



## **Council of the Haida Nation**

### **Submission of Information for Public Interest for Tenure Transfer**

#### **1. Overview of Council of the Haida Nation**

##### **a. CHN Overview:**

The Council of the Haida Nation (CHN) was formed in 1974 to organize and represent Haida Citizens in one political entity and to settle Haida Title on Haida Gwaii. The CHN is comprised of political representatives that are elected by Haida Citizens, in addition to staff, consultants and advisors. The work of the CHN is guided by resolutions passed by Haida Citizens at the House of Assembly, the legislative body of the Haida National government, as well as the Constitution of the Haida Nation. This work is further guided by the Hereditary Chiefs Council who provide input, advice, and are integral to decision-making on important matters to protect the Haida Nation's culture.

##### **b. CHN Vision**

The CHN's mandate is to steward the lands and waters of the Haida Territories on behalf of the Haida Nation, and to perpetuate Haida culture, language, and way of living for future generations.

##### **c. Employees**

The CHN is the largest employer on Haida Gwaii. CHN is comprised of seven directorates, all of which employ staff, contractors, consultants and advisors based on operational needs. CHN's directorates and programs include Marine Stewardship, Lands Stewardship, Governance, Finance, Negotiations, Communications, Policy, Protected Areas, Heritage and Natural Resources, Cultural Wood, Archeology, Property and Assets, Haida Gwaii Watchmen, Citizenship, Marine Planning and Fisheries.

#### **2. Forest Management on Haida Gwaii**

##### **a. How forests on Haida Gwaii Will be Managed to Support Climate Resiliency, Stewardship and Sustainability**

Forests on Haida Gwaii will be managed by CHN to ensure they flourish, thrive and support island communities now and for future generations. Bringing these areas under Haida jurisdiction is an important step on the path to Haida Title and aligns with provisions BC and CHN agreed to in Appendix A of the Gaayhllxid • Gíhlagalgang "Rising Tide" Haida Title Lands Agreement. Management of these licenses will be guided by principles and legal objectives established in the Haida Gwaii Land Use Objectives Order (HGLOO) and House

of Assembly Resolutions, whereby forests are managed for cultural, aquatic, biodiversity and wildlife values. These objectives protect Haida cultural values, support ecosystem integrity and provide environmental benefits by maintaining the diversity and abundance of organisms on Haida Gwaii. Human well-being will be maintained through policies and initiatives designed to achieve socio-economic benefits, including carbon values and timber harvest levels that will support a viable, sustainable, local forest economy that brings benefits to local communities and businesses.

CHN is working with Haida leadership and citizens, island residents, potential business partners and investors to envision a new forest economy that reflects the principles and values of the Haida Nation, through the recently established Joint Economic Working Group (JEWG). The JEWG will develop near-term recommendations on employment and investment opportunities, including the viability of wood processing, expanded wood product utilization, and natural capital revenue streams such as carbon and restoration. Based on recommendations from the JEWG, CHN will develop an integrated multi-value economic model to support sustainable forest management, conservation, and long-term socio-economic resilience on Haida Gwaii.

CHN will make decisions on harvesting and utilization of wood based on input and feedback provided through the Natural Resources Working Group's (NRWG) visioning forums, and as guided House of Assembly Resolutions and by principles laid out in the Constitution of the Haida Nation. CHN is supportive of local value-added business concepts, with a commitment to transitioning to a stronger local economy. Where harvesting occurs, opportunities will be provided for local mills and manufacturing on island will be a key priority.

A portion of wood volume may be incorporated into the Great Bear Carbon Project, an Improved Forest Management project. This project is unique in that it is the only Improved Forest Management Project of its scale that has equal involvement of First Nations and the BC Government, strong legal and policy foundations, and uses robust data to support the quantification of ecosystem services. CHN is exploring transitioning some volume into a new Protected Area, based on strong direction from Haida Citizens to protect the area of St'alaá Kún *Collison Point*.

