OKANAGAN NATION ALLIANCE
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TRIBAL COUNCIL RESOLUTION **2025 No. 552**
Natural Resources

SYILX STYÍŁCAʔ PROTECTION ORDER

September 23, 2025

WHEREAS: The syilx Nation is distinct and self-determining with inherent responsibilities and rights to govern and care for the lands, waters, and resources within our unceded territory. These responsibilities are affirmed in the Okanagan Nation Declarations and continue to be exercised in accordance with syilx laws, values, and teachings; and,

WHEREAS: The Syilx Okanagan Nation declare this statement to protect and uphold our inherent responsibilities to the land, to future generations, and to styíłc̓aʔ (caribou), who are our sacred relatives. We affirm our Title, Rights, and Jurisdiction as passed down through our captixwl (oral histories), our laws, and our governance systems, grounded in sqlxʷłcawtət (tmixʷ centric thinking) and our sacred relationship to the tmxʷulaxʷ (the land); and,

WHEREAS: mnímłtət iʔ‿kʷu‿xatmaʔ sqílxʷ, kʷu təmsqíxʷxʷ atláʔ t‿təmxʷúlaʔxʷ, iʔ‿tú́ḿtəmtət. təĺ‿k̓ʷəl ʼəncútn sxʷíc ʼc ʼxtət iʔ‿tú́ḿtəm ʼtət ksnpyílsməntəm kstxt ʼəntím uł ksk̓əłqíxʷəntəm. iʔ‿misq ʼsápiʔ iʔ‿kʷu‿xatmaʔsqílxʷ kʷu‿skʷliwtx iʔ‿l‿tú́ḿtəmt́ət.

We are the unconquered aboriginal people of this land, our mother. The Creator has given us our mother to enjoy, manage and protect. We, the first inhabitants, have lived with our mother from time immemorial. (Syilx Nation, 1987); and,

WHEREAS: ʔ k̓ʷl̓ncutn naʔł snk̓lip2 mnim̓łcəl̓x iʔ t̓k̓ʷntisəlx iʔ sc̓x̌ʷəx̌ʷíplaʔ k̓l kłcaw̓tsəlx iʔ sqilxʷ. kcx̌aʔx̌aʔstím iʔ sc‿c̓ax̌ʷsəlx iʔ kł‿ n̓xʷl̓xʷl̓tans, k̓l kł‿nx̌stans iʔ sqilxʷ, k̓l t̓ə sxʷuys.

Creator and Coyote laid down our laws/responsibility for us, sqilxʷ/syilx/sʔuknaqínx, to carry for all time. We hold in high regard their decree and teachings of accepting the responsibility to be keepers of our waters, territory, lands, foods, and resources. (Syilx Nation, 2022); and

WHEREAS: While the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) reflects a growing recognition of Indigenous rights within Canadian legal frameworks, syilx jurisdiction is rooted in our own laws, governance systems, and responsibilities, and is not defined by external legislation; and,

WHEREAS: We affirm the following rights as recognized by UNDRIP and as inherently held by the **Syilx** people:

- **Article 3** – *Right to self-determination*: The **Syilx** Nation has the right to freely determine our political status and pursue our economic, social, and cultural development.
- **Article 18** – *Right to decision-making*: We have the right to participate in decision-making in matters affecting our rights, through our own procedures and institutions.
- **Article 25** – *Spiritual relationship with lands and animals*: We have the right to maintain and strengthen our distinctive spiritual relationship with traditionally occupied lands, waters, and animals, including the styílc̓aʔ.
- **Article 26** – *Rights to land and resources*: We have the right to own, use, develop, and control the lands, territories, and resources that we have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used.
- **Article 29** – *Right to environmental protection*: We have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of our lands, waters, and territories.
- **Article 32** – *Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)*: We have the right to determine priorities and strategies for development or use of our lands and territories and must give FPIC before any project affecting them proceeds.

WHEREAS: We reaffirm our inherent Syilx Title and jurisdiction over Syilx Territory, which has never been ceded or surrendered. Our caretakership responsibilities are derived from ancestral law and cannot be extinguished or overridden by colonial systems; and,

WHEREAS: We hold sacred the responsibility to protect styílc̓a ʔ, whose existence is essential to the balance of our ecosystems, cultural teachings, and survival as a people.

WHEREAS: We recognize the **styíłc̓a ʔ** as sentient beings with rights under Syilx and natural law;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT: That the Syilx Chief's Executive Council declare the following:

- **Article 1: Right to Habitat Protection**
  styílc̓aʔ have the right to live in undisturbed, intact habitats necessary for their survival and well-being.
- **Article 2: Right to Safe Migration**
  styílc̓aʔ have the right to migrate freely and safely along traditional routes.

- **Article 3: Right to Population Recovery**
  styílc̓aʔ have the right to recover as a species, supported by culturally grounded and science-informed programs.
- **Article 4: Right to Protection from Climate Change**
  styílc̓aʔ must be shielded from climate-related threats through adaptation strategies and habitat resilience.
- **Article 5: Right to Community Involvement**
  Syilx communities must lead caribou recovery and be central to all conservation decisions.
- **Article 6: Right to Legal Enforcement**
  styílc̓aʔ rights must be protected through enforceable legal mechanisms, Indigenous law, and government accountability; and,

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- No activities affecting styílc̓aʔ habitat may proceed without FPIC from the Syilx Nation.
- We will exercise our responsibilities through guardian programs, Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs), and enforcement of Syilx law. We call on the Provincial and Federal governments to recognize this Declaration and align their policies with UNDRIP and Syilx law.
- This Declaration is made for future generations. The survival of the styílc̓aʔ and the well-being of tmxʷulaxʷ are inseparable from the survival of Syilx culture, language, and law.

Sil-teekin yilmixʷm Greg Gabriel
Penticton Indian Band

yilmixʷm kalʔupaqn Keith Crow
Lower Similkameen Indian Band

ki law na yilmixʷm Clarence Louie
Osoyoos Indian Band

simo yilmixʷm Robert Louie
Westbank First Nation

yilmixʷm Dan Wilson
Okanagan Indian Band

yilmixʷm Dan Manuel
Upper Nicola Band

yilmixʷm Bonnie Jacobsen
Upper Similkameen Indian Band

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