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## JOINT LETTER FROM DOWNSTREAM INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES REGARDING THE SITE C DAM

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November 30, 2017

By email ([premier@gov.bc.ca](mailto:premier@gov.bc.ca))

Dear Premier Horgan:

**Re: Statement from Downstream Indigenous Communities regarding Site C**

As indigenous peoples our ways of life and indigenous rights are deeply connected to the Peace River and the lands and resources it supports. As indigenous communities located downstream of the Site C project, we are deeply concerned that our rights and cultures are threatened by Site C.

### **Our shared commitment to the Peace River**

We share an unwavering commitment to the protection of the Peace River and to ensuring that it can sustain downstream indigenous communities, like ours, whose rights depend on the Peace River. This is a commitment we have made to our ancestors and to our future generations.

It is our shared commitment that has led us to raise concerns about the Site C Project with regulators, governments and representatives of the international community. And it is why we are writing to you now as you consider what to do about Site C.

### **The reasons for terminating the Project are overwhelming**

History has shown that downstream indigenous communities bear enormous costs when BC Hydro puts the Peace River and downstream waters at risk. For generations, we have witnessed negative changes to our lands, waters and resources from BC Hydro's regulation of the Peace River. The Site C Project, if it proceeds, will add further negative impacts to our lands and our rights.

We are not alone in seeing the risks and unacceptable costs associated with the Site C Project. Earlier this year, international experts in world heritage determined that the environmental assessment for the Site C Project failed to consider important downstream effects of the Project on the Wood Buffalo National Park World Heritage Site. In July, UNESCO's World Heritage Committee requested that Canada undertake a proper assessment of the Site C Project and take steps to better regulate the Peace River.

Separately, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination determined this year that proceeding with the Site C Project would be inconsistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Committee's conclusion

was stark: "The impact of this dam on Indigenous Peoples would be permanent, extensive, and irreversible."

Most recently, the Final Report of the BC Utilities Commission's Site C Inquiry confirmed the significant costs of continuing with the Site C Project. In doing so, the BCUC acknowledged the additional financial risks to British Columbians that are associated with the infringement of indigenous rights, including the potential costs relating to downstream impacts on indigenous communities such as ours.

**We jointly urge you to cancel the Site C Project**

This letter and the BCUC and UN reports should confirm for you what we have known for some time: cancelling and remediating the Site C Project is in the best interests of British Columbians, Canada's largest World Heritage Site and the rights of downstream indigenous peoples.

Together, we jointly call on the BC Government to cancel the Site C Project.

**Supported by**

Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation

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Beaver First Nation

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Deninu K'ue First Nation

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Duncan's First Nation

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Fort Chipewyan Metis Local 125

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Fort McKay Metis

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Fort McMurray Metis Local 1935

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Little Red River Cree Nation

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Lubicon Lake Band

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Mikisew Cree First Nation

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Northwest Territory Metis Nation

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Smiths Landing First Nation

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Tallcree First Nation

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Woodland Cree First Nation

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