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August 9, 2022

Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau MP
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister:

Re: Wilps Gwininitxw protected area declaration concerning Maxhla Didaat and Galaanhl Gist territories

On August 7, 2022, I attended a feast in Gitanmaax at the invitation of Gitxsan hereditary chief Gwininitxw, Yvonne Lattie.

As you may be aware, the Gitxsan were co-plaintiffs in the landmark Supreme Court case *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia*. The Gitxsan *lax yip* (territory) comprises 33,000 square kilometres in northwest B.C. and Wilps Gwininitxw is one of 62 Gitxsan Wilps, or houses, within their traditional governance system.

At the feast, Gwininitxw issued a declaration protecting her Wilp's 170,000-hectare *lax yip* in the upper reaches of the Skeena River watershed under Gitxsan law, or *Ayook*. As a witness at the feast, and as Member of Parliament for Skeena-Bulkley Valley, I was asked to inform your government of Gwininitxw's declaration of protection. I have attached the declaration itself for your records.

Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) hold tremendous potential for protecting biodiversity, strengthening relations with Indigenous nations and increasing resilience in the face of a changing climate. I note your government's efforts in this regard through the Target 1 Challenge and Canada Nature Fund. Your government must act more urgently if it is to reach its 2025 land protection target. Gwininitxw has tried to engage your government on the formal designation of her territory, including making applications to current programs. It is disappointing that to date these efforts have not been acknowledged.

I hope your government will find ways to work with Gwininitxw to realize her long-term conservation vision for her *Wilp's lax yip* – for today's residents of the Skeena watershed and for generations to come.

Respectfully,

Taylor Bachrach MP
Skeena-Bulkley Valley

Cc:
Yvonne Lattie (Gwininitxw)
Hon. Steven Guilbeault MP, Minister of Environment and Climate Change