

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 5, 2025

JOINT STATEMENT FROM THE Liǵʷiɫdaǵʷ ʔ HEREDITARY CHIEFS

Regarding the K'ómoks Treaty and the Infringement on Liǵʷiɫdaǵʷ Lands

Yo. We, the Hereditary Chiefs of the Liǵʷiɫdaǵʷ Peoples, representing the Wei Wai Kum First Nation, We Wai Kai First Nation, Kwiakah First Nation, and Walitsama, stand united in firm opposition to the ratification of the K'ómoks Treaty. We stand against the illegal encroachment on Liǵʷiɫdaǵʷ lands and resources.

For generations, we upheld an understanding with K'ómoks that their territorial claims would not extend north of Oyster River, while ours would not extend south. This long-standing agreement has now been violated. The K'ómoks Indian Band is attempting to use the Treaty process and the *Indian Act* to alter history, lay claim to our Reserve at Salmon River (Xʷəsəm)¹, and assert rights within our Territory that they do not rightfully possess.

OUR HISTORY, OUR RIGHTS

The Liǵʷiɫdaǵʷ Peoples have governed and stewarded our lands, waters, and resources since time immemorial. Our names, coppers, stories, songs, and dances are deeply rooted in our history and our territory. Our ancestors secured and defended these lands through governance, war, and trade, ensuring our people thrived. Historical records—both oral and written—confirm that our Nation was respected and feared across the coast, from the northern Johnstone Strait down to Victoria and over to the Fraser River.

Historically, the groups that now form K'ómoks were either pushed south by our ancestors or coalesced over time due to external pressures, including colonization. The term "K'ómoks" derives from our own Liq'wala word "K'umalha" or "Komokwe," meaning "land of plenty." Many of the Salish tribes that later formed the K'ómoks Indian Band, with the exception of the Pentlatch people, were scattered groups. Our ancestors conquered and pushed the K'ómoks southward. Now, they seek to manipulate the modern treaty process to rewrite history, lay claim to our land at Salmon River, and establish rights in our territory where they have none.

OUR RESERVE, OUR PEOPLE

Salmon River, Xʷəsəm, is the home of the Walitsama and the ancestral seat of at least six of our hereditary chieftainships. In 1886, Canada granted a Reserve to the Liǵʷiɫdaǵʷ at Salmon River. In 1940, three of the Liǵʷiɫdaǵʷ Members at Salmon River conditionally agreed to amalgamate with K'ómoks on the condition that there be two chiefs and that K'ómoks Reserves and assets be shared. K'ómoks and Canada have not upheld their commitments and are now trying to claim the Salmon River Reserve for their exclusive ownership.

THE THREAT TO OUR FUTURE GENERATIONS

The K'ómoks Treaty, if implemented, will have dire and irreversible consequences for the

¹ known also as H'kusam near Sayward

Liḡʷiḡdaḡʷ Peoples. This treaty threatens our inherent rights, our ability to govern our lands, and the future of our people. It is being advanced without our consultation, consent, or agreement. K'ómoks has refused to meet with us in our Gukwdzi (Big House) for a cultural discussion—the respectful and proper way to address such matters. If K'ómoks proceeds with this treaty, it will create a permanent divide between our Nations. We do not wish to leave our grandchildren a legacy of conflict. However as Hereditary Chiefs, it is our duty to protect our lands, history, and future generations.

OUR DEMANDS

We call for the following immediate actions:

- 1. K'ómoks must pause its Treaty ratification process.**
- 2. Canada and British Columbia must immediately engage in meaningful consultation with the Liḡʷiḡdaḡʷ Peoples.**
- 3. The K'ómoks elected Chief, Council, and Hereditary Chiefs must meet with us in the Gukwdzi** to share histories, engage in discussions through our traditional protocols, and seek a more respectful path forward.
- 4. The rightful Liḡʷiḡdaḡʷ title to Salmon River and other lands must be recognized and protected.**

We will not stand by as our lands, waters, and resources are taken from us. The K'ómoks Treaty is a direct attack on the Liḡʷiḡdaḡʷ. We will respond accordingly, with the same strength and resolve that our ancestors showed in protecting our territory.