#### **b. Vision for Forest Management on Haida Gwaii**

The Council of the Haida Nation is working to develop one forest management unit to steward Haida Gwaii's forests through a mutual relationship that is grounded in respect, responsibility, and reciprocity. Forest management decisions will prioritize balance, protect the integrity of natural ecosystems and culture while supporting innovation in the local economy. Management will be guided not only by economic considerations, but by respect for Haida laws, intergenerational responsibility, and from the inherent understanding that maintaining resilient ecosystems is integral to maintaining healthy, resilient communities. Forest management decisions will be guided by the Haida Nation's responsibility to future generations and to the forests, rivers, and ecosystems that sustain all beings on Haida Gwaii. The following guiding principles are central to the future of forest management on Haida Gwaii:

- **Yahguudang • Yahgudáng** *Respect*
- **Gina 'waadluxan gud ad kwaagid • Ginn 'wáadluwaan gud .ahl kwáagiidang**  
(Interconnectedness)

- **Accountability & Transparency**
- **Value over Volume**
- **Local, Meaningful Livelihoods for Future Generations**

### **3. CHN's Forest Management Engagement on Haida Gwaii**

#### **a. Engagement With the Haida Nation and Island Residents**

CHN engages Haida Citizens on work activities, including the acquisition of forest tenures, through quarterly reporting out sessions and through the House of Assembly. The President of the Haida Nation, Gaagwiis *Jason A/sop*, has led numerous webinars, written executive reports and published articles in Haida Laas, the Nation's seasonal magazine, to provide information and updates related to Haida Title Implementation on Haida Gwaii. CHN's Natural Resources Working Group (NRWG) has been leading forest visioning engagement sessions for Haida Citizens and island residents since 2024. NRWG engagement forum topics for Haida Citizens so far have included: land natural resources, forestry, streams and ecosystem services, forestry roads, carbon, hunting, wildlife and invasive species, non-timber forest products, cedar, cultural heritage and protected areas. NRWG has offered public engagement forums for all island residents on roads and ecosystem services to date and are currently planning 3 more engagement forums on the same topics that were already discussed with Haida Citizens over the next year. NRWG will continue to gather and synthesize feedback and input from community members on their vision for the future of forest management on Haida Gwaii under Haida jurisdiction.

CHN engages local municipalities and the regional district on various topics, including forest management, monthly through the All-Islands Protocol Table, which was formed after agreements were ratified between the Haida Nation and each of the municipalities and regional districts from 2004-2008. The Agreements signed by CHN, municipalities and the regional district speak to reconciling Haida Title and a shared commitment to developing an All-Island governance model, while affirming the hereditary responsibilities of Haida Citizens and the need for place-based, and collaborative partnership for all who call these Islands home.

#### **b. Haida Title Implementation**

Acquiring these forest licenses will support commitments made by BC and CHN in the GayGahlda • Kwah.hlahl.dáyaa *Changing Tide* Framework for Reconciliation and the Gaayhllxid • Giihlagalgang "Rising Tide" Haida Title Lands Agreement. Bringing these forest tenures under Haida jurisdiction aligns with the provisions of Appendix A of Rising Tide, where the parties agreed that the initial focus in the Transition Process would be on land and resource decision-making on Haida Gwaii whereby the parties would begin by addressing forestry. Land and resource management decisions on Haida Gwaii during the Transition Process are to be made consistent with Haida Aboriginal Title.

#### **4. Benefits of The Forest License Transfer to Haida Gwaii's Communities**

##### **a. Employment Opportunities - Created and Maintained**

Transfer of these tenures to CHN will create long term economic opportunities for Haida Citizens and local island residents, by supporting local value-added business projects and through carbon offset revenue, which creates sustainable employment in stewardship and community development.

CHN's management will provide an opportunity to explore how Haida Gwaii's forests can benefit the Haida Nation and all residents of Haida Gwaii, beyond the current harvest-and export-model. Achieving this objective requires moving towards opportunities grounded in restoration, climate resilience, value-added wood manufacturing and local employment opportunities. The CHN envisions a local economy that is rooted in Haida values and principles, shifting from an extractive model to one that restores, sustains, and nurtures the land, waters and people of Haida Gwaii.