



Statement from the Chair of the Board

Wednesday, June 3, 2020

When the First Nations of the Maa-nulth Treaty Society first began to join the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, it was unanimous that this was a sign of progress. The successive boards, the Chairs and Vice-Chairs included, had all expressed a deep enthusiasm for what were the first steps of treaty-based, political **reconciliation**. Today, we need to remind ourselves that this path is not one easily kept upon.

One such action taken by one of my predecessors, and likewise supported unanimously by the board of the day, was to declare that **we were all one**. While they are in English here, **these words hold power** up and down the west coast of Vancouver Island. It is the idea that no matter where we are in the natural world, or the human world that depends upon the natural one, we affect one another. Through our behaviours, speech, and action, our effect upon everyone and everything within those worlds can be traced and remembered. It is the idea that we must take heed of the deep and wide connections all around us, and that we must appreciate, if not fully understand, that our behaviour, speech, and actions can have far-ranging, long-lasting and perhaps unintended impacts.

Like our predecessors, this Board of Directors for the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District is deeply disappointed in the racist actions that took place a little more than one day ago in unceded Tseshaht territory. These actions are not in accordance with the values and beliefs espoused by the people and communities we serve, and we condemn those actions not only for their impact, but the sheer ignorance and ill intention behind them as well. We also believe that is the responsibility of all in our community to speak out when they see, read, or hear of such activities for it is not enough to stand aside and be silent.

In this time of deep and historic tension, in Canada and abroad, it is crucial that we actively cling to the values that make our society inclusive, strong, and resilient. We are stronger together. We are made better by our diversity. Only through patience and mutual discourse will we be able to move forward in a good way, in a way that will make both our ancestors and our successors smile in approval.

We must endeavour to work harder on disagreeing well with one-another. We must work harder at considering the situation and context of the fully-formed and valuable person before us before making pronouncements. We must listen before we speak. We must seek clarity, and do so in good faith. We must be better. We must become what we should be, rather than what results from a world that too often makes apathy and moral infirmity all too easy.

We will endeavour to do better ourselves, and for our wider communities. We need your help, and we will take the time to regularly ensure that this lesson is never forgotten.

Klecko, klecko.

John Alan Jack
Director for Huu-ay-aht First Nations
Chair for the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District