



Snuneymuxw

First Nation

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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B.C. Ferries continues history of discrimination against Snuneymuxw First Nation with launch of new vessel in Snuneymuxw territory

SNUNEYMUXW TERRITORY (Nanaimo, B.C.) – Yesterday, B.C. Ferries announced that the second Nanaimo-Gabriola ferry will be called Island Gwawis. This name for the vessel was informed by the Namgis First Nation. The Island Gwawis will enter service on the Nanaimo-Gabriola route this year, a route that is squarely within the core territory of the Snuneymuxw People. Despite several executive meetings between Snuneymuxw and B.C. Ferries that were geared to foster respect for Snuneymuxw People and recognize Snuneymuxw rights in Snuneymuxw Territory, B.C. Ferries executives continue to enact racist and discriminatory behaviour towards Snuneymuxw People.

Quote from Snuneymuxw Chief Mike Wyse

“For over six and a half decades, four B.C. Ferries terminals have operated in Snuneymuxw Territory without Snuneymuxw consent. History reveals that our people have disputed these terminals in our territory due to the lack of respect and recognition of our Snuneymuxw Treaty of 1854. These ferry operations have caused significant negative impacts to our Territory, and have infringed on our Snuneymuxw Treaty of 1854. These impacts and infringements remain unresolved. Two of the four terminals in our territory have proposed terminal development plans that require Snuneymuxw authorizations. Recently, for the first time ever, B.C. Ferries came to our Nation and met with us in Snuneymuxw Council Chambers. Despite B.C. Ferries proposing to build a totem pole in our territory, erroneously believing this is the solution to our issues, I focused our discussions on ways to resolve fundamental and critical issues regarding their existing and proposed ferry operations in our territory. I presented them a detailed process on how we can do this. So, I am saddened and frustrated that Mr. Collins and the rest of his executives have decided to choose a racist and discriminatory path riddled with colonial acts that is woefully inflammatory and offensive to building a relationship between us. These new vessels live in Snuneymuxw territory and will be used on Snuneymuxw waterways. However, Mr. Collins choose to use and apply Namgis First Nation laws and culture in Snuneymuxw Territory. This is a violation of our human rights, and the provincial Bill – 41 the Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples introduced by Premier Horgan. I fully intend to use all remedies available to our people to rectify this issue, urging B.C. Ferries to discontinue their divisive and colonial behavior against our Nation. Our relationship building starts with talking about real issues between us for the betterment of all British Columbians. It does not start and end with the proposal to build a totem pole or name a vessel. We’ve got to get real here, and talk about the real issues that matter.”

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