



FIRST PEOPLES' HERITAGE, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE COUNCIL

SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK PROVIDED IN JULY, 2009 ABOUT THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE FIRST PEOPLES' HERITAGE, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE ACT

Thank you! Kukwstsétsemc! Sunachailya! Huy ch q'u!

The First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council (FPHLCC) wants to thank all who provided their feedback to this important initiative.

This document provides a summary of all the feedback, and next steps for these proposed legislative amendments.

What are the Proposed Legislative Changes?

FPHLCC is seeking to improve its governing legislation to:

- include representation from all B.C. First Nations language groups on its Advisory Committee
- have more control over its operations in line with best practices for other crown corporations
- be able to adapt to governance changes as they occur in First Nations communities
- enhance its credibility among First Nations, with governments, funders and other partners

FPHLCC wants to include the voice of all 32 First Nations language groups in B.C. as intended in the original legislation. When the Act was brought into force in 1990, a tribal or area council represented most First Nations languages. Now some First Nations have expanded to come under a second tribal council or, increasingly, they are assuming other models of governance such as treaty groups or independent First Nations.

Under the current Act, First Nations unaffiliated with tribal councils are unable to nominate a representative to our Advisory Committee, while language groups with more than one tribal council have gained additional representation. As a result, only 18 of the 32 language groups in British Columbia are represented on FPHLCC's Advisory Committee.

The Act is also outdated in that it fails to explicitly reflect the understanding among First Nations that the term “culture” includes the arts and that heritage, language and the arts are all interdependent components of culture. Nor does it reflect FPHLCC’s important work with a wide range of B.C. artists, language champions, leaders and organizations or allow FPHLCC to be as responsive and modern as we need to be.

For more details, please read the Discussion Paper on Proposed Amendments to the *First Peoples’ Heritage, Language and Culture Council Act* online at www.fphlcc.ca.

Why Feedback was Solicited - July, 2009

FPHLCC works in partnership with the First Nations communities, governing organizations and other organizations such as cultural centres, language authorities and elders’ groups. It also advises government on the preservation and fostering of First Nations heritage, arts, languages and culture.

As a result, it was critical to canvass our key stakeholders and the First Nations community at large **before recommending** to the Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation that these proposed amendments be included in the provincial government’s 2010 legislative package for review.

How was the Voice of the First Nations Community Solicited?

In total, we made just under 700 contacts with stakeholders between June 29, 2009 and July 14, 2009 by taking the following steps:

- A list of stakeholders was developed to represent those most likely to be affected by the proposed amendments. These include: tribal councils, cultural centres, language champions, language authorities, artists, First Nations, First Nations political leaders, elders groups, educators and past submitters of funding proposals.
- Each stakeholder was provided with information about the initiative and provided with the opportunity to complete a feedback survey either on-line utilizing a simple user-friendly form or by printing and mailing in the feedback survey. The deadline for survey responses was July 17, 2009.

- A supporting discussion paper was distributed along with the feedback forms to ensure that the need for the amendments was clearly communicated, and that the proposed amendments were explained, to assist stakeholder responses.
- Additional efforts were taken to communicate directly with tribal councils and selected cultural centres since they were identified as key stakeholders that could be significantly affected by the proposed amendments.
- The opportunity to connect directly with language champions, another key stakeholder group, was presented by the language conference held in Vancouver July 4-6, 2009. This forum provided an excellent opportunity to advise a broad spectrum of language stakeholders and to gather their feedback.

Our outreach activities were challenged by two factors that were beyond the control of the FPHLCC:

Timing of Outreach Activities: The initiation of outreach activities was delayed by the timing of the spring provincial election. External stakeholders cannot be engaged by government entities and Crown agencies during the campaign and consultation activities had to be delayed until late June. Attempting to get feedback from any group – First Nation or otherwise – is very difficult during the summer months of July and August due to potential lack of availability.

Duration of Feedback Period: We had to proceed with our planned outreach activities nonetheless in order to meet the legislative schedule for the Spring 2010 session. The legislative process has many steps and the deadlines are quite inflexible - the results of outreach activities had to be completed no later than August 7, 2009. This meant that the period of time available for stakeholders to receive and review materials and submit their feedback was relatively short – approximately 15 days.

