



**YUKON
REGION**

A Yukon that Leads

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AFN Yukon Regional Chief Adamek Statement on 2022 Federal Budget

Whitehorse, Yukon – AFN Yukon Regional Chief Kluane Adamek expresses a mixed reaction following Thursday’s release of the 2022 Federal Budget

“Budget 2022 is making commitments that help advance some Yukon First Nation priorities. These are important to highlight and celebrate. I am pleased to see that advancing Indigenous self-determination, implementing the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, and support for communities searching the grounds of former residential institutions, amongst other things, are receiving the distinct investments and attention they deserve.

Perhaps most encouraging is that, for the first time ever, Canada is explicitly funding housing for Modern Treaty Nations with a \$565 million investment over five years, in addition to the \$30 million given to the Yukon government for affordable housing. In previous years, federal spending has largely neglected the housing needs of Modern Treaty Nations. This is a key issue our region consistently urges federal partners to resolve. Budget 2022 is a step in the right direction to filling this gap felt by many Yukon First Nation governments and citizens.

Trauma-informed and culturally appropriate approaches to support healing are deeply needed in the Yukon. It is encouraging to see Budget 2022 include a \$227.6 million envelope for Indigenous-led services to improve mental wellness. With the ongoing opioid crisis that is having a devastating impact on many Yukon First Nations, I am hopeful federal investments into Indigenous-led wellness and substance use solutions will continue increasing.

When it comes to climate action, Canada is setting aside \$29.6 million to co-develop an Indigenous Climate Leadership Agenda. While this funding is meant to support Indigenous peoples with addressing their climate priorities and strategies, a more substantial investment is needed immediately for communities to be able to lead the transformative climate action that is urgently needed.

Mining and resource development projects in the Yukon continue to be a reality that bring challenges to First Nations whose traditional territories are impacted, often without sufficient free, prior and informed consent, or a rights based approach. Budget 2022 commits \$103.4 million over five years to expand Indigenous partnership and benefit-sharing initiatives in natural resource projects. At least \$25 million of

this funding will be used for early engagement and capacity building for communities to participate in “critical mineral mining.” These investments are intended to provide opportunities for Indigenous communities to benefit from resource extraction, but they should not take away from the importance of respecting and upholding the rights of Yukon First Nation governments and citizens.

The AFN Yukon Regional Office will continue working with the federal government to realize the commitments in this budget that support and advance the interests of all 14 Yukon First Nations. We will continue to advocate, at the direction of Yukon First Nations, for the increased support and investments needed to create meaningful progress on our priorities.”

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