



Long Beach Airport MOU between ACRD and TFN Summary

History

The Long Beach Airport, originally constructed by the Federal Government during World War II, is within the ɥahuuɥi (traditional territory) of Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation (TFN).

The Nation originally supported the development of the airport lands by the federal government with the understanding that these lands and assets would be returned to the Nation at the end of the war.

It was transferred to the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD) in 2000.

In a true act of reconciliation, the ACRD and Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation have begun discussions on how the two parties could begin to set things right.

Signing MOU

The ACRD and TFN signed a three-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in June 2024 to work together on land-related items at the Long Beach Airport, called the Long Beach Airport ɥahuuɥi MOU.

The objectives of the MOU are for the two parties to work collaboratively on the following items:

- The development of a long-term protocol agreement for engagement regarding the airport. The intention is to have a long-term agreement ready to enter into at the end of this three-year MOU term.
- The development of a long-term land use and development plan for the airport.
- Review and approval of long-term and short-term lease applications at the site.
- Development of a communications and signage plan to identify traditional territory and provide other cultural interpretative information. This may include road and terminal signage, website information, and other communication mediums.

Why is this important now?

This MOU and eventual long-term partnership agreement is intended to recognize the Tla-o-qui-aht ɥahuuɥi and support the protection of and investment in their environment, culture, and people.

- This is one of the many initiatives that the ACRD is working on that supports reconciliation and partnering efforts identified in the ACRD's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan.
- Other efforts include:
 - An established working group for the Alberni Valley Landfill
 - An Inclusive Governance Initiative
 - Various other discussions and opportunities with First Nations throughout our region.
- Although the MOU was signed in June, it is important to acknowledge the work and the partnerships that occurred before and after the announcement on November 21, 2024.

What changes?

- Scheduled passenger fees have increased from \$5 to \$7.50 to financially support the MOU initiatives.
- No increase to taxation will be required because of this partnership.
- During the next 3 years, different mechanisms to ensure financial support and community benefit for Tla-o-qui-aht will be explored such as requiring airport tenants to become tribal park allies or contributions/fees on new leases to directly support the ḥahuuḥi. The intention will be to see development of the airport lands provide benefits in increased revenues, which will both reduce taxation to run the service and provide benefit to the community on which lands the airport operates.
- People flying in and out of the Long Beach Airport will see recognition of the Tla-o-qui-aht ḥahuuḥi in the Terminal Building and Airport property through banners, art, and interpretive signs.
- Otherwise, operations of the airport will not see significant changes.