



Media release

Cheslatta Carrier Nation and Rio Tinto sign New Day agreement

27 February 2020

The Cheslatta Carrier Nation and Rio Tinto today signed the New Day agreement, a long-term partnership to support a strong future for the Cheslatta community and Rio Tinto's hydroelectric operations in the Nechako Watershed. The signing took place at a ceremony on the Southside of Francois Lake in British Columbia, attended by community members and representatives from Rio Tinto.

Cheslatta Carrier Nation Chief Corrina Leween said, "The New Day Agreement is a significant and important step forward in a new relationship with Rio Tinto. It is also another step forward in restoring Cheslatta jurisdiction in our territory and implementing an innovative Cheslatta led stewardship initiative on our land, water and environment. I want the 'New Day Agreement' to help make up for the many dark days our nation has experienced over the past 68 years. I acknowledge the efforts of Rio Tinto's leaders in addressing Cheslatta's priorities in this comprehensive agreement. They have stepped up where so many before them had feared to go. I'm confident that this agreement will build and maintain a new relationship between the Cheslatta Carrier Nation and Rio Tinto based on the principles of reconciliation and partnership."

Rio Tinto Aluminium chief executive Alf Barrios said, "This historic agreement marks a New Day in our relationship with the Cheslatta Carrier Nation. Our partnership offers long term certainty between the Cheslatta Carrier Nation and Rio Tinto's hydroelectric operations in the Nechako Watershed, which provide clean, renewable power to our BC Works smelter in Kitimat. We believe that working in partnership with Indigenous Peoples is essential to achieve responsible and sustainable resource development that benefits us all."

The New Day agreement will promote the social and economic well-being of the Cheslatta Carrier Nation through engagement in the areas of training, employment, business opportunities and environmental stewardship. Measures include support for a remote training center built on Cheslatta property in 2018, which will deliver diverse trades, skills, safety, marine and driver training courses. The agreement also establishes the New Day Scholarship Fund, which can provide scholarships for Cheslatta students of all ages.

In order to promote employment and business opportunities, Rio Tinto and the Cheslatta will work together to develop internships and promote a model relationship between a global industry leader and a modern and progressive First Nation. Information will also be shared on job positions and procurement opportunities within the company's hydroelectric operations, as well as on potential Cheslatta candidates and suppliers.

The agreement also provides for the creation of the Nechako Reservoir Stewardship Program, a joint initiative that will leverage local knowledge to maintain the Nechako Reservoir watershed ecosystem while promoting recreation and tourism opportunities consistent with ongoing Cheslatta stewardship activities.

Rio Tinto and the Cheslatta Carrier Nation have been engaged in a process of reconciliation for more than a decade. In 2012, the company returned sixty-three district lots totalling just over 11,000 acres of land acres to the Cheslatta.

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