

Unofficial English Translation of the T'it'q'et Constitution

SXEKS TA NT'ÁKMENSA I P'EGPÍG7LH.HA

Traditional Laws of the P'egp'íg7lha)

CONSTITUTION

JANUARY 2007

MAP OF THE ST'ÁT'IMC TERRITORY

(not included in text only version)

Skw7ikwlacwkálha

Nilh ts7a skw7ikwlacws i P'egp'íg'lh7a ucwalmicw. Ts7as lhélta scwákwekw kalha i sqwal'útkalha. S7ats'xstsútkalhelh muta7 s7ats'xstwál'. Cuz' hal'acítem ku tí7texw nt'ákmen I stsmal'tkálha. Xekantsútkalhkelh. Cuz' nkialstúm' ta tsuwa7lhkalha nt'ákmen ts'íla nelh skelkl7lhkálha múta7 kelh i ts7ása Úcwalmicw.

Our Dream

This is the dream of the P'egp'íg'lh7a clan. Our words come from our hearts. We will look after ourselves and each other. We will make our own laws. We will follow our own way of life as did our ancestors and as will our future generations.

PREAMBLE

We, the P'egp'íg7lha of the St'át'imc Nation, have, together with other St'át'imc, used and occupied our homeland since time immemorial. The Creator placed us on our lands as a blessing and a responsibility, in order that we take care of this place and thrive as a people. We have never left this place or ceded the land to others. Having received this land from our ancestors, we are charged with the inherent responsibility and right to use and care for the land on behalf of the next seven generations. We have a sacred relationship with the land based on stewardship rather than ownership. We care for and hold our lands in a sacred trust for our future generations.

We will, to the best of our ability, adhere to and obey the seven sacred laws provided to us by the Creator:

1. Health
2. Happiness
3. Generations
4. Generosity
5. Pity/Compassion
6. Power
7. Quietness

These sacred laws are the fundamental basis for all other laws, policies, and actions. They are our guide to maintaining balance on our land, and in our nation and community, allowing us to live in harmony with all other nations and creation as relatives. We respect the Declaration of the Lillooet Tribe signed May 10, 1911 as our first written law since colonization of the St'át'imc. It guides us in our work to have St'át'imc Title and Rights fully recognized; as we assert ourselves as a Sovereign St'át'imc Nation. We will not rest until St'át'imc Title and Rights are recognized and truly respected. In this way healing will begin and reconciliation of past wrongs can occur, thereby allowing a future where all can thrive.

Therefore, we hereby enact the Sxeks Ta Nt'ákmensa i P'egpíg7lh.ha (the Traditional Laws of the P'egp'íg7lha). Tákem nsnek'wnúk'wa7

ARTICLE I: LANDS

We, the P'egp'íg7lha of the St'át'imc Nation, have occupied and used our lands since time immemorial. We are one with the land. The land provides our shelter, clothing, food, medicine, language and way of life. To destroy the land would be to destroy our selves. We have a responsibility to protect, use and maintain our lands in a good way. We therefore choose to live in harmony with the land, as we do with all creation. We will take care of our lands for all future generations, and we expect the same of all other people in the world.

Our sacred relationship with the land gives us the inherent right to live and thrive as a distinct people. We have named the places we occupy within the St'át'imc territory in our own language.

We will continue to defend our land and ourselves from those wishing to take it or use it without our consent. We are willing to share our land with others who live by and respect our way of life and Constitution.

Whenever we refer to our land, we are referring to our homeland, a place that includes the earth, water, fire, air and all living things.

