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Media Release

## **Advocacy groups call on Premier Horgan to follow federal lead on Site C injunction**

Indigenous peoples' organizations and social justice groups are welcoming the news that the federal government will not oppose a First Nations court application to suspend construction of the Site C dam.

"The impact of the Site C dam on First Nations Treaty rights must be addressed before it's too late," said Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. "Now that the federal government has done the right thing, and helped cleared the way for an injunction to be granted, Premier Horgan absolutely must ensure that the province and BC Hydro do the same. Anything less would make a mockery of the province's commitments to reconciliation and respect for the rights of Indigenous peoples."

The West Moberly and Prophet River First Nations have launched a civil suit alleging that flooding the Peace River Valley would violate rights protected in Treaty 8. West Moberly has asked the court to grant an injunction to protect the valley while the matter is before the courts.

Late last week, the federal government filed a response taking "no position" on whether the injunction should be granted, but also admitting to the court that approvals for construction of Site C had been granted without first making a legal determination of whether the dam violates Treaty 8.

Sarah Morales, a member of the Board of Amnesty International Canada and an Associate Professor in the University of Ottawa Faculty of Law, said, "The very fact that First Nations have been forced to go to court demonstrates a profound failure on the part of the federal and provincial governments. Having refused to consider the Treaty rights of First Nations in the decision-making process, it's crucial that the federal and provincial government now allow the courts the opportunity to come to a fair resolution of this crucial issue. This means protecting the valley until First Nations rights are finally considered and addressed."

Following the submission of the federal position, the West Moberly and Prophet River First Nations issued a statement calling on the federal and provincial governments to sit down with them "to work out how best to wind down work on Site C until the question of Treaty infringement is finally decided."

Brent Patterson, Political Director for the Council of Canadians said, “The federal response to the injunction application demonstrates that governments don’t necessarily need to take an adversarial position when their decisions are challenged in court. Honouring Treaty 8 is in all our interests. What Premier Horgan does next will put the sincerity of his government’s commitments to Indigenous rights to the test.”

– [witnessforthepeace.ca](http://witnessforthepeace.ca)

*This media release was issued by the following organizations:*

**Amnesty International Canada**

**Rolling Justice Bus**

**BC-Yukon KAIROS**

**Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs**

**Council of Canadians**

**Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation  
Initiative**

**FightC**

**KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice  
Initiatives**

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