Signed,

The Hereditary Chiefs of the Liḡʷiḡdaḡʷ Peoples in attendance at the March 4, 2025, meeting of the Liḡʷiḡdaḡʷ Hereditary Chiefs. The signatories do not intend to exclude or limit any Hereditary Chiefs who were not present. This is a living document that represents a collective stance on the K'ómoks Treaty and the protection of our Liḡʷiḡdaḡʷ lands, waters, resources, rights and title. Additional Hereditary Chiefs who endorse these statements may also use this document as an engagement tool in discussions.



Gigamae Yakawidi, Shawn Decaire



Gigamae Siwiti, Jake Smith
Wei Wai Kum Nəmimə




Gigamae Weklakalas, Jim Henderson
Wei Wai Kum First Nation



Gigamae Udzistalis, Johnathan Henderson
Wei Wai Kum First Nation



Gigamae P'asslath, Gary Johnson
Gixsən Walatsima



Gigamae Hə'tla las, Dean Drake
Wei Wai Kum First Nation

Daniel Billy

Gigamae Dzadzka’o, Dan Billy
Wei Wai Kai First Nation

James Quatell

Gigamae Kwa’xildazi, James Quatell
Wei Wai Kum First Nation

Brody Naknakim

Gigamae Qwumqwalath, Brody Naknakim
Wei Wai Kai First Nation

Tony Roberts Jr.

Gigamae P’aselath, Tony Roberts Jr.
Wei Wai Kum First Nation

Denis Johnston

Gigamae Paclzolił Kwakaista, Denis Johnston
Wei Wai Kai

Fred Moon

Gigamae łakʷasğəm, Fred Moon
Wei Wai Kum First Nation

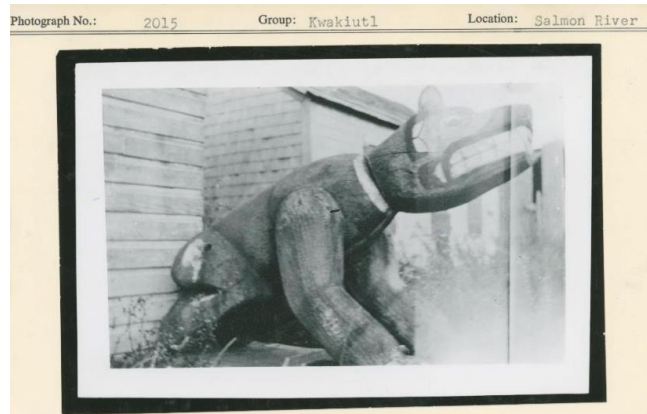
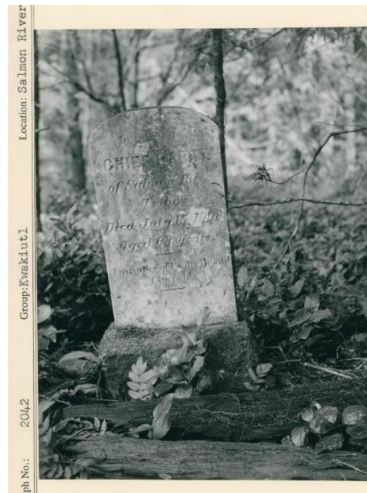
Max Chickite

Gigamae Tsulxid, Max Chickite
Wei Wai Kai Nənimə

Steven Dick

Gigamae Munmunłie, Steven Dick
Kwiahkah First Nation

Patrick Grey
Gigamae, Patrick Grey
Wei Wai Kai First Nation



Historic photos from the Liğwiłdačʷ Village at Salmon River: K’ómoks is attempting to claim exclusive ownership of these areas and ancestral remains in their treaty.