Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

We are writing to ask for your organization’s support for W̱SÁNEĆ community members and allies who are standing against a proposed “highway improvement project” through SELE₭TEȽ (Goldstream Park) along the Malahat Highway. Given the strong likelihood that bulldozing will begin soon, our request is that you write a letter from your organization to the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure after considering the information below.

The project proposed by the Ministry of Transportation and Transit was put forth and approved without meaningful consultation and consent of local Indigenous nations. Any consultations that have occurred have happened after the proposal was designed and/or funded.Consultations after a proposal has been approved suggests these are information sessions rather than requests for the communities to provide and address their concerns.

SELE₭TEȽ is a site of cultural heritage and socio-ecological significance in unceded W̱SÁNEĆ territory. The stream is home to populations of chum, coho, and chinook salmon, and supports the lives of a multitude of other aquatic and terrestrial life. W̱SÁNEĆ law indicates a responsibility to ensure the vitality of the territories and their resources for generations to come. To this day, W̱SÁNEĆ harvesters continue to assert their rights to fish and gather foods within SELE₭TEȽ. As well hundreds, indeed thousands of people, visit the park every year to watch the salmon returning up the Goldstream River.

The “Highway 1- Malahat Safety Improvements” project poses a major threat to the safety of the salmon and the overall well-being of the stream and the park. This project involves widening a stretch of the highway, installing a median barrier and pedestrian crossing, constructing retaining walls, and installing a drainage system with a concrete oil spill/water tank under the current parking lot. The project proposes to remove approximately 715 trees from along the uphill mountain side of the highway and along the stream. Healthy trees are vital to stabilize slopes and riverbanks, prevent erosion, and provide shade to keep streams cool for spawning fish. Some of the infrastructure required for this project will intrude into the stream physically.

Despite concerns and ongoing protests by W̱SÁNEĆ community members and allies, the Project is now moving forward on the [provincial government’s newly released budget for 2025-2027](https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2025/sp/pdf/ministry/trans.pdf) , to the tune of 162 million dollars, and a contractor has now been hired.

The provincial government released the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan 2022-2027. The action plan makes an explicit commitment to advance Indigenous Rights in the province by “enabling agreements with Indigenous governing bodies, including joint or consent-based decision-making agreements that reflect free, prior and informed consent”. By planning and approving this project without the consent of W̱SÁNEĆ Nations, the province directly breaks their promises outlined by the action plan and undermines their commitments to Indigenous leadership and governance.

Based on the original Douglas Treaties signed in 1852, the 1987 BC Court ruling on Claxton v. Saanichton Bay Marina reiterated that W̱SÁNEĆ communities have the right to resist any development that could pose a risk to their ability to access important food and cultural resources. Further, in 2025, the provincial and federal governments released a joint statement with two W̱SÁNEĆ Nations (Tsartlip and Tseycum), officially recognizing the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation as a beneficiary of the North Saanich and South Saanich treaties, which were a part of the Vancouver Island/Douglas treaties of 1852.

We ask you to do your part in protecting SELE₭TEȽ and holding the provincial government accountable to their commitments to protecting the environment, advancing reconciliation and upholding the rights of Indigenous Peoples. This is why we ask for your organization to use your collective power and send a letter, requesting that accountability and respect for both Indigenous leadership and environmental justice be a priority in protecting SELE₭TEȽ. Send your letter to David Eby, Mike Farnworth, Minster of Transport and the following B.C. ministers below.

Please consider bcc’ing us as well at **ReconcilAction.jbuc@gmail***.***com** so we can contact you with further developments of the Malahat highway expansion project or if we need support to witness or stand with W̱SÁNEĆ defenders.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Your Name for

Reconciling with Indigenous Peoples and the Land https://www.jamesbayunited.com/pages/our-purpose

Please send your letter to:

Honourable David Eby, Premier
Premier@gov.bc.ca

Honourable Mike Farnworth
Minister of Transportation and Transit
Minister.MOTI@gov.bc.ca

Honourable Bowinn Mah
Minister of Infrastructure

Honourable Christine Boyle
Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
IRR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Honourable Tamara Davidson
Minister of Environment and Parks
ENV.Minister@gov.bc.ca

**Additional Resources:**

Article on the recognition of W̱SÁNEĆ Nation as a beneficiary of the Vancouver Island/DouglasTreaties: [https://www.capitaldaily.ca/news/bc-canada-wsanec-nation-commit-new-shared-understanding-t reaties](https://www.capitaldaily.ca/news/bc-canada-wsanec-nation-commit-new-shared-understanding-treaties)

Resources and articles on the Vancouver Island/Douglas Treaties shared by the W̱ SÁNEĆ Leadership Council, including perspectives by W̱ SÁNEĆ community members: <https://wsanec.com/avada_portfolio/douglas-treaty/>

Article on ongoing opposition: Standing with the Salmon and W̱ SÁNEĆ people, https://watershedsentinel.ca/article/goldstream-solidarity/

 Email addresses for writing your own letter: