

For Immediate Release

Monday October 29, 2018

BC Southern Interior Peace Coalition (BCSIPC) Semi-Annual Conference, October 27th. Slavonic Senior Citizens Center, Grand Forks BC

The B.C. Southern Interior Peace Coalition (BCSIPC) met in Grand Forks on October 27th with delegates, supporters and guests attending from Kelowna, Nelson, Castlegar, Grand Forks and Slocan.

Delegates represented the Kootenay Region United Nations Association, (KRUNA), the Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ Working Groups (USCC), the Kelowna Peace Group, Kelowna KAIROS, Voice of Women for Peace (VOW) and the Boundary Peace Initiative (BPI) Grand Forks. A large group of peace activists attended as observers participating in the discussion and decisions.

The well attended meeting received greetings from recently elected Grand Forks Mayor Brian Taylor and re-elected Councilor Christine Thompson. Responding to the greetings BCSIPC Coordinator said that BPI and BCSIPC looks forward to working with Mayor and Council to reinstate Grand Forks as a member of Mayors 4 Peace and maintain its status as a Nuclear Free Zone.

A message of greetings from NDP MP Richard Cannings (South Okanagan West Kootenay) was received with applause. Canning wrote:

“To be among people who live and breathe the work of peace (oh yes, it is work) is uplifting, and I’m sorry to miss it. Your work matters. It is important work, even though at times I’m sure you feel you are banging your collective heads against a brick wall. Believe me, if people like yourselves did not work to advocate, educate and inform your community and your elected representatives, who would? You are passionate about the need for peace, and willing to do the hard work required for peace, and for that, I thank you. I thank you on behalf of myself, and on behalf of those who don’t know of you and your work, because they too need you to continue your efforts on their behalf.”

The highlight of the meeting was the address by Grand Chief Stewart Phillip of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) and Joan Phillip, leaders in the public opposition in BC against the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion across First Nations lands designed to carry Alberta Tar Sands bitumen to the coastal waters of BC. Grand Chief Phillip elaborated on his organizations opposition to Trans Mountain declaring that unified opposition of Indigenous and non-Indigenous

people alike had forced Kinder Morgan to abandon the project. Both speakers condemned the Trudeau Government's \$4.5 billion federal government buyout of Kinder Morgan labeling it a waste of tax-payers money that could be better spent on people's needs and conversion to sustainable energy and infrastructure. ¹

Grand Chief Philips called upon the Trudeau federal government to cancel its review of the project and accept the public rejection of Trans Mountain. In a recent public statement ² the Grand Chief called for acceptance of the Federal Court of Appeal decision which ruled that the National Energy Board (NEB) initial assessment of the project failed to take into account both the input of the Indigenous people and the impact of increased tanker traffic on British Columbia's coastline. Grand Chief Philip said the Liberal government bailout of Kinder Morgan meant that the Canadian people now owned a useless asset that he predicted would never be built. Chief Philip drew attention to devastating fires, floods and landslides now the norm in BC the result of climate change and global warming. Chief Phillip expressed his solidarity with the people of Grand Forks ruined by the May floods and now facing a difficult struggle with government and insurers to recover.

Before Grand Chief Stewart and Joan Phillip left for yet another engagement, a group photo was taken with most attendees included.

The main business agenda item at the BCSIPC Meeting was the upcoming Canadian Peace Congress (CPCCon) Convention on November 24-25, 2018 in Toronto. BCSIPC delegates received a report from BCSIPC Representative to the CPCCon and from CPCCon acting President Miguel Figueroa and a proposal for a revised CPCCon Constitution. ³ The meeting unanimously endorsed BCSIPC Coordinator as its delegate to the CPCCon Convention.

¹ Global News June 26th 2018 reported on a study by Energy Economics and Financial Analysis that federal purchase of the assets of Kinder Morgan plus planning and construction costs will put \$6.5 billion in unplanned spending on the books for the 2018-19 fiscal year and could add 36 per cent to the projected \$18.1-billion deficit.

"The principal budgetary action here looks to me like an unplanned expenditure for 2019," said Tom Sanzillo, director of finance for the institute in an interview. Angus Reid polling shows the Canadian people to be evenly split on the federal government bailout.

² <https://ipolitics.ca/2018/09/21/indigenous-leaders-urge-pm-to-cancel-trans-mountain-review/>

³ <http://www.wpc-in.org/members/canadian-peace-congress>

BCSIPC member organization reports were presented by Mark Haley and Roy Lechner of the Kelowna Peace Group, JJ Verigin on behalf of KRUNA and the USCC Working Groups, Hannah Hadikin of Voice of Women for Peace and Laura Savinkoff for the Boundary Peace Initiative. Laura Savinkoff also presented a report as Coordinator of the BCSIPC.

Three resolutions were received amended and adopted. A resolution endorsing Laura Savinkoff as BCSIPC delegate to the forthcoming Canadian Peace Congress Convention as well as a motion to fund her travel costs was unanimously adopted. Two Resolutions from the Kelowna Peace Group one on Foreign Military Base and one on Diverting/Reallocating Military Spending with amendments to be added by the Communications/Resolutions Committee were adopted. Directions were given to the resolutions committee to prepare a statement of solidarity and support for the actions and goals of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) in opposition to the Trans Mountain Pipeline and the Tar Sands.

Delegates honoured and applauded recipients of the BCSIPC Peace Activist Award presented to 95-year old Christine Medvedoff and 93-year old Harold Funk for a lifetime of dedication to the cause of peace. Both Christine and Harold have spent their whole lives working for a peaceful world and continue to do so to this day as much as humanely possible, given their ages. Both also are founding members of the Boundary Peace Initiative and continue to attend most events and actions locally.

The meeting was treated to a heartfelt a cappella rendition of a traditional Doukhobor song of peace and reverence for all Creation.

The next Conference of the Coalition will take place in the West Kootenays during the month of April, 2019.

On behalf of the B.C. Southern Interior Peace Coalition

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