



May 4, 2023

CAO David Leitch

SRD Board of Directors

990 Cedar Street, Campbell River, BC, V9W 7Z8

Sent by email: dleitch@srd.ca

Re: Land Acknowledgement

Dear Board of Directors and David Leitch,

On behalf of Tla'amin Leadership, I write to you to discuss an issue surrounding the Land Acknowledgement used by the Strathcona Regional District (SRD). It has been brought to our attention that there has been some discourse around whether or not the SRD should include Tla'amin Nation in their land acknowledgement.

Upon review of dialogue from the inaugural meeting of the SRD's First Nations committee, on Wednesday January 25th, there seemed to be some hesitancy from some members of the board as well as the CAO on whether to include Tla'amin Nation in your acknowledgement or not. Although the SRD and Tla'amin Nation do not work together on day-to-day issues, it is vital to recognize that parts of the land managed by the SRD is in the Tla'amin Area – an area established by our Treaty and formally recognised by the federal and provincial governments.

Electoral Area B, C, and D of the Strathcona Regional District all encompass areas included in the Tla'amin Area, as outlined and recognized in Appendix A of the Tla'amin Treaty. The Tla'amin Treaty is a constitutionally protected agreement under Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution. The Treaty does not extinguish Tla'amin's existence to these lands, it reinforces them. As you may know, there is a parcel of Tla'amin treaty land on Cortes Island, which Tla'amin has full jurisdiction over. This parcel is well within the boundaries of the SRD.

Tla'amin has occupied our territory, which now includes boundaries of the SRD, since time immemorial. Refusing to acknowledge Tla'amin's millennia-long relationship to the land that SRD now represents is an example of colonial erasure of Indigenous peoples.

I would like to thank those on the board who have continued to advocate for Tla'amin to be included on the SRD's Land Acknowledgement. Your allyship does not go unnoticed. Tla'amin Nation leadership welcome further dialogue with the SRD. We thank you in advance for continuing this important conversation, and we look forward to seeing the outcome of this work.

Sincerely,



Hegus John S. Hackett

Appendices:

Tla'amin Treaty and Appendices: <https://www.tlaaminnation.com/home-page/final-agreement/>

Cc

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