## ARTICLE II: PEOPLE

We, the P'egp'íg7lha of the St'át'imc Nation, are historically comprised of fourteen families who are descendants of the following:

- |     |             |                           |
|-----|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1.  | Ts'elpíken  | Henry Andrew              |
| 2.  | Nqtsapáulus | David Billy               |
| 3.  | Sipá7a      | Francis Bob's grandmother |
| 4.  | Méses       | Susan Bones               |
| 5.  |             | John Brigman              |
| 6.  | Lemxátsa7   | Mathias Charlie           |
| 7.  | Pápcen      | Michael Doctor            |
| 8.  | Híksen      | Paul Hixon                |
| 9.  | Tsupínek    | Susan Napoleon            |
| 10. |             | Ann Ottis                 |
| 11. | Ngításq'et  | James Retasket            |
| 12. | Múti        | Timothy Sampson           |
| 13. | Amíli       | Amelia Saul               |
| 14. | Txwín'ek    | Nancy Scotchman           |

We recognize that these families have responsibilities and rights under this constitution. All families are represented on the P'egp'íg7lha Traditional Council.

## ARTICLE III: LANGUAGE, TRADITIONS AND WAY OF LIFE

We, the P'egp'íg7lha of the St'át'imc Nation, share a common language, traditions and way of life with the other St'át'imc, particularly with the northern communities of our Nation. We are related by language, culture, marriage, geography, economy and politics, to our Úcwalmicw neighbours, the Scwápmeç (Shuswap) and the Nlhakápmeç (Thompson).

Our respected Elders are the keepers of our language and culture and are the teachers of our Nation. From the beginning our language, knowledge, customs, values, beliefs, way of life and spiritual practices (nt'ákmen) have been passed down through the generations in our teachings, songs, stories and legends. They come from the Creator, the land, and the way of life of our ancestors.

All things are our friends and relatives (snek'wnúk'wa7). We practice our values and beliefs by living in harmony with all things that share our territory with us as we make our living and thrive from the gifts provided by our Creator - Nk'úl'ten lhkálha. We understand the inter-connectedness of all things; no being or thing is more important than any other. Everything has a purpose, and is a part of the whole.

Our sacred Mother Earth provides life's necessities. We respect and show our gratitude to our Mother Earth, our mothers and our grandmothers who give us life.

We give thanks and pray for help and guidance in our Sweat Lodges (q'élza7), as we walk in our mountains, and as we live, work, eat and sleep in our homes. We are thankful for all that give their lives so that the people may live. We are the caretakers of the future. We plan for the survival of future generations by taking care of our children, our Mother Earth, our sustenance, our environment, and our natural resources. This is an important law of our people.

We are self-reliant, generous, respectful, hard-working, and we help one another (nuk'wantwál'lhkahl). As a symbol of our gratitude, we honour those who have helped us by giving a feast and sharing gifts in ceremony. We live by the following seven sacred laws of life:

1. Health: maintain balance in life through spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical health.
2. Happiness: for ourselves and all our relatives;
3. Generations: Responsibility and respect for the Seven Generations before and the Seven Generations after.
4. Generosity: Not to give away everything, but to be generous with knowledge and help one another in a balanced way.
5. Pity/Compassion: Not simply to pity others, or ourselves, but to have compassion for others and ourselves.
6. Power: The appropriate use of power is to extend honour and respect and to be responsible and accountable.
7. Quietness: Listen for real messages from others, the Creator and Spirit Guides.

#### ARTICLE IV: RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS

We, the P'egp'íg7lha of the St'át'imc Nation, have responsibilities and inherent rights that:

- have been handed down to us by our forefathers, and have never been surrendered.
- come from the Creator and the land we have used and occupied since time immemorial.
- are not frozen in time but evolve, as defined by the P'egp'íg7lha and the St'át'imc Nation.
- cannot be restricted or extinguished by any other government or nation.

We recognize St'át'imc Nation collective rights, the rights of each St'át'imc community, and individual rights. Collective and community rights have priority over individual rights.

#### ARTICLE V: OUR WAY OF GOVERNING OURSELVES

We, the P'egp'íg7lha of the St'át'imc Nation, hereby adopt a Constitutional form of government more closely related to our traditional ways.

