UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

October 26, 2026

The Honourable Julie Dabrusin
Minister of Environment and Climate Change
Via e-mail only: minister-minister@ec.gc.ca

Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship
Via e-mail only: WLRS.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Minister of Forests
Via e-mail only: FOR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

RE: UBCIC Resolution 2026-50 "Emergency Protection and Recovery of Southern Mountain Caribou and Critical Habitat"

Dear Ministers:

We are writing with respect to Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) Resolution 2026-50 "Emergency Protection and Recovery of Southern Mountain Caribou and Critical Habitat" which was presented, affirmed, and endorsed unanimously at the UBCIC Annual General Assembly on September 24, 2026 (enclosed).

By Resolution 2026-50, the UBCIC Chiefs-in-Assembly fully support Xatśūll First Nation and the Syilx Okanagan Nation in their call for urgent federal action to protect southern mountain caribou and their critical habitat, including the use of an emergency protection order under the Species at Risk Act (SARA) where required to prevent further destruction of habitat and support the recovery of southern mountain caribou.

The UBCIC Chiefs-in-Assembly call on B.C. to immediately cease authorizing forestry, road building, and other industrial activities within critical and high-value southern mountain caribou habitats where those activities would further undermine caribou recovery, unless and until decisions are made in full recognition of First Nations title and rights and jurisdiction and consistent with the requirement to obtain the free, prior and informed consent of the affected First Nations.

The UBCIC Chiefs-in-Assembly further call on Canada and B.C. to work directly with affected First Nations as full and equal partners to co-develop and adequately fund Nation-led caribou recovery, habitat protection, restoration, monitoring, and cumulative-effects initiatives that respect and uphold First Nations laws, knowledge, jurisdiction, title and rights.

Finally, the UBCIC Chiefs-in-Assembly call on B.C. to support and meaningfully advance First Nations-led stewardship and forest governance mechanisms, including working directly with Xatśūll First Nation regarding its proposed First Nations Woodland Licence and other Nation-determined approaches to the management and protection of lands, forests, wildlife, and caribou habitat within First Nations territories.

Kamloops Office
209 - 345 Chief Alex Thomas Way
Kamloops, BC, V2H-1H1
Phone: 250-828-9746
Fax: 250-828-0319

Vancouver Office
Suite 401 - 312 Main Street
Vancouver, BC, V6A-2T2
Phone: 604-684-0231 or toll free: 800-793-9701
Fax: 604-684-5726

www.ubcic.bc.ca

We look forward to your response and please keep us informed as the work progresses.

On behalf of the UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip	Chief Councillor Linda Innes	Chief Marilyn Slett
President	Vice-President	Secretary-Treasurer

CC: UBCIC Chiefs Council
Xatśūll First Nation
Syilx Okanagan Nation

Encl: UBCIC Resolution 2026-50

Kamloops Office
209 - 345 Chief Alex Thomas Way
Kamloops, BC, V2H-1H1
Phone: 250-828-9746
Fax: 250-828-0319

Vancouver Office
Suite 401 - 312 Main Street
Vancouver, BC, V6A-2T2
Phone: 604-684-0231 or toll free: 800-793-9701
Fax: 604-684-5726

www.ubcic.bc.ca

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

UNION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA INDIAN CHIEFS

FOUNDING HEAD OFFICE
209 – 345 Chief Alex Thomas Way
Kamloops, B.C. V2H 1H1
Tel: 250-828-9746
Fax: 250-828-0319

VANCOUVER OFFICE
Suite 401, 312 Main Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6A 2T2
Tel: 604-684-0231
Fax: 604-684-5726
1-800-793-9701
Email: ubcic@ubcic.bc.ca
Web: www.ubcic.bc.ca

UNION OF B.C. INDIAN CHIEFS
58TH ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SEPTEMBER 23RD TO 25TH, 2026
SHXWHÁ:Y VILLAGE COMMUNITY CULTURAL CENTRE (STÓ:LŌ TERRITORY)

Resolution no. 2026-50

RE: Emergency Protection and Recovery of Southern Mountain Caribou and Critical Habitat

WHEREAS First Nations have inherent, constitutionally protected title and rights and jurisdiction over their lands, territories and resources, including the right and responsibility to steward wildlife and wildlife habitat and to maintain their cultural, spiritual, and harvesting relationships with caribou and other species for present and future generations;

WHEREAS southern mountain caribou have been listed as threatened under the federal *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) since 2003, and the federal recovery strategy identifies habitat loss, development, and increased predation as contributing to their decline. Despite the continued decline of southern mountain caribou, forestry activity, including logging and road building, continues to be authorized within caribou habitat in B.C.;

WHEREAS Xatśūll First Nation and the Syilx Okanagan Nation have petitioned the federal government to issue an emergency protection order under SARA to prevent further loss of southern mountain caribou and their habitat, following repeated concerns raised with the Province regarding the continued authorization of forestry activities in important caribou habitat;

