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**The Honourable Patty Hajdu**  
Minister of Indigenous Services Canada  
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Page 1 of 3

February 17, 2023

Dear Minister Hajdu,

**Re: FNLC Demand for a Pause of FNHA's 10-Year Canada Funding Agreement**

We are writing concerning the currently ongoing negotiations on the Canada Funding Agreement between Health Canada and the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) and First Nations Health Council (FNHC) and the First Nations Leadership Council letter dated February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023.

I am writing on behalf of the Squamish Nation Council, which forms the government of the Squamish People. The purpose of this letter is to put on record our position on a matter which has arisen in the BC region on First Nations and Health. This letter sets out what is in the hearts and minds of the Squamish Nation.

We write to you to inform you that the demands of the First Nations Leadership Council in their letter do not comply with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and call on you to disregard their letter to pause these negotiations or to withhold the agreement until specific demands are met.

In spring 2021, resolutions on the BC First Nations health governance structure were presented, affirmed, and endorsed by consensus at the annual meetings of the three organizations which comprise the First Nations Leadership Council, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (2021-14), BC Assembly of First Nations (02/2021) and First Nations Summit (0621.11) (enclosed). However, there was no consensus in 2022 as Squamish Nation voted opposed at the UBCIC and BC AFN meetings.

The Squamish Nation was not aware of recent moves by some First Nations leaders at First Nations Leadership Council organizations to circumvent the established Health Governance Structure established by First Nations in 2010 and 2011.

The FNHC is one of three pillars of the First Nations Health Governance Structure in BC, along with its partners at the FNHA, the FNHDA and the Tripartite Committee on First Nations Health, including the BC and Federal government.

The 15-person Council regionally drives the FNHC with three elected representatives from each of the five health regions in BC. The FNHC's mandate is to oversee the transformation of the health system, make progress on the Social Determinants for Health and advocate for First Nations decision-making in health and wellness. The FNHC provides political leadership for implementing Tripartite commitments and supports the health priorities for BC First Nations.



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However, Squamish Nation participated in and recalls the dialogue by First Nations governments in 2010 and 2011. First Nations were transparent in our demand for a clear separation of politics from the administration regarding First Nations Health. BC First Nations leaders feared political interference undermining improvement in necessary community health services, care, and benefits.

However, in fall 2022, some First Nations leaders have called on the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA). The First Nations Health Council (FNHC) to participate in a third-party health governance review and not to enter into any further agreements, including a renewed Canada Funding Agreement or the Tripartite Data Quality & Sharing Agreement, on behalf of First Nations before the external review of FNHA's governance structure and mandate.

We know that Canada, the Province of BC and the First Nations Health Authority have a legal and binding agreement with provisions for formal organizational evaluations. The Squamish Nation reiterates our understanding and support for the FNHC and FNHA, who have begun engaging with First Nations in each regional caucus this Fall of 2022. The FNHC and FNHA are seeking out advice and direction to strengthen the First Nations Health Governance Structure. Our position is that the First Nations Leadership Council organizations must communicate that the First Nations Health Council is the political governance body for FNHA and advise First Nations members to use the appropriate means to address any issues, concerns, or challenges.

The Squamish Nation continues to support the current First Nations Health Governance Structure. It does not support political interference in the First Nations Health Governance Structure by UBCIC, First Nations Summit, or BC AFN. The First Nations Leadership Council does not speak for Squamish Nation.

We are aware that FNLC hosted a session for First Nations representatives to share feedback on the health governance structure. This meeting did not have the attendance or unanimous support of all First Nations in BC. The Squamish Nation was not present for this meeting, and the First Nations Leadership Council does not have the support of the Squamish Nation to take such divisive action that threatens our community's health programs and benefits.

We call on you to ignore demands to pause negotiations on the Canada Funding Agreement with FNHA.

We thank you for your attention to this matter.



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**Chair Khelsilem**  
Council Chairperson  
Squamish Nation

- c.c. Wade Grant, Chair, First Nations Health Council  
BC First Nations  
BC First Nations Leadership Council  
Hon. Adrian Dix, BC Minister of Health  
Gina Wilson, Deputy Minister, Indigenous Services Canada  
Patrick Boucher, Sr. Assistant Deputy Minister, First Nations Inuit Health  
Branch, ISC  
Stephen Brown, Deputy Minister, BC Ministry of Health  
Teresa Dobmeier, Associate Deputy Minister, BC Ministry of Health