The Creator has entrusted the St'át'imc with the responsibility to maintain, protect and govern St'át'imc traditional lands, resources, language, culture and traditions for present and future generations.

We are responsible for our lands, resources, citizenship, health, education, individual and community well being. This includes the enactment and enforcement of laws and policies.

We recognize five spheres of government.

1. P'egp'íg7lha
2. Elders Council
3. Traditional Families
4. P'egp'íg7lha Traditional Council
5. T'ít'q'et Council

The powers of the five spheres of government will be recognized and enacted into law by the P'egp'íg7lha.

#### ARTICLE VI: ST'ÁT'IMC RELATIONS

We, the P'egp'íg7lha of the St'át'imc Nation, recognize that together the St'át'imc Communities are a NATION, sharing a common spirituality, language, culture, lands, history and traditions.

We acknowledge and will participate in the St'át'imc Chief's Council and the St'át'imc Elders' Council and other St'át'imc governance systems that may develop for the mutual benefit of and with the agreement of the P'egp'íg7lha.

The Declaration of the Lillooet Tribe of May 10, 1911 speaks for our tribe as a whole. We stand together with our relatives to use, defend and protect our St'át'imc Title and Rights. This includes our commitment to the development of a St'át'imc Nation Constitution and a St'át'imc national governance structure.

We recognize that we may speak and act only for P'egp'íg7lha and not for the St'át'imc Nation.

## ARTICLE VII: OUR OTHER RELATIONS

We, the P'egp'íg7lha of the St'át'imc Nation, recognize that the Creator has placed many Nations on Mother Earth and while we recognize these Other Nations as our Relations, our very existence depends on defending our St'át'imc Way of Life from destructive influences.

No other People, Nation, Government or organized religion may make decisions or take actions with respect to P'egp'íg7lha language, traditions, way of life, spiritual practices or lands without our consent.

We maintain the right to establish agreements and relationships with other governments or organizations.

We maintain the right to establish special relationships with other Indigenous Peoples and Nations.

## ARTICLE VIII: ECONOMY

We, the P'egp'íg7lha of the St'át'imc Nation, have the inherent right to protect, use, manage and benefit from our traditional territory and all its resources for ourselves and future generations.

We maintain the right to establish trade relations with other regional, national and international organizations, governments or other economic institutions.

## ARTICLE IX: JUSTICE

We, the P'egp'íg7lha of the St'át'imc Nation, have the right to security and our own justice system.

We are committed to a process of healing, peacekeeping and the restoration of harmony and balance within our communities through lawmaking, traditions, ceremony and spiritual practices.

No other government has the right to impose their laws or government systems upon us.

P'egp'íg7lha law supersedes all other laws with respect to governing our people within our traditional territory.

## ARTICLE X: SPIRITUAL PRACTICES AND BELIEFS

We, the P'egp'íg7lha of the St'át'imc Nation, have the right to our own spiritual practices and beliefs.

## ARTICLE XI RATIFICATION AND AMENDING FORMULA

1. The P'egp'íg7lha Constitution will become law by means of the following process: it will be tabled at four separate general assemblies of the P'egp'íg7lha; the constitution will be adopted by the P'egp'íg7lha at the fourth general assembly, with a minimum of 80% of the members present at the meeting, agreeing to the adoption of constitution; a signing ceremony will be held, at which time the P'egp'íg7lha will celebrate the formalization of the P'egp'íg7lha Traditional Governing system.
2. The P'egp'íg7lha may amend the constitution from time to time at a special general assembly called for that purpose with a minimum of 80% of the members present at the meeting agreeing to the proposed amendment to the constitution.

## SXEKS TA NT'ÁKMENSA I P'EGPÍG7LH.HA

We, the P'egp'íg7lha of the St'át'imc Nation, hereby sign this constitution into law.

