

UPDATE: JUNE 2022

TAKE ACTION: We encourage you to share your voice and let the Joint Working Group, the Mayor & City Council, and our community know that you support a name change for Powell River. If you have already sent a letter, you can always send another one. This is an updated Letter of Support template (June 2022).

USING OUR TEMPLATE:

- City Council has indicated that letters with personalized thoughts and information are taken more seriously than form letters with just a signature.
- That said, please use this template Letter of Support if it's helpful, and add what you like to it (or leave it as is).
- Make sure to include your name and address to show that you are a resident of this region. If you are not a resident, you can still send a letter – explain why this initiative is important to you.

WHERE DO I SEND MY LETTER OF SUPPORT?

Joint Working Group & consultants: pnc@powellriver.ca or drop off to City Hall

Mayor & City Council: info@powellriver.ca or drop off to City Hall

Brent Mueller, Director, Governance and Structure Branch: brent.mueller@gov.bc.ca

Minister Nathan Cullen: MUNI.Minister@gov.bc.ca

The Name Matters: whythenamematters@gmail.com (We are compiling your words to share with the community - with your permission, of course. We will reply to you when we receive your email).

Please note: Send letters to pnc@powellriver.ca by midnight on Monday, June 6th to be included in the Recommendation Report that will be submitted to City Council by the Joint Working Group. Please continue to send emails and letters to all government officials and The Name Matters, beyond that date.

We include province government officials because we have heard reports that those officials are receiving letters from those who are *not* in support of the name change.

YOUR VOICE MATTERS: We are in a critical time in this process and the Joint Working Group will be making recommendations soon. Your letter to Mayor & Council and the Joint Working Group is a very important way to have your voice heard – don't underestimate the power of your participation. All are welcome to participate – you don't have to be of voting age, all citizenship statuses are welcome, and any length of letter is welcome (from a one liner saying "I support the name change" to a five-page evidence-based analysis – it is all helpful).

LET'S LEARN TOGETHER

Visit our website (www.thenamematters.org) and check out the resources and FAQ -- please feel free to use any information you find there in your letter. You can also find us on FB + IG (the name matters). Spread the word! Our voices matter.

Template Letter of Support

City of Powell River Mayor & Council

6910 Duncan Street

Powell River, BC

V8A 1V4

RE: I support the renaming of the City of Powell River

Dear Mayor and Council,

I want to commend the Joint Working Group's effort in engaging residents of this region in a dialogue about re-naming the City of Powell River to something meaningful that reflects our rich history and our shared responsibilities to truth and reconciliation in action. I support the Tla'amin Nation's request to change the name of this place and I call on the leaders of this region to work together. I am opposed to a referendum/assent voting for this important history-making decision. Let us be guided by 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>).

Tla'amin Nation has had place names for all areas in this region since time immemorial. When settlers arrived, they renamed Tla'amin places with little regard for existing names; this history and the continued impacts of colonization cannot be disputed. That Israel Powell was a government official who did not live or work in this area and who developed and encouraged policies, laws, and programs that harmed Indigenous peoples is well-documented. Memorializing this individual is inconsistent with our values. Reclaiming Tla'amin place names is part of a greater project of reclaiming Tla'amin identity and connection to landscapes and waterways, as well as inherent rights and responsibility to homelands. It is an act that honours Tla'amin peoples' ancestors and future generations. While we don't yet know what the new name will be, we do know that renaming also benefits all peoples now and in the future by choosing to live intentionally in right relationship, mutual respect, and honour in the Tla'amin territories—that is, in a spirit of reconciliation.

The name change is an act of truth and reconciliation and is well-aligned with our expressed community values. We can also look to the Community Accord (2018), and the City's strategic plan (2020-2022). The Community Accord outlines the City of Powell River and Tla'amin Nation's shared responsibilities of mutual recognition, collaboration, and maintenance of relationship; it states that the City and the Nation "deem recognition, understanding, and reconciliation as the foundation of their communities' common good" (July 20, 2018). The strategic plan emphasizes progressive governance and community health alongside values of innovation, inclusivity, collaboration, and accountability. The name change is also a meaningful act that advances the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the safety and dignity of all. The name change would be fully consistent with the BC

government's endorsement of UNDRIP, its own Declaration Act (2019), and its UNDRIP Action Plan (2022).

In closing, I reiterate that I strongly oppose the option of a referendum / assent voting / a community survey as a solution; it is a divisive and inappropriate mechanism to address such an important and sensitive matter. We elect representatives to show leadership and help all community member navigate difficult issues. 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 the constitutionally enshrined rights of minorities. I firmly believe that public engagement and education, healing community conversations, and firm action through the commitment of renaming are crucial.

The Mayor and Council have an opportunity to lead with integrity, guided by the values and actions outlined above. I, therefore, request that Mayor and Council continue to listen and to engage the community *and* do not put a referendum, assent voting, or community survey process in place. This re-naming process reflects our shared commitment to caring and respectful relationships and creating a better future together as governments, communities, and individuals. Such work holds a positive legacy for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Signature
Name
Address