
COLUMBIA River Treaty



July 12, 2024

Local Governments Congratulate Announcement of the Columbia River Treaty Agreement-in-Principle

Columbia Basin, B.C. The [Columbia River Treaty \(CRT\) Local Governments Committee](#) congratulates the Canadian and United States CRT Negotiating Teams for having announced an Agreement-in-Principle (AIP) for a modernized treaty after over six years of negotiations.

This is an exceptional achievement for the five governments in Canada who have worked together to reach this agreement on a complex international treaty – the federal and provincial governments along with three Indigenous Nations: the Ktunaxa, Syilx-Okanagan and Secwepemc Nations. We understand this is a first in Canada and perhaps the world.

Since 2011 the CRT Local Governments Committee has worked to ensure the voices of Basin residents and local governments are heard in any decisions about the future of the Treaty. In 2021 the Committee provided updated [Recommendations](#) to the Canadian Negotiating Team about modernizing the CRT. These Recommendations are based on what the Committee heard from Basin residents and local governments about how the current reservoir operations negatively impact their quality of life, mainly through large fluctuations in water levels in the CRT reservoirs (Kinbasket Reservoir south of Valemount to north of Golden, Arrow Lakes Reservoir between Revelstoke and Castlegar, Duncan Reservoir in the Lardeau Valley and Kocanusa Reservoir southeast of Cranbrook) and downstream of Hugh Keenleyside dam in Castlegar.

The Committee appreciates the province's commitment to hold a public review of the AIP, to fully explain the AIP to Canadian Columbia Basin residents and local governments, to seek our input and then pursue appropriate refinements to the AIP based on this input before the modernized treaty is finalized.

'We look forward to fully understanding the content and implications of the AIP for Basin residents and local governments so that we can evaluate how closely the AIP follows our 2021 [Recommendations](#) to the CRT Negotiating Team, and then to hear the perspectives of Basin residents and local governments,' stated the Committee Chair, Linda Worley who is also Chair of the Regional District of the Kootenay-Boundary.

This AIP is a first step towards modernizing this important international treaty. The Committee looks forward to continuing to engage on the modernization of this treaty, including the development of active adaptive management approaches. This is essential to manage this great river as energy demands and options shift while the climate continues to change.

'We encourage Basin residents and local governments to get educated about the Treaty and to participate in the opportunity to provide input during the upcoming AIP review,' urged Ms. Worley.

The province's [CRT website](#) has regular updates and the option to subscribe to an e-newsletter.

The Columbia Basin Trust provides extensive background information about the Treaty at [CBT CRT](#).

The Committee was created in 2011 by the local governments in the region impacted by the treaty. The primary purpose of the Committee is to assist local governments and region residents to engage in decisions around the future of the treaty. Since 2012 the Committee has worked closely with the BC CRT Team to consult with residents and local governments in the region to fully understand the concerns and issues related to the Treaty.

The Columbia River Treaty is a water management agreement between Canada and the United States that regulates the flows of the Columbia River in southeastern BC for flood control and power generation purposes. Negotiations to modernize the Treaty began in May 2018. The federal government leads the negotiation of this international treaty, however B.C. has representatives on the team because water management is a provincial responsibility in the Canadian federation. In April 2019, the federal government invited the three regional Indigenous Nations – the Ktunaxa, the Secwepemc and the Syilx-Okanagan – to join the Negotiating Team as observers. Their role has been described as observers plus as they are involved in all negotiations preparations and have made presentations during negotiating sessions.

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Media contacts:

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For more information about the Committee and its Recommendations to the CRT Negotiating Team:
[Committee webpage](#) and [Recommendations](#)

For more information about the negotiations and the Treaty: [BC CRT Engage website](#)

For more information about the Treaty: [Columbia Basin Trust CRT website](#)

CRT Local Government Committee members:

Linda Worley, Chair, Regional Director, Regional District of Kootenay Boundary
Stan Doehle, Vice Chair, Regional Director, Regional District of the East Kootenays
Aimee Watson, Regional Director and Chair, Regional District of Central Kootenay
Aidan MacLaren-Caux, Councillor, Village of Nakusp – appointed by Regional District of Central Kootenay
Frank Marino, Mayor, Village of Warfield - appointed by Regional District of Kootenay Boundary
Jane Walter, Regional Director, Regional District of the East Kootenays
Ron Oszust, Mayor, Town of Golden - appointed by Columbia-Shuswap Regional District
David Brooks-Hill, Regional Director, Columbia Shuswap Regional District
Donnie MacLean, Councillor, Village of Valemount
Keith Page, Councillor, City of Nelson and Chair, Association of Kootenay Boundary Local Governments