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June 26, 2018

To: Minister Chrystia Freeland, Global Affairs Canada

cc:

Minister Carolyn Bennett, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada
Minister Katrine Conroy, Minister Responsible for the Columbia River Treaty
Kathryn Teneese, Chair, Ktunaxa Nation Council
Kukpi7 Wayne Christian, Shuswap Nation Tribal Council
Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, Okanagan Nation Alliance

Re: Exclusion of First Nations from Columbia River Treaty Renegotiation

Dear Minister Freeland,

I write today to urge your government to include First Nations at the table for the Columbia River Treaty (CRT) renegotiation. The decision to exclude the Ktunaxa, Secwepemc and *Syilx* Okanagan Nations from direct participation in the Columbia River Treaty renegotiation is a direct betrayal of any commitment to reconciliation and to the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

In the context of UNDRIP and the Trudeau government's stated commitment to reconciliation, and after these nations were ignored in the initial Treaty and saw their territories deeply affected by flooding behind the Treaty dams, it is unacceptable that these nations be excluded from the Treaty table.

The impacts of the Columbia River Treaty dams on the communities and environment of the Columbia Basin cannot be understated. These nations have been leading the work to restore ecological function to the Columbia River system, including the restoration of salmon. Not only is this a question of respecting Indigenous rights, Indigenous leadership and knowledge of these issues would be invaluable at the Treaty table.

It is crucial that the Canadian government include the Ktunaxa Nation, *Syilx* Okanagan Nation and Secwepemc Nation in the CRT renegotiation on a government-to-government basis and that this be remedied before the next formal negotiation session in August 2018.

Sincerely,

Caitlyn Vernon
Campaigns Director
Sierra Club BC