**Ktunaxa First Nation responds to ‘pause’ announcement by Cullen**

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*ʔa·kisk̓aqǂiʔit / Cranbrook, B.C.:*ʔaq̓am First Nation leadership is disappointed with the Province of British Columbia’s decision to suspend proposed amendments to B.C.’s *Land Act*. The proposed amendments aimed to bring aspects of the *Land Act* in line with the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA)*, passed by B.C. in 2019.

“We are dismayed that these straightforward updates to the act were misrepresented by some people to such an extent that Minister Cullen has opted to pause the process,” said Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre of ʔaq̓am.

The Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, Nathan Cullen, published a statement on the issue on February 21. In the statement, the minister noted, “Some figures have gone to extremes to knowingly mislead the public about what the proposed legislation would do.”

The proposed amendments would remove barriers to shared decision making in a framework that recognizes First Nations rights and freedoms.

“The amendments would make way for better shared decision making,” Nasuʔkin Pierre said. “They would create space in the law to implement agreements that would be negotiated in accordance with the process and requirements of Section 7 of the *Declaration Act*. That’s it.”

During the public engagement process, however, that message was lost to disinformation, so much so that the Province has opted to ‘not proceed’ with the proposed amendments.

“ʔaq̓am leadership supports a transparent engagement process around important issues,” Nasukin Pierre said. “Such an engagement process was happening, but it was derailed. We are cautiously hopeful that the pause announced is in order to more fully engage and educate the public so that the disinformation is not leading the discourse.”

DRIPA was passed unanimously in 2019 and establishes the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) as B.C.'s framework for reconciliation.

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**Contact queries:**

Karmin Snow, ʔaq̓am Executive Assistant  
ksnow@aqam.net

[Minister’s statement on proposed Land Act amendments | BC Gov News](https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2024WLRS0009-000236)

[FNLC Deeply Frustrated with Opposition to Land Act Amendments | British Columbia Assembly of First Nations (bcafn.ca)](https://www.bcafn.ca/news/fnlc-deeply-frustrated-opposition-land-act-amendments)

[B.C. presses pause on Indigenous-related changes to the Land Act - Fernie BC News (thefreepress.ca)](https://www.thefreepress.ca/news/bc-presses-pause-on-indigenous-related-changes-to-the-land-act-7320693)