

Gitksan Band Councils  
&  
Gitksan Gimlitzwit  
Meeting

September 4, 2008  
Gitanmaax

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Agenda

- . Alternative Governance Model
- . Overview & Impact Analysis
- . Discussion
- . Alternatives Going Forward

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Highlights of Alternative  
Governance Model

Report dated May 15, 2008 states:

- "We seek no special status nor any parallel society. We wish to live as ordinary Canadians"

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Alternative Governance Model

> "The Gitksan are not interested in the concept of treaty settlement lands"

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Alternative Governance Model

> " Any agreement must of course end the application of the Indian Act, including the Band governance structure"

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Alternative Governance Model

> "The laws and services currently supplied by Indian Act Councils can be better and more efficiently provided by federal and provincial entities"

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Alternative Governance Model

➤ "the federal government should transfer money formerly given to Band governments for these purposes, to the provincial government upon acceptance by the Province of those responsibilities".

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Alternative Governance Model

➤ "we wish to take our place as full citizens of British Columbia, paying for and receiving health, education and social services from the province in the same way as any others."

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Alternative Governance Model

➤ "The Gitksan are prepared to pay income and sales taxes just as other Canadians".

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### IMPACT

- Band Governments established under the Indian Act will disappear
- Membership in bands will cease
- Reserve lands established under the Indian Act will be eliminated
- No treaty settlement lands will be selected

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### IMPACT

- Programs and services now provided by Bands will be provided by the provincial and federal governments
- Gitksan people will pay taxes and local governments will not collect taxes

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Loss of Gitksan Ties to History and Identity

- Gitksan have lived in villages for thousands of years
- These lands will no longer be protected or set aside only for Gitksan people
- Under the *B.C. Land Title Act*, lands in Gitksan communities can be bought and sold by non Gitksan

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Loss of Gitksan Ties to History and Identity**

- 809 individual land holdings on reserve will be impacted

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Possible loss of Fishing Sites**

- Reserve lands generally situated at fishing sites.
- With loss of protection these lands could be held by non Gitksan resulting in possible loss of access

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Language and Culture Threatened**

- Gitksan used in community settings
- With loss of communities language will tend to be used less
- Language and culture interconnected
- Loss of language = Loss of Culture

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Loss of Band Governments

- Right to self government is part of Aboriginal Peoples' inherent right
- Now two systems of government; Elected and Hereditary
- Band Council exercise right to self government
- Loss of Band Governments is loss of self government capacity

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Loss of Band Governments

- Elected system gives individuals an opportunity to participate in Gitksan government decisions and voice concerns which they cannot in the hereditary system

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Loss of Tax Exemption

- Tax protection gives registered Indians more "take home" income
- Tax protection helps to increase amount of income to spend in the community
- Loss will cause financial hardship as 70% of Gitksan are unemployed or employed in short term /seasonal jobs

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Loss of Protection against seizure

- > Under Indian Act property cannot be seized
- > Without protection Gitksan people who cannot pay loans or taxes can have property seized

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Loss of Programs & Services

- > Gitksan people will pay for:
- > Health insurance premiums and health services
- > Education, including post secondary education
- > Housing construction and renovation
- > Taxes charged to pay for community services and infrastructure

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Loss of Programs & Services

- > GWES negotiates with school district for culturally appropriate programs and services; these would no longer be available
- > Band operated schools on reserve will become part of B.C. school system; Board may close schools to balance budgets

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Loss of Programs & Services

- Loss of culturally appropriate education will lead to higher drop out rates
- Fewer people likely to attend college and university

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Negotiating the Alternative Governance Model

- Right to self government in Gitksan communities not recognized
- Responsibilities and obligations of Band Councils not recognized

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Negotiating the Alternative Governance Model

- Responsibilities of Hereditary Chiefs to protect Gitksan rights not taken into account
- Loans made on behalf of Gitksan for treaty negotiation however no involvement by the Community

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---