
COLUMBIA River Treaty



January 27, 2021

Columbia River Treaty Local Governments Committee Updates Recommendations

The Columbia River Treaty Local Governments Committee (the Committee) has updated their recommendations regarding the modernization of the Columbia River Treaty and resolution of domestic issues based on what the Committee has heard from Basin residents and local governments since their original recommendations were provided in 2013.

The Committee has provided their recommendations to the five governments represented on the CRT Negotiating Team – the federal government, the BC government, the Ktunaxa Nation, the Syilx-Okanagan Nation and the Secwepemc Nation.

Unlike when the original Treaty was ratified in the 1960s with no consultation with Indigenous Nations, residents or local governments, the provincial government has been consulting with Indigenous Nations and inviting input from Basin residents and local governments since 2012.

‘There are real opportunities to refine the Treaty and domestic hydro operations to reduce the negative impacts on our quality of life in the Basin,’ states Linda Worley, Committee Chair. ‘We thank Basin residents for continuing to advocate for improvements and the CRT Negotiating Team and Minister Conroy for the phenomenal engagement opportunities, for hearing our concerns and doing their utmost to rectify these impacts.’

Based on input from Basin residents, the recommendations have been revised to include a detailed description of the impacts from the Treaty and update and refine the original 2013 recommendations, as well as add recommendations related to the Treaty on less fluctuation in reservoir levels and a broader governance structure that includes Indigenous Nations at a government to government level with the federal and provincial governments, as well as Indigenous and western science expertise in ecosystem management, local governments and basin residents.

Adding ecosystem function as a third and equal priority in the Treaty, alongside flood risk management and hydro power generation, is a continuing interest and priority for many Basin residents so there is relief in knowing this is one of the main points of discussion during the negotiations. The Committee acknowledges and supports the federal decision that the three regional Indigenous Nations have official observer status in the negotiations and supports their leadership in integrating ecosystem function into the Treaty.

The Committee is very aware of the public commitments by the B.C. CRT Team to bring any elements of a negotiated agreement that impact the region back to residents and local governments for review before negotiations are finalized.

‘We encourage Basin residents and local governments to get educated about the Treaty and stay informed about the ongoing negotiations to be ready to provide input when invited,’ adds Ms. Worley. ‘We assure the Negotiating Team that the Committee and Basin residents will be looking for significant changes in the Treaty that improve our quality of life compared to current operations’.

The Columbia Basin Trust provides extensive background information about the Treaty at [CBT CRT](#). The province’s

[CRT website](#) has regular updates on the negotiations and the option to subscribe to an e-newsletter.

The Committee was created in 2011 by the local governments in the region impacted by the treaty. The primary purpose of the Committee is to assist local governments and region residents to engage in decisions around the future of the treaty. Since 2012 the Committee has worked closely with the BC CRT Team to consult with residents and local governments in the region to fully understand the concerns and issues related to the Treaty.

The Columbia River Treaty is a water management agreement between Canada and the United States that regulates the flows of the Columbia River in southeastern BC for flood control and power generation purposes. Negotiations to modernize the Treaty began in November 2018. The federal government leads the negotiation of this international treaty, however B.C. has representatives on the team because water management is a provincial responsibility in the Canadian federation. In May 2019, the federal government invited the three regional Indigenous Nations – the Ktunaxa, the Secwepemc and the Syilx-Okanagan – to join the Negotiating Team as observers. Their role has been described as observers plus as they are involved in all negotiations preparations and have made presentations during negotiating sessions.

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Attachments:

Letter to the five governments

Recommendations

Revisions Summary

For more information about the Committee:

[Committee webpage](#)

For more information about the negotiations and the Treaty

[BC CRT engage website](#)

For more information about the Treaty

[Columbia Basin Trust CRT website](#)

CRT Local Government Committee members:

Linda Worley, Chair, Regional Director, Regional District of Kootenay Boundary

Stan Doehle, Vice Chair, Regional Director, Regional District of the East Kootenays

Aimee Watson, Regional Director, by Regional District of Central Kootenay

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Diane Langman, Mayor, Village of Warfield and appointed by Regional District of Kootenay Boundary

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Clara Reinhardt, Mayor, Village of Radium Hotsprings and appointed by Association of Kootenay Boundary Local Governments