

For Immediate Release

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Lower Mainland Area Local Governments Support Ratification of the First Treaty at Tsawwassen

Burnaby, BC... Further to the announcement that a *Final Agreement* has been ratified by the *Tsawwassen First Nation* community on **July 25th, 2007**, local government representatives to the *Lower Mainland Treaty Advisory Committee* (LMTAC) offer their support for the conclusion of a final treaty settlement for the *Tsawwassen First Nation*, marking the first modern day treaty to be ratified by a First Nation under the *BC Treaty Process*.

“I congratulate Chief Kim Baird and her community,” said Mayor Ralph Drew, LMTAC Chair, “this agreement represents a historic moment for the *BC Treaty Process* as the first *Final Agreement* to be ratified not only in the Lower Mainland, but in British Columbia.”

Drew further noted that, “Lower Mainland area local governments, through LMTAC, have had a direct voice at the treaty table as full members of the provincial negotiating team, and we have actively participated in the Tsawwassen negotiations since substantive discussions began in 1995. It’s been a long process and it’s rewarding to see a tangible result from so many years of hard work by all the Parties. LMTAC strongly supports the objective of treaties to provide certainty with respect to aboriginal rights and title and, though the negotiations require give and take by all sides, LMTAC’s analysis of the *Agreement* revealed that a majority of issues identified by local government were addressed.

Treaty negotiations in the urban Lower Mainland have a complexity unlike anywhere else in the province; especially with respect to intergovernmental relations. “LMTAC is excited that post-treaty Tsawwassen will become a full participating member of the *Greater Vancouver Regional District*”, stated Drew, “to have them engage with their municipal neighbours will only encourage understanding and the opportunity to work together on matters of mutual interest.”

Despite positive efforts on governance matters, the committee does acknowledge that, given the nature of negotiations, there were a few issues in which local government interests were not fully met, such as the ‘Specified Lands’ approach to post-treaty additions to *Treaty Settlement Lands* (TSL) because it removes the requirement of municipal consent and the exclusion of some portions of proposed TSL from the *Agricultural Land Reserve* (ALR) without due process.

In recognition of the work ahead in implementing the *Agreement*, Drew offered that “once this treaty is ratified by both the provincial and federal governments, LMTAC is eager to be part of the transitional process and to see success on the ground for this historic treaty.”

Ratification by the Provincial government is anticipated this fall, and by the Federal government in 2008. The *Tsawwassen First Nation Final Agreement* is expected to take effect by early 2009.

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**For further information on LMTAC and its activities, please visit us at www.lmtac.bc.ca
or contact Regan Schlecker, LMTAC Managing Director, at (604) 451-6198.**

LMTAC coordinates and represents the interests of Local Governments, and through them their constituents, in defining and building relationships between First Nations and other orders of government.