



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JAPANESE CANADIANS

NAJC Statement Regarding Wet'suwet'en Territory

Winnipeg, Manitoba – February 19, 2020

The National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC) is alarmed by recent RCMP incursions into the sovereign and unceded territory of the Wet'suwet'en people. We affirm the right of the hereditary chiefs, who hold legal title to their land, to refuse to allow construction of the Coastal GasLink pipeline on their territory.

We recognize that the situation today is not an easy one. While the hereditary chiefs oppose the Coastal GasLink pipeline, the chiefs of elected band councils along the pipeline's route have supported it. But the chiefs' differing stances does not justify moving ahead forcefully. If anything, it underscores the importance of consent.

To Japanese Canadians these events are disturbingly familiar. We, too, were betrayed by the governments of British Columbia and Canada when our homes were taken from us out of racism and greed, and were rounded up and removed by the RCMP. We know, all too well, the lasting toll this kind of dispossession takes.

As both the bearer of the legacy of internment and a voice of Japanese Canadians today, the NAJC joins others in expressing solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en people. We support non-violent actions calling on our Governments to respect the rights and law. We also urge anyone affected by acts of protest to consider the injustices, past and present that have forced people to take such actions.

In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRCC) called for a new "Royal Proclamation" to make Indigenous nations full partners in Canada's confederation. We urge all levels of government to meet with all affected Indigenous peoples to come to a peaceful resolution to the present situation, and to work toward a greater understanding for future relationships.

The National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC) was founded in 1947 and is a Canada-wide organization that represents Japanese Canadians and Japanese Canadian member organizations. The NAJC supports the development of our communities and a strong Japanese Canadian identity. We strive for equal rights and liberties for all persons, and in particular for racial and ethnic minorities.