WHEREAS the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which the government of Canada has adopted without qualification, and has, alongside the government of B.C., passed legislation committing to implement, affirms:

Certified copy of a resolution adopted on the 24th day of September of 2026 in Stó:lō Territory

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President

Article 18: Indigenous Peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions.
Article 26(1): Indigenous Peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired. **(2)** Indigenous Peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired. **(3)** States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditions and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned.
Article 29(1): Indigenous Peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources. States shall establish and implement assistance programmes for indigenous peoples for such conservation and protection, without discrimination.
Article 32(2): States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the Indigenous Peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources;

WHEREAS the UBCIC has consistently called for urgent action to protect and recover caribou and their habitat and to uphold First Nations laws, jurisdiction and stewardship responsibilities, including through Resolution 2019-33 "Support for Caribou Recovery Agreement and Anti-Racism Investigation," which supported First Nations-led caribou recovery and called on Canada and B.C. to ensure the recovery of Southern Mountain Caribou; Resolution 2022-09 "Support for BC First Nations' Territorial Management and Protection of Caribou and Wolf Populations," which recognized habitat destruction and fragmentation as the underlying cause of caribou decline, and Resolution 2025-61 "Amendments to the Wildlife Act," which called for the explicit recognition of First Nations' inherent and constitutionally protected title and rights and jurisdiction and for co-management and shared and consent-based decision-making in wildlife stewardship;

WHEREAS the ongoing decline of caribou populations has already severely impaired First Nations' ability to exercise their cultural and harvesting practices as indicated by community members having been unable to hunt caribou for decades;

WHEREAS provincial recovery measures have included predator control and maternity pens, while the Province continues to authorize logging in caribou habitat, and scientific evidence cited in relation to the southern mountain caribou decline indicates that predator control may provide short-term benefits but cannot substitute for the protection and recovery of sufficient habitat;

WHEREAS southern mountain caribou populations remain at serious risk, including the Barkerville herd, which is estimated to have only approximately 50 to 60 animals remaining, with significant losses of habitat and insufficient habitat protection contributing to an increasingly precarious outlook;

WHEREAS First Nations must be full partners in decisions affecting caribou habitat and recovery, and Xatśūll First Nation has called for a stewardship management model for forestry within its territory, including

through its proposed First Nations Woodland Licence, to ensure that decisions about forest management reflect Xatśūll jurisdiction, responsibilities, knowledge, and priorities; and

WHEREAS effective caribou recovery requires governments to address the underlying loss and fragmentation of habitat and cumulative impacts from forestry, roads, resource development, and other disturbances, rather than relying predominantly on short-term measures that do not address the continuing destruction of caribou habitat.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs-in-Assembly fully support Xatśūll First Nation and the Syilx Okanagan Nation in their call for urgent federal action to protect southern mountain caribou and their critical habitat, including the use of an emergency protection order under the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) where required to prevent further destruction of habitat and support the recovery of southern mountain caribou;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs-in-Assembly call on Canada to immediately use all available legal and policy mechanisms under SARA to prevent further loss of southern mountain caribou and their habitat, and to complete without further delay any outstanding identification, mapping, and protection of critical habitat necessary for the recovery of southern mountain caribou;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs-in-Assembly call on B.C. to immediately cease authorizing forestry, road building, and other industrial activities within critical and high-value southern mountain caribou habitats where those activities would further undermine caribou recovery, unless and until decisions are made in full recognition of First Nations title and rights and jurisdiction and consistent with the requirement to obtain the free, prior and informed consent of the affected First Nations;

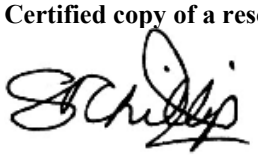
THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs-in-Assembly call on Canada and B.C. to work directly with affected First Nations as full and equal partners to co-develop and adequately fund Nation-led caribou recovery, habitat protection, restoration, monitoring, and cumulative-effects initiatives that respect and uphold First Nations laws, knowledge, jurisdiction, title and rights;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs-in-Assembly call on B.C. to support and meaningfully advance First Nations-led stewardship and forest governance mechanisms, including working directly with Xatśūll First Nation regarding its proposed First Nations Woodland Licence and other Nation-determined approaches to the management and protection of lands, forests, wildlife, and caribou habitat within First Nations territories; and

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the UBCIC Executive and staff, subject to available resources, to advocate to Canada and B.C. for the immediate implementation of this resolution and to support affected First Nations, at their request, in advancing Nation-led protection and recovery of southern mountain caribou and their habitat.

Moved: **Kukpi7 Brent Dixon, Tsq?éscen? First Nation**
Seconded: **Chief Colleen Erickson, Nak'azdli Whut'en**
Disposition: **Carried**
Date: **September 24, 2026**

Certified copy of a resolution adopted on the 24th day of September of 2026 in Stó:lō Territory



Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President