



May 27, 2025

The Honourable David Eby, M.L.A.
Premier of British Columbia

The Honourable Bowinn Ma, M.L.A.
Minister of Infrastructure

The Honourable Christine Boyle, M.L.A.
Minister of Indigenous Relations and
Reconciliation

The Honourable Niki Sharma, M.L.A.
Attorney General and Deputy Premier

Via email

Re: BCCLA Urges BC Government to Withdraw Bill 15: *Infrastructure Projects Act*

Dear Premier Eby and Ministers Ma, Boyle, and Sharma:

BCCLA urges Premier David Eby and the BC Government to immediately withdraw Bill 15-2025 [*Infrastructure Projects Act*](#) (the “Bill”). The Bill betrays the Province’s commitment to recognize and respect the rights of First Nations and was drafted in violation of BC’s own *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (DRIPA).¹ We stand in solidarity with First Nations people and leaders in decrying this unilateral and disrespectful attempt to circumvent First Nations’ inherent rights and decision-making authority.

After all, British Columbia would not exist but for its occupation of unceded First Nations lands, and by way of Treaty in some parts of the province.

The Bill, if passed, will empower the government to fast-track infrastructure projects, at the risk of First Nations’ legal rights and environmental protections. Shockingly, under Part 2, the Bill permits the Minister of Infrastructure to acquire land by purchase, lease or *otherwise*, for present or future infrastructure projects. In theory, this could include lands subject to Aboriginal title claims or the expropriation of First Nations reserve or treaty lands.

We are deeply disappointed to learn that the Bill was drafted without any input from First Nations, contrary to section 3 of DRIPA, which provides that: “in consultation and cooperation

¹ Section 3 of DRIPA provides that: “In consultation and cooperation with the Indigenous peoples in British Columbia, the government must take all measures necessary to ensure the laws of British Columbia are consistent with the Declaration.”

with the Indigenous peoples in British Columbia, **the government must take all measures necessary to ensure the laws of British Columbia are consistent with [UNDRIP].**" Although its proponents insist that BC's commitment to DRIPA is built into the Bill under section 20, we are concerned that it is inadequate to ensure the Articles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) will be adhered to, or to ensure First Nations can enforce their rights.

In addition to the government's breach of its legal obligations to First Nations, the BCCLA is further concerned that the Bill could fast-track politically unpopular infrastructure projects at the expense of vital democratic processes. The Bill will empower the government of the day to override the interests of others, including municipalities, for any project the Government deems "provincially significant" - a vague designation for which the Government has yet to release any proposed criteria at the time of this letter.

Moreover, as several environmental groups have cautioned, proceeding with Bill 15 poses a grave threat to the lands and waters of BC, and to the humans and animals dependent on them. While the BC Government keeps highlighting hospitals and schools as examples of the kind of projects the Bill will fast-track, there's little acknowledgement that the Bill's extraordinary powers can also be wielded in service of the projects of private businesses, such as mining companies.

Bill 15 is a triple threat: A threat to building right relations with First Nations; a threat to our democratic processes; and a threat to the health of the lands and peoples of "British Columbia."

BCCLA is proud to join the growing chorus of First Nations, environmental groups, local governments, and residents calling on Premier Eby, Minister Ma, and the BC NDP Government to withdraw Bill 15.

Sincerely,



Meghan McDermott
Policy Director
BC Civil Liberties Association



Veronica Martisius
Litigation Staff Counsel
BC Civil Liberties Association

CC: Mr. John Rustad, M.L.A.
Leader of the Official Opposition

Mr. Jeremy Valeriote, M.L.A.
Interim Leader, BC Green Party

Members of the Government Caucus

Ms. Kate Ryan-Lloyd
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly