



GIDIMT'EN CHECKPOINT

RESPECTING OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -
DECEMBER 17 2018:**

**Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs erect new checkpoint on
Gidimt'en (Cas Yikh) Territory**

On December 16, 2018, Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs reaffirmed, once again, their stance on oil and gas export pipelines in Wet'suwet'en Yintah (traditional lands). This decision was validated in the feast hall where Wet'suwet'en decisions are enacted into law. While some Wet'suwet'en Indian Act Bands and corporations have signed on to the Coastal GasLink Agreement, the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Leadership - who have jurisdiction over 22,000 square kilometers of traditional territories - have not given Free, Prior and Informed Consent to any oil or gas companies to build pipelines in their lands and waters. The Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs have not made any agreement with the Canadian or British Columbian government to surrender or permit access to Wet'suwet'en lands for any pipeline corridors or construction activities.

To enforce this decision, the house chiefs of all five Wet'suwet'en clans agreed by consensus to assert control of the Gidimt'en Clan territory that borders to the west of Unist'ot'en lands. As such, a checkpoint is erected at the 44 gm mark on the Morice Lake Forest Service Road and will follow a Free, Prior and Informed Consent protocol whereby anyone seeking access to Gidimt'en territory will be required to present themselves, respectfully, to spokespeople at the site. The checkpoint will remain in effect until further notice.

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The Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs represent a governance system that predates colonization and the Indian Act which was created in an attempt to outlaw Indigenous peoples from their lands. The Wet'suwet'en have continued to exercise their unbroken, unextinguished and unceded right to govern and occupy their lands by continuing and empowering the clan-based governance system to this day. Under Wet'suwet'en law, clans have a responsibility and right to control access to their territories. The validity of the Wet'suwet'en house and clan system was verified in the Delgamuukw and Red Top Decisions that uphold the authority of the hereditary system on Wet'suwet'en traditional territories.

Further, forcing access to Wet'suwet'en territories without consent produces extensive implications to Wet'suwet'en title and rights and therefore requires government to government discussions between the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs and Provincial and Federal officials in the spirit of reconciliation.

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