

Aboriginal Trade Mission Promotes Canada's Pacific Gateway

November 10, 2008

Beijing, China - A delegation of Aboriginal representatives from British Columbia's northwest corridor have held talks with senior political and business leaders in China. The purpose of the mission is to promote Canada and BC as an attractive destination for investment. Delegates explained the unique competitive advantages of the Pacific Gateway, the Port of Prince Rupert, and the abundant natural resources available throughout the northern corridor.

Chief Councillor John Helin of the Lax Kw'alaams Band, and officials of Coast Tsimshian Resources Ltd, the bands wholly owned company, stated: "Our core business is forestry and fisheries. We have been meeting with potential clients and promoted the cost, quality, branding and marketing advantages of doing business in the northwest. We have access to the resources China needs and we want them to know that our communities are open for business."

Coast Tsimshian Resources last year shipped more than \$19 million in wood products to China and its fish plant can produce more than 10 million pounds of product annually for the world markets.

Commenting on the discussions, Elmer Derrick, Hereditary Chief of the Gitksan Nation, chief negotiator of the Gitksan Treaty Office, and board member of Ridley Terminals Inc, a federal crown corporation located in Prince Rupert, said: "We talked about the benefits of the region and our strong desire to build long term economic partnerships with the Chinese to develop our regional economy. And we stressed the value of dealing directly with aboriginal representatives to facilitate transactions within our communities and the region as a whole. The Gitksan First Nation is eager to play a constructive role in fostering and accelerating the renewal of the resource economy in the region. We have access to an untapped fibre and mineral supply that requires substantial investment. Our people are ready and willing to work with regional stakeholders to seize on our natural attributes to revitalize our economy and develop compelling business opportunities for investors."

Jerry Lawson councillor of the Lax Kw'alaams Band, stated, "The meetings provided us a great opportunity to network with the Chinese, and also the Canadian companies who are here as part of the Canada-China Business Council. We have learned a great deal about the opportunities that exist for our communities as we seek to expand our business and broader economic interests."

Daniel Veniez, Chairman of Ridley Terminals stated: "The Governments of Canada and British Columbia have invested heavily in building infrastructure to accommodate and breathe life into the Pacific Gateway Initiative. The Port of Prince Rupert and Ridley Terminals are strategic assets to Canada that deepen our national trade flow capacity. The northwest transportation corridor offers unrivalled access to one of the most important markets in the world. All of us in BC's northwest – aboriginal and non-aboriginal alike - have a powerful interest in aligning our efforts to work together to create new business opportunities for the entire region. We are happy to support the effort to develop and strengthen the productive capacity of resource based communities in Western Canada and along the northern corridor."

The trade mission was organized by the Native Investment Trade Association, under the chairmanship of Calvin Helin. The Aboriginal trade mission includes delegations from British Columbia, Northwest Territories, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Quebec, Labrador and Nova Scotia.