- A. Elders Council
- B. P'egp'íg7lha Traditional Council
- C. T'it'q'et Council.
- D. The family of Ts'elpíken (Henry Andrew)
- E. The family of Nqtsapálus (David Billy)
- F. The family of Sipá7a (Sipá7a is the grandmother of Francis Bob)
- G. The family of Méses (Susan Bones)
- H. The family of John Brigman
- I. The family of Lemxátsa7 (Mathias Charlie)
- J. The family of Pápčen (Michael Doctor)
- K. The family of Híksen (Paul Hixon)
- L. The family of Tsupínek (Susan Napoleon)
- M. The family of Ann Ottis
- N. The family of Ngításq'et (James Retasket)

- O. The family of Múti (Timothy Sampson)
- P. The family of Amíli (Amelia Saul)
- Q. The family of Txwín'ek (Nancy Scotchman)

## **ADDENDA**

### **Powers of Government**

The P'egp'íg7lha elect the T'ít'q'et Council. The P'egp'íg7lha will meet to discuss and make decisions on matters of importance to the community and nation as a whole no less than two times each year.

Traditional Families each appoint their Traditional Council representative and will meet together as a family to discuss matters important to the health and well being of the family, community and nation as a whole. The families will advise their representatives on the issues of importance to them to ensure that their voice is heard at the Traditional Council table.

The Elders Council provides guidance to the P'egp'íg7lha and advises the political leadership on major decisions relating to or affecting the health and well being of the people and the community as a whole. The Elders are the keepers of the St'át'imc language, culture, history and traditional ways and have the responsibility of passing on their cultural knowledge to present and future generations. The Elders Council is responsible for ensuring justice and fairness in all community dealings, this includes facilitating, mediating and arbitrating disputes that arise amongst individuals and families. The Elders Council will hold Veto powers over any decision of the other Councils.

The P'egp'íg7lha Traditional Council works for the common welfare of the community as a whole, with each representative ensuring that their family's voice is heard at the decision-making table. The Traditional Council makes decisions and negotiates with external governments on matters relating to the Traditional Territory and the St'át'imc Nation.

The T'ít'q'et Council is the elected council of the P'egp'íg7lha government. The Council is responsible for overseeing the programs and services provided to the P'egp'íg7lha by the Federal Crown or other governments. The Council negotiates with various external governments to ensure the adequacy of programs and services. The Council will manage the programs and services in a fiscally responsible way and be accountable to the P'egp'íg7lha for all funding provided to the community. The Chief will hold the title of Community Chief.

### **Bureaucracy**

**Administration and Programs.** Under the direction of the T'ít'q'et Council, administrative and program staff will provide programs and services to people who reside within T'ít'q'et communities in a fair, consistent and efficient manner in accordance with community policies, values, and available resources.

**Committees.** The Chief and Council may establish advisory committees to assist in the delivery of programs and services to members. The advisory committees will develop program policies and procedures for approval by the P'egp'íg7lha.

## **GLOSSARY**

- P'egp'íg7lha – 1) One of the eleven clans in the St'át'imc Nation. 2) The people of the P'egp'íg7lha Clan. 3) Also known as T'ít'q'etmec (emc). 4) Formerly known as the Lillooet Indian Band.
- St'át'imc – 1) The St'át'imc people or nation. 2) Formerly known as the Lillooet Tribe.
- T'ít'q'et – used at present as the name for the P'egp'íg7lha Clan; formerly known as the Lillooet Indian Band; in fact T'ít'q'et is the name of the place where reserve number 1 is located. Other reserves where people of the P'egp'íg7lha Clan now reside include Qwíxwcn (IR No. 4), Skwel'sút (IR No. 3), Txwín'ek (IR No. 2) also known as Q'áq'peqw, Sk'emqín (IR No. 5), and Áku7 Cá7a (also known as Scotchman Flat).
- Tákem nsnek'wnúk'wa7 – all my relations.
- Sxeks Ta Nt'ákmensa I P'egp'íg7lha - the Traditional Laws of the P'egp'íg7lha.
- Úcwalmicw – people of the land.
- Sphere is a field of action or influence.