The following steps were taken make up for the short timeline for providing feedback:

- Careful thought was given to the circumstances faced by potential respondents. Every effort was made to keep documents simple and to make the completion of the survey form simple.
- Tribal councils and some cultural centres received personal contacts and were provided with materials to help communicate the initiative to a wider local audience.
- A FPHLCC Board Member made a presentation at the language conference. Participants were encouraged to complete the survey at the conference and provided an incentive prize to entice greater participation. Staff from the FPHLCC was available at four counters during the conference to take in completed surveys, answer questions and provide assistance filling in the survey form.
- All materials were posted on the FPHLCC website and an easy link to the on-line survey was provided. The whole initiative was also posted on Twitter.

- Overlap in outreach activities occurred between groups so that some stakeholders received more than one contact about the initiative. This increased the number of communication channels and potentially improved the awareness of the initiative and the timelines
- Responses received up to July 24th were accepted and input into the on-line survey.

Despite the short timeframe, the initiative was well publicized and clearly explained.

Who Responded

In total, 240 completed feedback forms were returned between July 2, 2009 – July 17, 2009 from a wide range of interested stakeholders.

Figure 1 - Respondents by Type

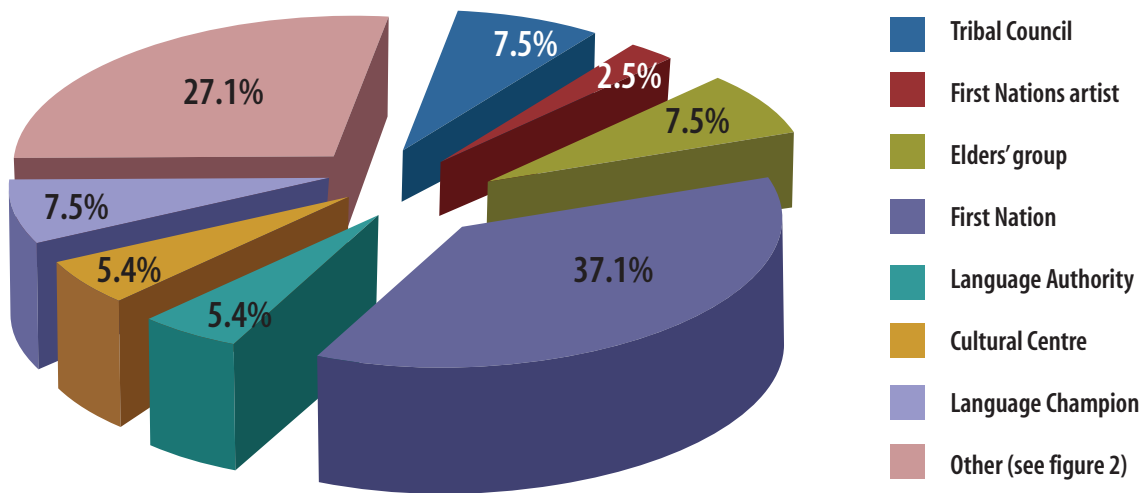


Figure 2 - Other Respondents

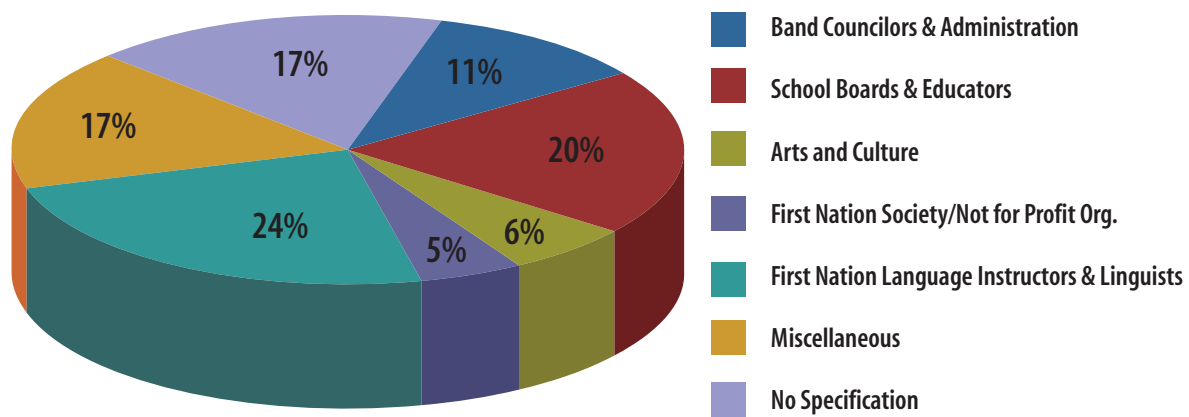
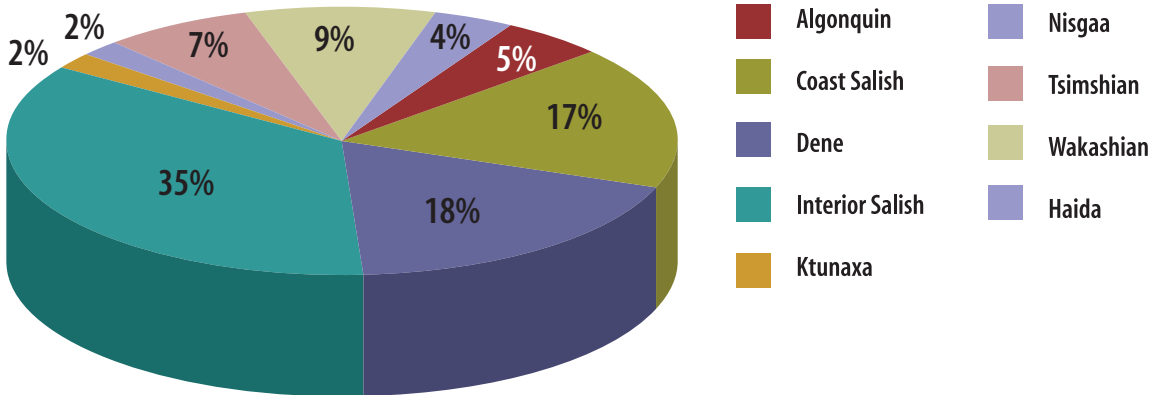


Figure 3 - Language Families Represented



WHAT YOU TOLD US

We were overwhelmed with the positive response we received to the proposed changes. The majority of you agreed with the changes that have been proposed:

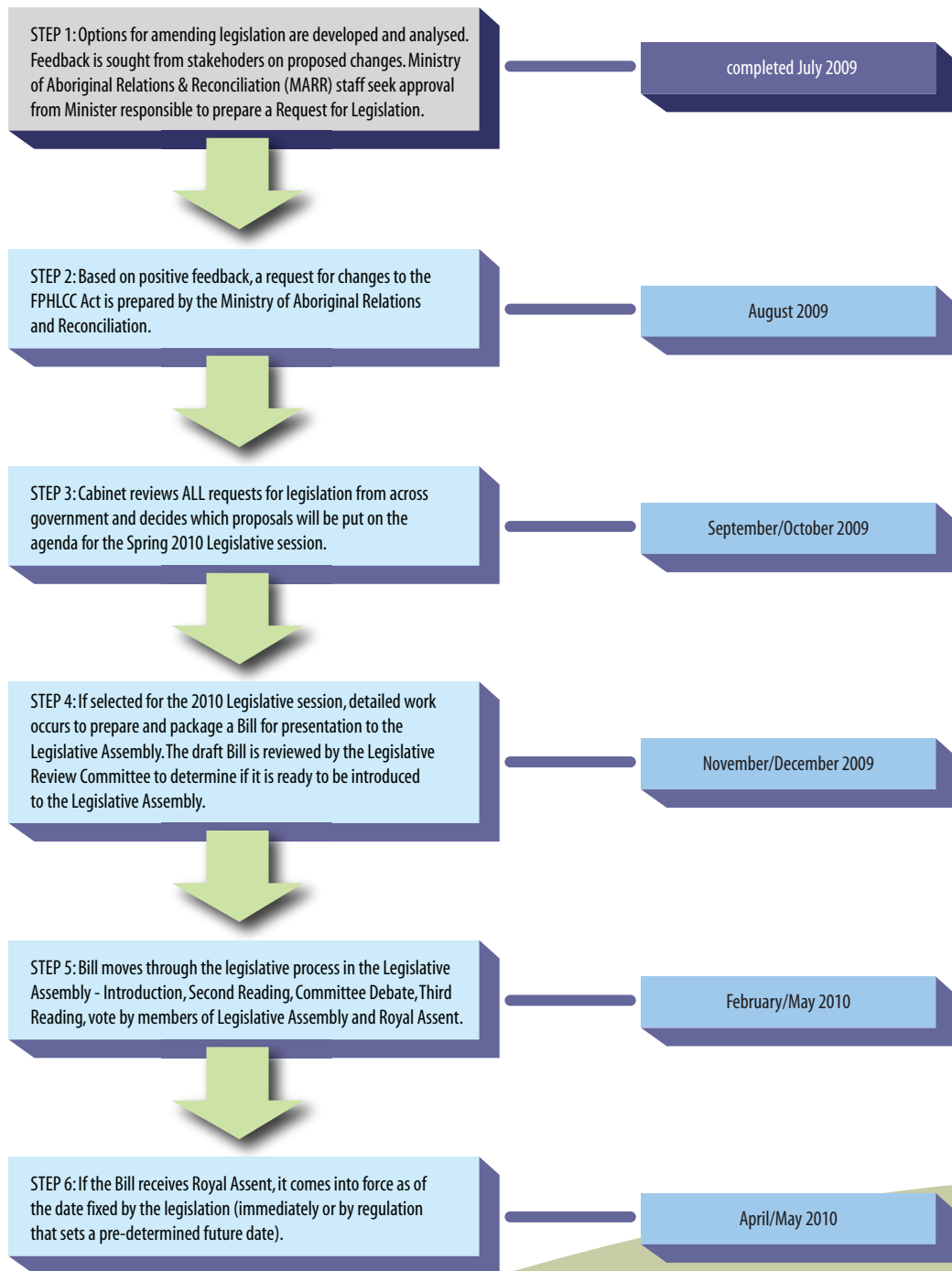
Question	Agree	Disagree	No Opinion
1. Respondents asked to identify the group that best describes their affiliation from a list of possible groups - see Figures 1 and 2.			
2. Do you agree that FPHLCC should include a representative of each BC First Nations language group on its Advisory Committee?	94.2%	2.5%	3.3%
3. Do you agree that the legislation should contain clear reference to the arts as a component of First Nations' culture?	93.8%	2.5%	3.8%
4. Do you agree that the legislation should accurately reflect the broad range of FPHLCC's activities?	96.7%	1.7%	1.7%
5. Do you agree that the legislation should provide FPHLCC with the flexibility to adapt to governance changes within First Nation communities?	90.4%	3.3%	6.3%
6. Do you agree with distinguishing clearly between the functions of the Advisory Committee and the Board in the Council's bylaws?	86.7%	2.5%	10.8%

- 7. Do you support an open nomination process as described? 85.8% 5.0% 9.2%
- 8. Respondents asked to identify their language group and dialect - see Figure 3

What Happens Now?

Gathering your feedback on the proposed changes is just one step in the legislative process.

Figure 4 - Steps in the Legislative Process



The proposed changes will now be packaged into a detailed proposal that will be presented to a government committee in September. This committee decides which legislation from across government will be on the agenda for the spring session of the Legislative Assembly in 2010.

Even though the proposed changes are strongly supported by those most interested and affected by the *FPHLCC Act*, the legislative agenda is always very full and the committee may not find a place on it for our legislation. We will determine what steps to take if this happens.

How Can I Find Out More?

If you would like more information about the proposed changes, the response to the request for feedback or the status of the proposed legislative amendments, please contact the office at anytime at 250-652-5952 and ask for Leah at extension 215.

Thank you once again for your interest in this important initiative.