
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation

EARLY LAND TRANSFERS TO BENEFIT MAA-NULTH FIRST NATIONS

PORT ALBERNI—The Province has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with each of the five Maa-nulth First Nations that transfers ownership over key parcels of treaty settlement lands in advance of implementing their treaty, announced Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation Michael de Jong today.

“The land transfers are in keeping with the Province’s commitment to find new ways for First Nations to benefit from future Maa-nulth lands while still working through the final stages of the treaty process,” said de Jong. “Reconciliation is about constructing mutually beneficial and harmonious relationships between governments. These MOUs will help the Maa-nulth First Nations benefit from their treaty lands before the effective date of the treaty.”

The MOUs coincide with the signing of the Maa-nulth Final Agreement by Huu-ay-aht First Nations and Government of Canada at a ceremony in Port Alberni today. The signing of the Final Agreement allows the federal government to formally proceed with introducing the legislation to ratify the agreement in Parliament. The treaty will take effect on a date agreed to by the parties.

British Columbia introduced and passed legislation to ratify the treaty in November 2007, and subsequently signed the Final Agreement with the remaining four First Nations last summer. The early transfer of treaty settlement land allows the Maa-nulth First Nations to incorporate the social and economic benefits flowing from land ownership prior to implementation of the treaty.

The Maa-nulth First Nations Final Agreement will provide a capital transfer of \$73.1 million, annual resource revenue payments projected to be \$1.2 million for 25 years and a land package totalling approximately 24,550 hectares to the five First Nations. It defines the Maa-nulth First Nations’ rights and title, including ownership and management of lands and resources. When the treaty comes into effect, each of the five Maa-nulth First Nations will own their land in fee simple and there will be no more Indian reserves. The treaty includes self-government provisions and a phase-out of tax exemptions.

The Province is building a New Relationship with British Columbia First Nations founded on mutual respect, recognition, and reconciliation. For more information on these and other agreements visit: www.gov.bc.ca/arr.

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1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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