



huu ay aht

ANCIENT SPIRIT, MODERN MIND

Ḥaw'iiḥ Council

August 31, 2023

To: Huu-ay-aht Citizens

Re: Removal of Derek Peters (Ḥiišín) from his seat

On May 5, 2022, following receipt of serious allegations against Derek Peters made by a citizen, we decided that, until the matter was resolved, he would not participate in meetings or decision-making of the Ḥaw'iiḥ Council, or speak publicly on our behalf.

On August 3, 2022, Executive Council directed that an Inquiry Panel (the “panel”) be convened to inquire into allegations of abuse of power, intimidation, harassment, assault, sexual harassment and sexual assault committed by members of government.

The panel received information from several individuals alleging that Ḥiišín had intimidated people, sexually assaulted, harassed, and threatened and assaulted women and children contrary to section 12 (3) of the *Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Act* (COCCIA), and had otherwise breached multiple other provisions of that Act. The panel issued terms of reference for an investigation into these allegations. That investigation has been completed and the panel has shared its findings with the Ḥaw'iiḥ Council.

Ḥiišín was offered the opportunity on multiple occasions to participate in the investigation process, but chose not to do so.

The investigator found, on a balance of probabilities, that the complaints against Ḥiišín in relation to breaches of COCCIA s. 12 (3) were substantiated. The investigator also found that Ḥiišín attempted to stop a complainant and her family from reporting one of the sexual assaults to the police; assaulted, intimidated and threatened another woman and attempted to obstruct an ongoing police investigation by directing family members what to say and do in relation to allegations of sexual assault made against him. In addition, the investigator found that he improperly used government property and resources and made unauthorized purchases on his government credit card for which he failed to provide receipts for purchases as required.

We are deeply troubled that Ḥiišín has failed, over an extended period of time and in many ways, to conduct himself in accordance with our core principles of Ḥisaak, ḤuuḤaḤuk, and Ḥišuk ma Ḥawak. We cannot condone this behavior and, after careful consideration and discussion we have decided to permanently remove Ḥiišín from the Ḥaw'iiḥ Council and from his role as Tayii Ḥaw'iiḥ.

This decision was not taken lightly and was made in accordance with our customary practices and Nuu-cha-nulth customary practices.



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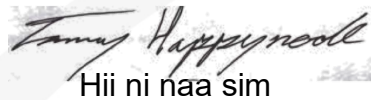
We recognize that the inquiry process and investigation have been challenging for all involved.

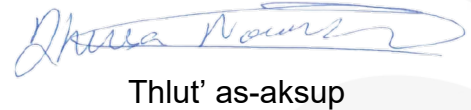
We wish to express our gratitude to Sandra Cunningham K.C. and Jennifer Dehoney for their dedication and hard work throughout the inquiry and subsequent investigation. We also wish to thank all of the community members who came forward to share their stories and all of those who supported this important work.

We are profoundly grateful to the women who placed their trust in us by initially bringing their stories forward to our Council and to all of those who participated in the investigation. We are humbled by their bravery and appalled by what they have suffered. The Ḥawiiḥ Council stand with them and are here to support them. We urge them and all our citizens to take care of themselves and one another.

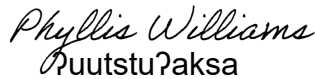
Yours truly,


Yał luu a


Hii ni naa sim


Thlut' as-aksup


Ciicaacistuł


Puutstu?aksa


łaacmiik

1. Child and Family Wellness Department 250-723-0100 (please call for individual support)
2. Cultural Support (Cory Howard Sr and Mel Edwards) 1-888-644-4555 or 250-723-0100
3. Cultural Wellness Program (Qu'Asa) – 250-724-3939
 - For referrals, fill out referral form (I have attached one in the email) and email to Sanne Van Vlerken sanne.vanvlerken@nuuchahnulth.org
4. Kuu-us Crisis Line (24-hour support)
 - 250-723-4050 (Port Alberni)
 - 250-723-2040 (Port Alberni)
 - Toll Free 1-800-588-8717 (BC Wide)
 - Outside of BC, please contact the Crisis Line in your area
5. First Nations Health Authority – for counsellors covered by your First Nations Health Authority Benefits in your area, see <https://www.fnha.ca/benefits/mental-health>