

Maa-nulth First Nations deal to go to legislature this fall.

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VICTORIA - The B.C. government hopes to introduce a second treaty to the legislature next month for provincial ratification so it and the Tsawwassen treaty can be sent on to Ottawa for final approval.

Members of five Vancouver Island First Nations have voted in favour of a final treaty settlement worth about \$500 million in cash and land.

The Ucluelet, Toquaht, Uchucklesaht, and Kyuquot First Nations approved the Maa-nulth treaty over the weekend, following a successful vote in July by the Huu-ay-aht First Nation.

Mike de Jong, the aboriginal relations minister, said Monday the deal covers more than 2,000 people on the island's west coast.

"It is great news," de Jong said.

He said the next step is to introduce ratification legislation.

Given the Opposition leader's support of the treaty, de Jong anticipates MLAs will likely ratify both the Maa-Nulth and the Tsawwassen treaty before the end of the fall session.

The two treaties are the first to make it all the way through the B.C. Treaty Commission process.

NDP Leader Carole James said she will support the treaty when it comes before the legislature.

"This was a challenging treaty," she said. "To see a number of different First Nations come together to be able to do these negotiations and I think it's to their credit that they were able to do that and see such huge support for this treaty."

The Maa-nulth treaty will give the five tribes 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