

By Keven Drews

Alberni-Clayoquot communities will be well represented in Victoria when the Liberal government introduces the Maa-nulth Treaty in the legislature Wednesday.

The five Maa-nulth nations have invited local mayors and municipal councillors to be a part of the historic event.

Ucluelet Mayor Dianne St. Jacques said she will attend the ceremonies with Coun. Eric Russcher.

“It’s history making,” said St. Jacques. “We want to be there to support our neighbours.”

On Oct. 21, the five Maa-nulth nations – Ucluelet, Toquaht, Uchucklesaht, Kyuquot and Huu-ay-aht – ratified a treaty that will give them a capital transfer of \$73.1-million, annual resource royalty payments averaging \$1.2-million for 25 years and a land transfer of approximately 245 square kilometres.

The treaty will be introduced to the legislature as a bill Wednesday.

Chief Coun. Robert Dennis, of the Huu-ay-aht First Nation, said his band has invited officials from the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District.

“We have approximately anywhere from 55-70 people going down,” he said. “I would say there’s a lot of excitement. People are doing a lot of things to prepare.”

The Huu-ay-aht, said Dennis, have been working hard to build relationships with local communities during the treaty process.

“This treaty is icing on the cake for all that work.”

Bob Harper, ACRD administrator, said the Maa-nulth have invited St. Jacques, Mayor John Fraser, Tofino, and Mayor Ken McRae, Port Alberni, to the event.

They have also invited ACRD board chair Hira Chopra, Tony Bennett, director for Long Beach, Area C, and Stefan Ochman, director for Bamfield, Area A.

St. Jacques said celebrations will begin at 10:30 a.m. at the Empress Hotel.

A procession will then walk to the legislature.

A reception will take place in the late afternoon and early evening.

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