

What Sustainable Development Means to Lake Babine Nation

Lake Babine Nation has four main criteria that major projects must meet to gain the Nation's support:

- a. the project must be sustainable
- b. the project must bring significant benefits to LBN, in keeping with the level of project impacts on LBN, *niwh be 'ondzin* (LBN rights), and *yintah* (Territory and the natural resources it sustains).
- c. the project includes sufficient and reliable measures to manage any potential negative socio-economic impacts on LBN communities and members
- d. the proponent and LBN must be in a respectful relationship that includes significant LBN involvement in the project, in keeping with the nature and level of project impacts on LBN, *niwh be 'ondzin*, and *yintah*.

This document explains what the first criterion – sustainable project – means to Lake Babine Nation.

- Sustainable development is safe for - i.e. does not jeopardize – our *yintah*, especially the natural resources and special places within our *yintah* that sustain our *'eelh'oh 'eeneelh* (families), our economy (e.g. *talok* or salmon, *dicin* or timber, *yuh* or medicines) and our culture
- Sustainable development goes beyond protecting humans and the resources we harvest. Development must be safe for *nuneets'iyh* (all the living creatures), even the rats and the bugs
- Projects must be safe for all the components of the environment that humans and *nuneets'iyh* live in, i.e. *yin* (land), *to* (water, including *yin to* or ground water) and air
- Sustainable projects allow the Lake Babine people to keep practising our *niwh be 'ondzin* (LBN rights) and *nts'edah yinkak hadeelhts'iyh* (traditions, culture, and way of life). We need the following to sustain our *niwh be 'ondzin* and *nts'edah yinkak hadeelhts'iyh*:
 - access to the healthy and abundant natural resources on which our food security, and *nts'edah yinkak hadeelhts'iyh* depend (e.g. *talok* or salmon, *khida* or moose, *dicin tots* or bark, *yuh* or medicines, *nit'ay* or berries)
 - convenient, preferred, and sacred places and areas in our *yintah* where we harvest, carry out spiritual activities, teach our *nts'edah yinkak hadeelhts'iyh* to our youth, and practice other aspects of our *niwh be 'ondzin* and *nts'edah yinkak hadeelhts'iyh*
 - peaceful and uncontaminated communities and areas in our *yintah* (e.g. not noisy or busy from industrial activity, not in or right beside a clearcut, not near any

Confidential Draft

April 22, 2021

- contaminated sites, good air, *to* (water) and soil quality), including not too much competition from non-Indigenous harvesters
- to be physically safe from industrial activity in our communities and elsewhere in our *yintah* (risks could arise from industrial machinery or work sites, work camps, increased road traffic on roads used by LBN members)
 - the ability to preserve, study and celebrate our archaeological heritage (e.g. *keyikh hozdle* or villages sites, *tiy* or trails, *hideelhk'in* or CMTs), which helps tell the story of our longstanding use and occupation of our *yintah*
 - a feeling of security in our ability to practice our *niwh be 'ondzin* and *nts'edah yinkak hadeelhts'iyh* over the long-term, without worry or anxiety that development is eroding our ability to be Lake Babine¹
 - ability to pursue our own economic development activities in our *yintah*, which is part of our right of self-determination and our Aboriginal title (for example, does a project jeopardize LBN commercial fisheries, tourism operations, forestry operations?)
- Sustainable projects will not compromise the needs described above in any significant way.
 - Land and resource development and climate change already interfere with these needs. For example, we are experiencing an ongoing decline in *khida* and *talok*, our two main and preferred foods; the 4000 Road into Fort Babine is already not very safe; there are already significant clearcuts in some of our members' trapping areas. In those cases, LBN will consider whether the project would add to the problem. The more compromised a need already is due to the cumulative impacts of other land and resource development and climate change, the more LBN will be concerned about potential further adverse effects from a new project.
 - Lake Babine will consider both western science and Indigenous knowledge to understand the potential impacts of a project and its sustainability implications for our *yinta*.
 - Lake Babine will not assume lack of adverse impacts in the face of significant knowledge gaps. Significant knowledge gaps relating to a matter of real concern to Lake Babine need to be resolved before Lake Babine can conclude a project is sustainable.
 - Lake Babine will not assume sustainability based on legislated environmental standards or the fact that mitigations are proposed to address a Lake Babine concern:
 - mitigation measures need to be proven as effective or reasonably expected to be effective;
 - mitigation measures need to be enforceable and there must be a plan and funding for enforcement (by proponent, Crown, and Lake Babine);

¹ This one will depend on all the earlier ones in the list – the greater the negative effects, the greater the threat to culture and way of life and thus the greater the cultural insecurity.

Confidential Draft

April 22, 2021

- there will need to be monitoring and reviewing of effectiveness of mitigation measures, and if a mitigation measure proves less effective than expected, adaptive management to try to achieve more effective mitigation.
- As Lake Babine people, *niwh yinah wighec 'ats 'olh 'ee*: we are responsible for protecting our *yintah*. We have had this duty since time immemorial. We owe this duty to our future generations and to *nuneets 'iyh'* on our *yintah*. If we do not *niwh yintah wighits 'eenlee* (care properly for our *yintah*), both the *yin* and the people suffer. The high rates of sickness today in Lake Babine people are connected to the sickness on our land. We need to regain our role as stewards of our *yintah*.