



ASSEMBLY OF CHIEFS  
NOVEMBER 10, 2020

October 20, 2020

Honourable John Horgan  
Office of the Premier  
PO BOX 9041 STN PROV GOVT • Victoria, BC V8W 9E1

**Re: All Nations Cannabis Assembly of Chiefs**

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Dear Premier Horgan:

I would like to begin with a note of appreciation for the commitments you have made to equity, inclusion and reconciliation for Indigenous people. From British Columbia's enactment of The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act to your recognition that it is the government's responsibility to advance reconciliation in partnership with Indigenous peoples. Of particular resonance was your address to the Assembly of First Nations in December 2019, and your affirmation that "Reconciliation is not just words, reconciliation is action."

Shxw̓há:y First Nation and our partners, Cheam First Nation, Soowahlie First Nation and Sq'ewlets First Nation believe the path to reconciliation must be charted through economic growth and self-determination. The cannabis industry offers a unique opportunity to advance reconciliation and uplift First Nations communities.

We have an ongoing interest in participating in the emerging legalized cannabis industry and have been attempting to engage the Province on this issue for the last two years. The Minister has re-affirmed that the Province is committed to working collaboratively with Shxw̓há:y Village and supports our desire to pursue economic opportunities associated with legal cannabis production and sales. Yet, those words have not been supported by action.

We have designed a business model which involves leasing a small portion of our reserve lands to develop cannabis retail locations. Through this model, each First Nation receives 51% of the profits earned through retail operations which are staffed by the Nation's community members.

A Section 119 agreement under the Cannabis Control and Licensing Agreement Act (CCLA) would enable us to implement our business model and participate in the cannabis industry under the auspices of a governance regime that respects Indigenous jurisdictional interest.

When we approached your government in 2018, we were excited by the opportunity for true partnership. We have always supported a collaborative approach that works within the established governance structures; however, only when that approach recognizes our place and interest in this once-in-a-lifetime industry. We want to approach the discussions as equal governing bodies. We have given a lot of thought to the business model and s. 119 agreement terms that we seek.

We have an opportunity to lead the nation and demonstrate that governments, working with sincerity, can work with First Nations in true partnership. We do not want to be left behind in this moment, and we are ready to engage in the discussion. We need the Province to demonstrate a reciprocal commitment.

Premier Horgan, it is our impression that there is a lack of willingness on the part of your government to facilitate Indigenous success in cannabis distribution. Our approach presents a solution to what has become a national issue where the lack of consideration given to Indigenous communities in the passage of the Cannabis Act has limited communities to operate only within their own reserves while provincial regulations prevent us from participating in the national market.

On behalf of Shxw̓há:y First Nation, Cheam First Nation, Soowahlie First Nation and Sq'ewlets First Nation, I formally invite you to engage with us as an equal partner by joining our virtual Assembly of Chiefs on November 10th. Together, we can cross this hurdle and continue on the path to reconciliation.

**Chief Robert Gladstone**  
Shxw̓há:y First Nation

