



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Xat'sull First Nation calls on B.C. to withdraw Bills 14 and 15 and commit to true, meaningful reconciliation**

*Xat'sull stands in solidarity with the First Nations Leadership Council and First Nations across the province*

**XAT'SULL FIRST NATION TERRITORY; 20 May 2025:** Xat'sull First Nation has joined the First Nations Leadership Council and First Nations across B.C. to call on Premier David Eby and the Government of British Columbia to withdraw Bill 14, *the Renewable Energy Projects (Streamlined Permitting) Act* and Bill 15, *the Infrastructure Projects Act*.

Xat'sull First Nation is firmly opposed to Bills 14 and 15, which pose a direct threat to First Nations rights, environmental accountability, and the principles of reconciliation. These bills, introduced without adequate or meaningful consultation, would centralize environmental assessment powers in the hands of the Province — sidestepping First Nations and weakening our ability to protect our territories. These bills threaten our land, our sovereignty and our future.

Xat'sull is currently engaged in a judicial review challenging the Province of British Columbia's decision to approve the expansion of the tailings storage facility at the Mount Polley mine without meaningfully consulting or accommodating our Nation. Despite clear obligations under Section 35 of the Constitution and British Columbia's own commitments under the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (DRIPA), our concerns were dismissed. The decision was made without our consent, and without properly addressing the serious environmental and cultural impacts this project poses to our land, waters and way of life.

Now, with Bills 14 and 15, the Province is attempting to formalize and entrench that same pattern of exclusion of our rights and consent into law for future projects.

"We have been forced to watch our Nation repeatedly be sidelined in decisions that directly impact our territory, our rights, and our future," said Kúkpi7 (Chief) Rhonda Phillips and Xat'sull First Nation Council. "We are already in the middle of a judicial review because the Province ignored its legal obligation to consult and accommodate us on a mining project expansion. Now, with Bill 14 and Bill 15, they are trying to push through legislation that would make it even easier to exclude us — stripping away environmental oversight and removing critical accountability."

Bills 14 and 15 could be used to fast-track natural resource projects, including mining, without adequate consultation and without key provincial permitting and environmental



oversight. As drafted, these Bills will have a significant impact on First Nations' inherent and Aboriginal rights, title, and jurisdiction.

"This is not reconciliation," said Kukpi7 and Council. "This is a step backward to the old ways of doing business, where colonial governments decide and First Nations are expected to accept it. We stand united as leadership of Xat'sull and in solidarity with other First Nations and the First Nations Leadership Council in our opposition to these bills. Together, we will continue to defend our rights, our lands, and the future of our people."

Xat'sull understands that the Province must respond to external threats to B.C.'s economy, but these actions cannot ignore the Province's obligations to First Nations under DRIPA, its own law. We recognize the need for mining and the Nation's members benefit from the materials that mining provides. We support development that is responsible, sustainable and carried out in partnership with First Nations. But Xat'sull must be part of sharing how development happens on our territory, which we have been stewards of since time immemorial.

First Nations have a right to free, prior and informed consent, not after-the-fact consultation. Reconciliation is not just a word — it must be reflected in action, law, and respect for our inherent rights.

Xat'sull First Nation urges the Province to withdraw Bills 14 and 15 and return to the table to work in true partnership with First Nations and honour its commitments to true reconciliation.

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Xat'sull First Nation is a First Nations government and is part of the larger Secwepemc (Shuswap) Nation, located in the Cariboo region of British Columbia near Williams Lake. Learn more on Xat'sull First Nation's [website](#).

## Media Contact

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