



**TSESHAHT
FIRST NATION**

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CANADA PERMITTED PROVINCIAL HIGHWAY DESPITE CİŞAA?ATH (TSESHAHT) FIRST NATION'S OPPOSITION

The Nation did not consent to the construction or operation of the roadway that runs through its main reserve

(PORT ALBERNI, OCTOBER 27, 2022) — cİşaa?ath (Tseshaht) First Nation has recently submitted a Specific Claim with the Government of Canada seeking compensation for the unlawful and unauthorized use of land within the Nation's Tsahaheh IR 1 (main or principal community lands) for the provincial Pacific Rim Highway 4, which leads to Tofino.

Tseshaht has always opposed the construction or operation of Highway 4 and has never been compensated for the use of its land.

Specific claim aims to right past wrongs by the Government of Canada against Indigenous Nations. This Specific Claim filed by Tseshaht provides Canada with an opportunity to accept responsibility for its wrongs and ensure Tseshaht is appropriately compensated for the loss of its reserve lands for this increasingly popular highway.

"This is not a new issue," said Wahmeesh (Ken Watts), Elected Chief Councillor. "In 1889, our Nation wrote a letter to the Government of Canada expressing opposition to the roadway. Despite this, Canada did not take any steps to protect our interests, as they were legally required to do. As a result, the Province of British Columbia proceeded to build the highway, taking our land without our consent."

cİşaa?ath (Tseshaht) First Nation is focused on preserving and improving the safety and protection of the Nation and its people. As the only public route from Port Alberni to Tofino, roughly 1 million visitors travel Highway 4 annually. cİşaa?ath (Tseshaht) First Nation has consistently expressed concerns about the impacts of the highway including through increased pollution, garbage waste transportation and vehicle accidents that disproportionately impact Tseshaht members.



In accordance with the Specific Claims policy, Canada now has three years to review the claim and decide whether it will accept it for negotiations or not.

“We encourage Canada to expedite its review and acceptance of this Claim so that we can get on with the work of righting this historic wrong,” said Wahmeesh (Ken Watts). “Meanwhile, our Nation is open to a separate conversation with the Province of B.C. about its role in the future of this roadway on Tseshaht land to better protect our people now and in the future and keep them safe from the damage it continues to cause.”

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About c̓šaaʔaḥ (Tseshaht) First Nation

c̓šaaʔaḥ (Tseshaht) First Nation has over 1200 registered members whose ḥaaḥuuli (territory) extends from the Broken Group Islands, including areas in central Barkley Sound, up both sides of the Alberni Inlet and the entire Alberni valley, as well as a large part of the interior of central Vancouver Island. c̓šaaʔaḥ (Tseshaht) First Nation is one of the 14 member Nations of the Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council. For more information, please visit www.tseshaht.com.

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