



HUU-AY-AHT

(Ohiaht) First Nations

P.O. Box 70, Bamfield, B.C. V0R 1B0
Ph: (250) 728-3414 Fax: (250) 728-1222

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FOR IMMEDIATE MEDIA RELEASE

Huu-ay-aht First Nations Overwhelmingly Approve Treaty

Port Alberni – The Huu-ay-aht First Nations voted 90% in favour of the Maa-nulth Treaty in Saturday's vote on a treaty initialled last December 2006 by Maa-nulth First Nations, British Columbia and Canada.

Of the 303 eligible Huu-ay-aht voters who voted, 272 voted to approve a treaty granting the Huu-ay-aht self-government, land, and cash as well as access to fisheries, forestry and other economic opportunities valued at \$ 145 million. Huu-ay-aht voters also approved the transfer of Band assets to the new Huu-ay-aht government.

“The ingredients are now there for us to restore our rightful place within Canada as a strong, healthy, and prosperous people,” said Hereditary Chief Spencer Peters, “I only wish that my father, grandfather, and great- great- grandfather could have been here to witness and celebrate this day.”

Team Huu-ay-aht worked tirelessly over the last seven months, to ensure that Huu-ay-aht members were well informed about the Treaty and ready to vote.

“I want to extend a special thanks to all of those who worked so hard for our people,” said Chief Councillor Robert Dennis, “Once again our people have exercised their democratic right to vote and have given the treaty a resounding vote of confidence. We can now focus our energy and resources on using the tools in the treaty to make the dreams and aspirations of our people a reality.”

The treaty is expected to take effect in 2010 once the other 4 Maa-nulth Nations hold their votes – expected this October - and approve the treaty, followed by the BC Legislature and the Parliament of Canada approval of the treaty.

“The oral history and written word of the Huu-ay-aht is filled with testimonies to the rich culture and strong economy once enjoyed by the Huu-ay-aht,” said Chief Treaty Negotiator Tom Happynook, “We are now on the doorstep of renewing our historic greatness for our children.”

“I am very happy,” said Councillor Irene Williams, “We now have the opportunity for a brighter future as Huu-ay-aht. It has taken a long time but we will once again be masters in our own house.”

For More Information Contact:

Chief Councilor Robert Dennis
Cell: (250) 735-9154