



OKANAGAN NATION ALLIANCE

101 - 3535 Old Okanagan Hwy, Westbank, BC V4T 3L7
Phone 250-707-0095 Toll Free 1-866-662-9609 Fax 250-707-0166 www.syilx.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Westbank August 11, 2014:

Okanagan Nation Alliance File Lawsuit Challenging British Columbia Treaty Process

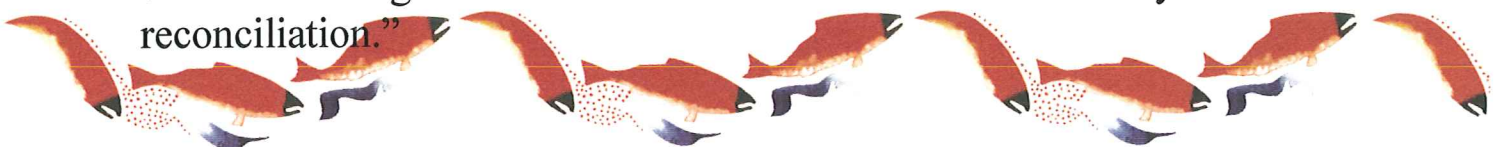
Okanagan Territory/Westbank, British Columbia: The Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) has filed legal action against the Province of British Columbia. The legal action will directly challenge the much-criticized British Columbia Treaty Process.

“This lawsuit should come as no surprise to the Province,” said Grand Chief Stewart Phillip. “The British Columbia Treaty Process is a broken system that fails to recognize established legal principles, traditional protocols, and our Title and Rights. By this lawsuit, we intend to put the Province’s pattern of dishonourable and unlawful conduct before the court.”

The ONA’s legal action resulted from the Province’s decision to sign an “Incremental Treaty Agreement” with the Ktunaxa Nation Council to transfer approximately 241 hectares of land near Nakusp in the Arrow Lakes area as part of an early transfer of lands that will form part of a final Treaty.

The Province did not consult with the ONA before signing the agreement, despite the fact that the area includes important village sites, hunting grounds, and cultural heritage sites for the ONA communities and their members.

“The Province doesn’t have the right to simply give away our Title and Rights,” said Grand Chief Phillip. “Overriding our Title and Rights to enter into an agreement with another First Nation is no way to achieve reconciliation.”



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The ONA made the decision to file the legal action after attempting for over a year to resolve the issue directly with the Province.

“We offered the Province a chance to rectify the situation through a process of collaborative, respectful engagement, but the Province rejected this path,” said Grand Chief Phillip. “The Province has shown us that it is not serious about resolving this issue, so we are taking action in court to protect our Title and Rights for our people and communities.”

The ONA is made up of seven First Nations in British Columbia: the Lower Similkameen Band, Okanagan Indian Band, Osoyoos Indian Band, Penticton Band, Upper Nicola Band, Upper Similkameen Band and Westbank First Nation, as well as the Colville Confederated Tribes in the United States. The communities of the ONA include thousands of members who are Sinixt descendants who historically lived in the Arrow Lakes area.

For More Information Contact:

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, ONA Chair
(250) 490-5314