

We encourage you to share your voice and let City Hall know how important this initiative is to you.

- Use this form Letter of Support; add what you like (or leave it as is), sign your name, address and email.
- City Council has indicated that letters with personalized thoughts and information are taken more seriously than form letters with just a signature.
- We have developed a FAQ on our website – please feel free to use any information you find there in your letter.
- Spread the word! Your voice matters.
- Email to: info@powellriver.ca, cc: whythenamematters@gmail.com

Template Letter of Support

City of Powell River Mayor & Council 6910 Duncan Street Powell River, BC V8A 1V4

RE: Support for renaming of the City of Powell River Dear Mayor and Council,

I want to commend the Joint Working Group's work for engaging residents of this region in a dialogue about re-naming the City of Powell River to a meaningful name that reflects our rich history and our shared responsibilities to truth and reconciliation in action.

Tla'amin Nation has place names for all areas in this region since time immemorial. When settlers arrived, they renamed Tla'amin places to mold Indigenous lands into European replicas. Sometimes places were named arbitrarily; Powell River is no exception – Powell was a government official who did not live or work in this area and developed and encouraged policies, laws, and programs that harmed Indigenous peoples. Memorializing this individual is inconsistent with our values. In the words of John Hackett, Hegus for the Tla'amin Nation: "In the spirit of reconciliation and qathet (working together), let's find a more respectful and inclusive name that is more reflective of both the oral history of these lands and the present-day collaborative communities" (Peak, 2021, <https://www.prpeak.com/opinion/viewpoint-some-things-arent-worth-fighting-over-3805839>).

Reclaiming Tla'amin place names is part of a greater project of reclaiming Tla'amin identity and connection to landscapes and waterways; and inherent rights and responsibility to homelands. It is an act that honours Tla'amin peoples' ancestors and future generations. The same is true for the many other place name reclamation projects occurring across Turtle Island and other settler-nation-states. Renaming also benefits settler families and future generations by choosing to intentionally live in right relationship, mutual respect, and honour in the Tla'amin territories—that is, in a spirit of reconciliation.

I strongly disagree with the concept of a referendum. As a community, we must balance majority rules and minority rights. In this case, this is *not* a decision for majority rule; instead, it is an essential and meaningful act rooted in reconciliation *and* our Canadian democratic values and constitutionally enshrined rights of minorities. I firmly believe public engagement and education, healing community conversations, and **firm action** through the commitment of renaming are crucial.

This is a meaningful act that advances the implementation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and the safety and dignity of all.

I, therefore, commend you, Mayor and Council, for your resolved support to advance this initiative with the name change Joint Working Group and appropriately commemorate this visible act of reconciliation. This re-naming process reflects our shared commitment to caring and respectful relationships and creating a better future together as governments, communities, and individuals.

I am in full support of the name change. Such work holds a positive legacy for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Signature

Name

Address