



huu ay aht

ANCIENT SPIRIT, MODERN MIND

Ḥaw̓iiḥ Council

March 6, 2026

### **Statement from Ḥaw̓iiḥ Council Regarding Upcoming ʔApw̓inisathʔ House Seating Event**

Huu-ay-aht Ḥaw̓iiḥ has recently been informed of an upcoming private event involving the seating of Huupaalthus (Olivia Peters) for the House of ʔApw̓inisathʔ at the House of Gathering in Port Alberni. Huu-ay-aht Ḥaw̓iiḥ were not traditionally invited to this event, and do not feel this event is being conducted through our traditional teachings but continue to support Huupaalthus taking on the seat in accordance with Huu-ay-aht tradition and protocols.

As a result of the removal of the seat holder due to misconduct and breaching Huu-ay-aht traditions and Huu-ay-aht laws, the House of ʔApw̓inisathʔ experienced a long period with the seat left vacant. During that time, the late suʔiyaakuuʔ (Jane Peters), matriarch of the House of ʔApw̓inisathʔ, was welcomed by the Ḥaw̓iiḥ Council as the sitting Ḥaw̓iʔ for the House of ʔApw̓inisathʔ.

On May 5, 2022, Ḥaw̓iiḥ Council received serious allegations regarding Derek Peters from a number of citizens. On May 6, 2022, Derek Peters stepped away and retired from all his positions and duties. Huu-ay-aht then initiated a formal investigation. In May 2023, investigators submitted their report to the Ḥaw̓iiḥ Council. After months of careful deliberation and following our traditional practices, on August 31, 2023, given the extremely serious nature of these acts and the extended timeframe over which this highly concerning behaviour occurred, Ḥaw̓iiḥ Council decided to permanently remove Derek Peters from the Ḥaw̓iiḥ Council and from the role as Tayii Ḥaw̓iʔ. Findings of the Panel of Inquiry Report can be found here: (<https://huuayaht.org/hfn-inquiry-panel/>).

On October 7, 2024, suʔiyaakuuʔ held a private gathering at the House of Huu-ay-aht with family and members of the Ḥaw̓iiḥ Council present. During that gathering, she shared a statement expressing that she was holding the seat for Huupaalthus. At this time, the Ḥaw̓iiḥ reflects on the guidance from suʔiyaakuuʔ by looking to the remaining matriarch, Uksyaʔkwilthim (Theresa Peter), for continued mentorship in Olivia's role on Ḥaw̓iiḥ Council.

We also recognize that this private event may raise questions within the community. The Ḥaw̓iiḥ Council wishes to reassure citizens that we remain committed to supporting our people and to ensuring that our community continues to feel safe, respected, and cared for.

The Ḥaw̓iiḥ will continue to support one another and our citizens, and we welcome any successor to the Council in accordance with our laws, teachings, and traditions.

ʔuušyak šiʔiiʔic (Thank you),

Office: Anacla Government Office, 170 Nookemus Road, Anacla, B.C., V0R 1B0

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Theresa Nookemus  
Thlut' as-aksup  
Ha'wiih Representative

Phyllis Williams  
kiyakinuᑲ

Andy Clappis  
Ciicaacistuᑲ

Sherri Cook  
Yaalthuuaa-uks

Tommy Happynook  
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Alec Frank  
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We understand that this information may be triggering, we encourage citizens to reach out to support if needed:

- Child and Family Wellness Department - 250-723-0100 (please call for individual support)
- Cultural Support (Cory Howard Sr.) - 1-888-644-4555 or 250-723-0100
- Huu-ay-aht Clinical Counsellors – 250-723-0100
- Cultural Wellness Program (Quu'asa) – 250-724-3939
- 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
- 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>

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