

RESOLUTION NO. 85

SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY

Subject: SUPPORT FOR BC ABORIGINAL NETWORK ON DISABILITY SOCIETY'S
(BCANDS) EFFORTS TO CREATE A NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR
ABORIGINAL PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Moved by: Chief Doug Kelly, Soowahlie First Nation, BC

Seconded by: Chief Wayne Bobb, Seabird Island Band, BC

Decision: Carried (one abstention)

WHEREAS federal Statistics Canada reports indicate a national disability rate of 15% for Non-Aboriginal people and that 31% of Aboriginal adults have a disability, over twice the national rate; and

WHEREAS the BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS) is an independent non-political organization with the mandate of promoting the "betterment of Aboriginal people with disabilities" for the purpose of improving quality of life, which has been operating in BC since 1991; and

WHEREAS BCANDS currently provides a multitude of services for disabled Aboriginal people in BC including, but not limited to: conducting research on the needs of Disabled Aboriginals and the resources available to meet these needs; making the results of the Society's research available to appropriate agencies and organizations to assist them in their service delivery to Disabled Aboriginals, and in their development of more effective or appropriate services; making the results of the Society's research available directly to Disabled Aboriginals and educating and training them to access and make use of services currently available to them; developing culturally appropriate programs, services and materials which will benefit disabled Aboriginal people; operating a Health Canada funded health library and resource centre; providing technical information and support regarding Aboriginal disability issues to the HRDC federal Office for Disability Issues; and

WHEREAS BCANDS currently operates a national 1-800 Advocacy and Referral Line for Aboriginal people with disabilities, that maintains hours of operation convenient for eastern provinces, from 7 AM-4:30 PM PST, providing information and assistance to Aboriginal people from across Canada. BCANDS has proven to be an invaluable service provider for Aboriginal people in Canada, both on and off reserve; and

WHEREAS there is currently no national Aboriginal disability organization similar to BCANDS and no national organization for Aboriginal people with disabilities; and

WHEREAS BCANDS has strongly expressed its desire to expand its current role of working on behalf of disabled Aboriginal people in BC to acting as a National organization for Aboriginal people with disabilities; and

WHEREAS BCANDS is the most appropriate organization to work nationally on behalf of disabled Aboriginal people due to its long-term and extensive experience in assisting First Nation and Aboriginal clients; and

WHEREAS the BC First Nations Summit Chiefs in Assembly have already expressed their support for the BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS) by entering into a formal Protocol Agreement in September, 2004 in its goal to create a national organization to provide a national level of service for Aboriginal people with disabilities

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Assembly of First Nations actively support the BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society's efforts to create a national organization for First Nation and Aboriginal people with disabilities