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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Joint Statement by Kwanlin Dün First Nation Chief Doris Bill and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council Chief Kristina Kane

April 7, 2021

Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council confirm our full support of the Yukon Chief Medical Officer of Health's mandate to keep Yukon's border restrictions and self-isolation rules actively in place.

As COVID-19 variants are spreading quickly in other parts of Canada, our governments are concerned about increasing pressure on the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) and Government of Yukon to ease restrictions and open our borders.

Evidence has shown that Indigenous people are one of the most vulnerable populations when it comes to COVID-19 infection and our Yukon First Nations could be greatly impacted if this virus is allowed to spread.

Some COVID-19 variants—such as P.1, first identified in Brazil, and B.1.1.7, first identified in the UK—have shown themselves to be more easily transmitted and more dangerous, especially to younger people.

Yukon has done well rolling out the vaccine, but we have yet to reach herd immunity levels and too little is known about how immunization will protect against this new P.1 variant.

We know Yukon's health care infrastructure remains limited with just 15 ventilators in the territory, and we realize there is a risk of overburdening our system. Other jurisdictions, such as BC, may not be able to help if they are dealing with their own cases. An influx of medical transfers from the Yukon may be too much for them to accommodate.

We all must work together to act in the best interest of public health; this means continuing to follow the Safe 6 + 1 protocols and to enforce the *Civil Emergency Measures Act*.

Sháw nítähän, Gùnálchísh, Mähsi'cho, Thank you.



Chief Bill

“We will continue to stand by Yukoners, who have all worked very hard to keep our Territory safe. Because of this hard work, we’ve had a relatively low number of COVID-19 cases in Yukon. Now is not the time to open the Territory up to the Third Wave of COVID variants, which has the potential to be the deadliest part of the pandemic. We too look forward to the day when we can be together and hug our friends and family members. In the meantime, let’s keep supporting our local businesses, our essential workers, our Elders, our children, and each other.”

Chief Kane:

“We all have seen the first-hand impacts this pandemic has had on our communities. There is no doubt this virus has taken its toll on our economy and our well being and we would like nothing more than to have everything return to normal. However, we cannot ignore the science or the trends before us. We respect the Chief Medical Officer of Health’s decision to continue the restrictions at Yukon borders. It is because of these restrictions we have been able to protect our families, our neighbours, and our communities. We understand the frustrations many feel but we have to continue to follow these guidelines. We encourage all Whitehorse residents and our neighbours to do the same. Take care and stay safe.”



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