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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation  
First Nations Leadership Council

### **Long-term agreement guarantees 25 years of revenue shared with First Nations**

VICTORIA - First Nations in B.C. and the provincial government completed and signed a 23-year agreement on Sept. 16, 2020, that will see the Province share approximately \$3 billion in gaming revenue.

The agreement supports Indigenous self-government and self-determination, strong, healthy communities and services that make life better for First Nations communities and people.

"Being able to count on this secure and long-term revenue can transform communities and lives - as two years of initial funding already started to show," said Premier John Horgan. "Locking in these revenues for 25 years is part of our government's ongoing commitment to reconciliation, ensuring First Nations can plan for the long term and invest in the services they decide their communities need to thrive and prosper."

More than 97% of eligible First Nations in B.C. have joined the First Nations Gaming Revenue Sharing Limited Partnership and started receiving their share of new revenue in September 2019 under an interim two-year agreement. The completion of the long-term agreement guarantees their share of gaming revenue for the subsequent 23 years.

"This agreement marks an exciting commitment from the Province to B.C. First Nations, as it relates to gaming revenue, that inspires hope regarding the application of United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and informs how we can engage in successful government-to-government relations," said Judith Sayers, co-chair, BC First Nations Gaming Commission. "We look forward to building on these successes with positive results from the upcoming Phase 2 negotiations, including enhanced First Nations access to gaming opportunities."

The agreement is the first major multilateral agreement with First Nations that substantively incorporates the UN Declaration, following the passage of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act in November 2019.

"In the first two years of the agreement, we've seen many success stories from First Nations and their utilization of gaming revenues," said Michael Bonshor, co-chair, BC First Nations Gaming Revenue Sharing Limited Partnership. "We look forward to continued positive impact for B.C. First Nations."

First Nations determine how their communities will benefit best from the revenue. The revenue may be invested in:

- health and wellness;
- infrastructure, safety, transportation and housing;
- economic and business development;
- education, language, culture and training;
- community development and environmental protection; and
- capacity building, fiscal management and governance.

"With this funding, First Nations can continue to build on plans that will make a real difference in their communities," said Scott Fraser, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation. "Already, we've seen communities able to start new projects building housing and community centres, protecting homes from wildfires, and expanding language programs - and there will be many more examples in the years ahead."

The long-term agreement will provide certainty for First Nations in B.C. to share in the Province's gaming revenues for 25 years. In 2019, the Province made amendments to the Gaming Control Act, establishing an entitlement to 7% of the BC Lottery Corporation's net income.

The BC First Nations Gaming Revenue Sharing Limited Partnership is governed by a five-person board of directors. In addition to administering the distribution of funding to eligible First Nations, it provides regular reporting to an independent auditor jointly appointed by the Province and the limited partnership.

#### **Quotes:**

##### **David Eby, Attorney General -**

"This partnership reinforces our government's commitment to work alongside First Nations, sharing guaranteed long-term funding that will build up communities and give Indigenous peoples improved access to the services that they rely on, now and into the future."

##### **Kukpi7 Judy Wilson, Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs -**

"B.C. reached this momentous agreement after years of persistence by our leadership. The agreement is certainly a testament to the drive of our First Nations in B.C. to see self-determination and self-governance become the cornerstones of healthy, empowered First Nation communities. This agreement not only helps First Nations use gaming revenue to build strong, sustainable economies, but sets a precedent for how the United Nations Declaration can be meaningfully incorporated into future accords to foster and support Indigenous leadership and resiliency."

### **Robert Phillips, political executive, First Nations Summit -**

"We are very pleased this long-term agreement has been finalized. These annual funds will provide B.C. First Nations the ability to address a vast array of community needs. As we have said before, these annual investments into communities will measurably enhance the economy of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, supporting the concept that healthy Indigenous economies ultimately benefit all British Columbians."

### **Regional Chief Terry Teegee, British Columbia Assembly of First Nations -**

"The benefit and impact of this long-term agreement will be significant in promoting and enhancing community-driven priorities and initiatives. This funding will flow directly to First Nations, subsequently supporting First Nations' goals and projects. We are beginning to see free, prior and informed consent as components of government-to-government agreements, thanks to the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. I look forward to the ongoing discussions and the completion of negotiations related to Phase 2, implementing gaming operations and jurisdiction within our own territories, which will empower First Nations to operate and manage their own gaming institutions."

#### **Quick Facts:**

- As part of an interim agreement, the Province transferred \$194.84 million in August 2019 for the first two years. The next payment will be transferred in April 2021.
- In 2018-19, the B.C. government collected \$1.4 billion in net revenue from gaming activities.
- Under the long-term agreement, 7% of net provincial gaming revenues per year will be distributed to First Nations communities through 2044-45 based on the following formula:
  - 50% base funding (divided equally among eligible First Nations);
  - 40% based on population; and
  - 10% for geographically remote communities.

#### **Learn More:**

First Nations Gaming Revenue Sharing Limited Partnership:

<https://www.bcfngamingrevenue.ca/>

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