

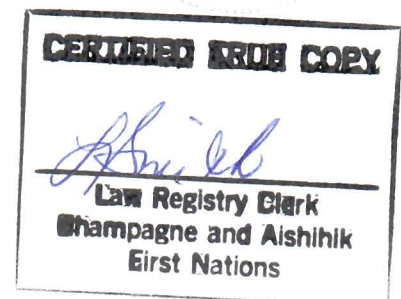


CHAMPAGNE and AISHIHIK First Nations

**Dákwänje Nàts'ùal Act
Yoo X'atángí
Dákhwänji Nats'ú'aw**

LANGUAGE ACT

Third Reading
Date: July 11, 2014



Dákwänje Nàts'ùal Act

Enacted the 11th day of July, 2014


Chief James Allen

Preamble

As the people of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and as a self-governing nation, we hold the land, water, air, animals and our connection with all creation as sacred. Our culture is rooted in this belief and our languages are embedded with traditional knowledge and spirituality, as taught to us by our Elders. The stories, songs and cultural teachings are transferred from Elders to Youth, for each generation, as part of our education and responsibility for carrying the culture and language forward.

Respecting the traditional languages of Southern Tutchone, Northern Tutchone, Tlingit and others is an important value of our people. Our diversity is part of our strength. Our intent is to support the language and cultural learning of all of our citizens and to continue to deepen our appreciation and pride in our nation.

The Elders remind us that our words themselves contain values, spirituality and principles of respect within them. Knowing the words and the languages instills the way by which we live on the land, with the animals and how we treat each other. As well, the words and phrases contain knowledge, traditional and cultural as well as scientific details which must be preserved in a living language that we learn from.

With fluency in the Southern Tutchone language in rapid decline, the protection, preservation and enhancement of this language must be a priority. The responsibility for revitalizing the language is shared between the Government, its departments, and all citizens. This responsibility extends from generation to generation with the goal being to ensure that the values, knowledge and healing rooted in the language are available to all, now and in the future. Restoration of the intergenerational transmission of language and culture will help unify our communities and families.

This Act can serve as a call to action to all, to work towards fulfilling the vision statement of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations people and government that we “shall promote a healthy, unified and self-reliant people while conserving and enhancing our environment and culture.”

The Council of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations hereby enacts as follows:

Title

1. This Act shall be called the *Dákwänje Nàts'ùal Act*.

Purpose

2. The purpose of this Act is to provide direction for and state the commitment to the restoration and revitalization of the Southern Tutchone language and the other traditional languages as primary languages of communication, education, ceremony, government and business for the people of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations.

This Act affirms the importance of the Southern Tutchone language and the other traditional languages and the cultural and traditional teachings of the people of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations.

This Act is based on the principle that the people, individually and collectively, have a moral and ethical obligation to protect, promote, use and encourage the use of the Southern Tutchone language and the other traditional languages of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations.

Definitions

3. In this Act,

“Citizen” means a Citizen of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations;

“Constitution” means the Constitution of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations;

“Government” means the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations’ Government including the four branches of government which are the General Assembly, First Nations Council, Elders Senate and Youth Council;

“language mandate” means a document that establishes key priorities and strategies for the departments of the Government to follow in their activities leading to the restoration and revitalization of the Southern Tutchone language and the traditional languages;

“people” means the Citizens of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations; and

“traditional languages” means Southern Tutchone and any language or dialect spoken currently or historically by the people.

Language rights and responsibilities of the people of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations

4. Every citizen has the right to free expression, in private or in public, in the Southern Tutchone language and the other traditional languages or in the language of their choice.
5. Every citizen has the moral and ethical obligation to protect, promote, use and encourage the use of the Southern Tutchone language and the other traditional languages and to enhance respect for the culture of the people of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations.
6. Every citizen has a responsibility to participate in the restoration and revitalization of the Southern Tutchone language and the other traditional languages of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations in public or private.

Duties and responsibilities of the Government and the departments

7. (1) The Government and the departments have a duty and responsibility to protect, promote, use and encourage the use of the Southern Tutchone language and the other traditional languages and to enhance respect for the culture of the people of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations.

(2) The First Nations Council shall fulfill the purpose of this Act by adopting a language mandate that establishes key priorities and strategies for departments to follow in the restoration and revitalization of the Southern Tutchone language and in the provision of support for the other traditional languages.

(3) The First Nations Council shall, while giving priority to the Southern Tutchone language in the language mandate, recognize that most of the people, in the past, spoke more than one traditional language.

(4) The First Nations Council shall require the Government, through all departments, to fulfill the obligations set out in the language mandate.

(5) The language mandate must recognize the right of every citizen, pursuant to sections 13, 14 and 15 of the Constitution, to speak in Southern Tutchone and any traditional language in all democratic processes of the Government and, where feasible, to have translation provided.

(6) The First Nations Council, prior to adopting the language mandate, shall seek the advice, assistance and recommendations of the Elders Senate and the Youth Council on its content.

Accountability of the First Nations Council and departments

8. (1) The First Nations Council shall be accountable on an annual basis to the General Assembly for its oversight of the language mandate.

(2) The First Nations Council shall also be responsible for ensuring that reports are provided to the General Assembly by the departments, including the lead department of Language, Culture and Heritage, for their activities taken under the authority of the language mandate.

(3) Any reports to the General Assembly that are in written form shall be posted on the Government website and made available to any citizen upon request.

9. The First Nations Council shall conduct an evaluation of the language mandate every third year after it has been adopted. The process for this evaluation shall ensure that the citizens and the Elders Senate and the Youth Council have an opportunity to provide their advice, assistance and recommendations on the advancement of the language mandate.

The *Dákwänje Nàts'ùal Act* as a living document

10. Citizens may contribute at any time to the significance and success of this *Dákwänje Nàts'ùal Act* by providing stories, songs and narratives which share their perspectives and values. Each submission shall be included in the *Dákwänje Nàts'ùal Act* by the addition of a separate appendix.