



OKANAGAN NATION ALLIANCE

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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COURT UPHOLDS OKANAGAN NATION AND SECWEPENC NATION LOGGING CASE

Today, Judge Sigurdson rejected the Province of British Columbia's arguments that the Province is accommodating the rights of First Nations through its Forest Revitalization legislation and the Forest Range Agreement.

The Province lost an application in Court today to discontinue a lawsuit against the Okanagan & Secwepenc Nations, who logged to provide housing for their members without seeking the Province's permission.

The cases were started by the Province in 1999 and are aimed at enforcing stop work orders issued to the Bands following logging projects started by them under the authority of licenses issued by their respective Nations. The Province has to pay the Band's costs of fighting the cases following a 2003 BC Court of Appeal decision on the costs issue that was upheld by the Supreme Court of Canada.

Last year, the Bands were successful at the Supreme Court of Canada in obtaining an order that the Province pay the Bands' court costs.

In a last ditch effort to avoid a court ruling that the Province's forestry legislation is unconstitutional, and to avoid paying the Bands' costs to prove that, the Province had gone snivelling to Court to try to drop the lawsuit it started when it issued stop work orders against the Bands in 1999.

A trial date is set to begin in the fall of 2006.

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