

# OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

UNION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA INDIAN CHIEFS

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## News Release

October 28, 2021

### UBCIC Calls for Phasing Out of Fur Farming in B.C. Amid Continued Public Health and Animal Welfare Concerns

(X̱w̱məθḵw̱əy̱əm (Musqueam), S̱ḵw̱x̱w̱ú7mesh (Squamish) and sə̱lilw̱ətał (Tsleil Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C. – October 28, 2021) In solidarity with the many organizations and members of the public who oppose the unsustainable and inhumane mass breeding and farming of wildlife species for fur, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs continues to call upon the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries to advance the full phasing out of the fur farming industry in B.C., giving full consideration to the many pressing COVID-19 related health risks and ethical concerns.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, UBCIC President, stated “The time is now for B.C. to act and end an outdated, contentious industry. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, UBCIC, the BC SPCA, the Fur-Bearers, infectious disease doctors, and the public have consistently [communicated](#) their many concerns around mink fur farms to the provincial government and called upon them to make the necessary regulatory and legislative changes to phase out an industry that the vast majority of Canadians considers inhumane and unnecessary.” Grand Chief Phillip continued “At our 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Assembly, UBCIC passed [Resolution 2021-62](#) to outline UBCIC’s ethical and cruelty-free stance against fur farms and uphold the inherent and traditional rights of First Nations to respectfully and ethically harvest fur and food from abundant wildlife populations. With COVID-19 leading countries like the Netherlands and France to accelerate their phasing out of mink farms, and with fur farms having been long implicated in cruel and inhumane practices, by Resolution 2021-62 the UBCIC Chiefs-in-Assembly joined BC SPCA, likeminded organizations, and concerned members of the public in advocating for the full phasing out of fur farming in B.C.”

“On July 26, 2021, the Province issued a moratorium on new mink farms and capped existing farms at their current numbers after a fourth outbreak where mink tested positive for the virus that causes COVID-19. This moratorium is set to end on January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022, shortly before mink breeding season, and we urge the government to extend it and begin the necessary processes, consultations, and steps to transition away from fur farming before breeding begins and the

number of mink on farms increases fivefold,” continued Chief Don Tom, UBCIC Vice-President. “On September 22, 2021, UBCIC joined the BC SPCA to discuss with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Fisheries the future of mink fur farms in B.C. and the next steps forward, including considering a possible transition program for farmers and workers. No new applications for fox farms should be considered and the Province should initiate plans to phase out the remaining nine mink farms and one chinchilla farm in the province and to provide comprehensive supports to farmers and communities in this transition.”

“How can we justify industrial fur farming, including the mass breeding and slaughtering of minks, foxes, and chinchillas for international luxury markets, when it is not ethical or meaningfully contributing to the Province’s key priority of food security?” concluded Kukpi7 Judy Wilson, UBCIC Secretary-Treasurer. “Recognizing that the fur trade has long been an important part of First Nations’ cultural identity, UBCIC continues to support the ethical harvesting of fur for cultural and ceremonial purposes by Indigenous peoples. As stewards and caretakers of our lands and waters, we want to work together to help ensure B.C. can live up to its obligations under its *Together for Wildlife* strategy and address the risks and concerns that stem from fur farming, a practice Canada has long outgrown. We urge the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Fisheries to advance the full phasing out of the fur farming industry in B.C., ensuring that any new legislation, regulations, or policies around fur farms fully align with the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, and that a transition program for fur farmers and workers is developed and implemented.”

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*UBCIC is an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.*

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