



Hon. David Eby, K.C.
Premier and President of Executive Council
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

January 25, 2022

Dear Premier Eby,

Re: Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) are a barrier to economic reconciliation in B.C.

We are writing to support the statements [published by Cowichan Tribes and Khowutzun Development Corporation](#) (KDC) on January 19, 2023, as well as [by Jon Coleman](#), a member of the Cowichan Tribes, on January 16, 2023, calling on the British Columbia government to permit Cowichan citizen-owned companies to participate in the construction of the Cowichan District Hospital Replacement Project.

The BC Liberal Caucus has been voicing long-standing concerns about CBAs giving special preference to NDP-supportive unions over local First Nations employees from the Cowichan Valley and jeopardizing public infrastructure projects. These poorly arranged agreements have also led to unnecessary delays and increased the costs of the Cowichan District Hospital Project from \$600 million to over \$1.4 billion. Yet, local employers from the Cowichan Tribes are barred from working on their lands.

The work under the agreements — that are supposed to ensure that local indigenous communities benefit from — are now being granted to businesses outside the Cowichan Valley. Not only does this negate what CBAs were purported to do, but it also leaves many companies who hired workers and equipment to contribute to a massive project in their backyard in a financial predicament. As evidenced by this project, CBAs do not help First Nations companies work on their lands or community projects. Instead, Cowichan Tribes along with these workers and employers, who have not been consulted with or given any involvement in CBA negotiations, are being blocked by your government through CBAs.

Despite multiple calls from the Official Opposition, impacted businesses and First Nation leaders, there has been no solution or response presented by the government. We strongly urge you to reconsider CBAs and their true impact on communities such as the Cowichan Tribes, and to discontinue discriminatory CBAs that neither increase First Nations' employment participation or equity within their own communities, nor achieve any measurable benefit to British Columbian taxpayers. As indicated in the statements referred to in this letter, CBAs undermine economic reconciliation with First Nations by barring Indigenous citizens and companies from working on community infrastructure projects on their lands.

Sincerely,

Michael Lee
MLA for Vancouver-Langara and Shadow Minister for Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Greg Kylo'.

Greg Kylo
MLA for Shuswap and Shadow Minister for Labour and Skills Training

CC:

Hon. Katrine Conroy
Minister of Finance

Hon. Murray Rankin, K.C.
Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

Hon. Harry Bains
Minister of Labour

Kevin Falcon
MLA for Vancouver-Quilchena and Leader of the Official Opposition