

Environmental Emergency Program

RECONCILIATION *with* Indigenous Nations STRATEGY

1. Introduction	2
2. Scope	2
3. Key Actions	3
3.1 <i>Learning for Reconciliation Plan</i>	3
3.2 <i>Develop guidance for EEP and enhance collaboration to support Indigenous Nations in spill response</i>	3
3.3 <i>Review and update EEP legislation and regulations</i>	4



1. INTRODUCTION

The Environmental Emergency Program (EEP) has identified reconciliation and building relationships with Indigenous Nations to be a critical strategic priority. The BC *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act) came into force in November 2019, providing requirements for reconciliation, recognizing the constitutional and human rights of Indigenous Peoples and putting into action the *United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP). The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (ENV) Executive has identified three areas to focus efforts:¹ (1) Staff Training and Cultural Safety, (2) Policy and Legislative Review, and (3) Partnerships and Engagement.

EEP's purpose is to plan for, coordinate, implement and manage a program to protect the welfare of the public and environment in the event of an environmental emergency or disaster. Environmental emergency response is supported through collaboration and integration of Indigenous knowledge and skills in mitigation, response, and recovery. Over the next three years, EEP will focus on developing staff knowledge to support cultural safety; ensuring legislation and regulations adhere to the Declaration Act and UNDRIP; and building partnerships with Indigenous communities through integrated planning, response, and recovery.

This strategy follows the guidance of UNDRIP, the Declaration Act, and the areas of focus provided by ENV Executive, the EEP Reconciliation with Indigenous Nations policy, and identifies the vision to move forward with recognition and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.



2. SCOPE

This strategy includes the following actions to commence in 2021/22. These actions will be reviewed annually to ensure this is a living document.

1. Develop and implement a Learning for Reconciliation Plan to foster reconciliation and cultural safety for all EEP staff.
2. Develop and roll-out guidance documents to support Indigenous Nations in spill response and to enhance collaboration during incidents. Topics to be addressed include improving spill notifications to Indigenous Nations, identifying financial support available to Indigenous Nations for their involvement in response and recovery and engaging Indigenous Nations in incident command, planning, response, and recovery.
3. Review existing and new EEP legislation as it applies to the Declaration Act and identify areas for updating to reflect reconciliation principles.

¹ Cultural safety is an outcome, based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances. It results in an environment free of racism and discrimination where people feel safe when engaged in environmental emergency response.



3. KEY ACTIONS

3.1 Learning for Reconciliation Plan:

EEP will develop and implement a Learning for Reconciliation Plan to train EEP staff in promoting a culturally safe and reconciliatory approach to spill response in BC. EEP supports the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Call to Action #57:

“We call upon federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal Peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal Rights, Indigenous law and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.”

The intended outcome of learning for reconciliation plan is to influence the day-to-day activities of all EEP staff and help prepare individuals to engage with Indigenous communities constructively and respectfully.

Managers, supervisors, and staff all play a key role in the implementation of this learning plan, through participation and mentorship. Through the continued alignment of EEP culture towards reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, EEP supports staff in recognizing Indigenous communities as partners in reconciliation and emergency management.

3.2 Develop guidance for EEP and enhance collaboration to support Indigenous Nations in spill response:

To support Indigenous Nations in spill response and enhance collaboration during incidents, EEP operational guidelines must be clear and applied consistently. The following operational guidance will be developed in collaboration with Indigenous Nations and EEP response partners:

- a) Develop a notification process that adheres to the Declaration Act and integrates and supports Indigenous Nations to respond to environmental emergencies.
- b) Develop guidance to assist with inclusion of Indigenous Nations in the Incident Command System (ICS) structure during an environmental emergency, particularly within Unified Command, the Environmental Unit, and any other positions of specific interest to a Nation.
- c) Identify regional outreach goals, build internal Engagement Specialist capacity and capabilities, and develop supporting materials taking into consideration the capacity of Indigenous communities and regional differences.
- d) Explore funding opportunities available through provincial agencies to support Indigenous Nations in spill response.
- e) Develop guidance outlining best practices for recovery-related engagement best practices to integrate Indigenous Peoples cultural knowledge into recovery efforts and plans.



3.3 Review and update ENV legislation and regulations

This key action will be carried out as it applies to the Declaration Act:

- a) As appropriate, update legislation and regulations to ensure EEP staff actions reduce barriers to reconciliation and collaboration.
- b) Ensure the development of legislation adheres to the Declaration Act and includes consultation with Indigenous Peoples.
- c) Review Division 2.1 Spill preparedness, Response and Recovery of EMA to ensure UNDRIP principles are addressed.

SUCCESS FACTORS for RECONCILIATION WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

- Adherence to the Declaration Act
- Application of provincial best practices for engagement
- Executive support for the allocation of resources to commence operational initiatives.

Cover image: istockphoto.com



Susan Colby, Shutterstock.com



Img Image.com