



## Cowichan Tribes

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October 24, 2023

Cheryl McLay, Regional Manager Vancouver Island/Coast  
Regional and Rural Development Unit  
Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development & Innovation  
2080 Labieux Road  
Nanaimo, B.C. V9T 6J9

RE: Letter of Support for Cowichan Public Art Gallery Society

'Uy' skweyul Ms. McLay,

On behalf of Cowichan Tribes' Council, I am pleased to extend our support to the Cowichan Public Art Gallery (CPAG) Society as they work to establish a public art gallery within the City of Duncan and upon the traditional lands of the Quw'utsun Mustimuhw (Cowichan Peoples).

Over the past several years, the CPAG Society has been increasing public access to the arts in the Cowichan Valley. They have curated art exhibitions in rented spaces, some of which have prominently featured the artistic expressions of First Nations artists.

I understand as part of the CPAG Society's plans to develop a new gallery building, they have pledged one of the major exhibition spaces to showcase Cowichan Indigenous art, and the appointment of an Indigenous curator to guide these exhibitions. Such a space would provide a welcome opportunity for Coast Salish carvers, painters, textile and glass artists, traditional jewellery artisans, and other artists to showcase their creations, share their narratives, and generate sales within the retail area planned for the Gallery.

The Gallery would also attract tourism to its exhibits and events. Visitors to the Gallery will have an opportunity to experience and purchase Indigenous artwork, fostering a deeper understanding of the rich cultural heritage, artistic traditions, and history of our region.

In recent months, Cowichan Tribes appointed Councillor Stuart Pagaduan as our representative to the CPAG Board of Directors. Councillor Pagaduan is also an accomplished artist and educator; and, he serves as a liaison between our two organizations, ensuring open lines of communication and feedback regarding the gallery project.

We look forward to seeing the progression of this initiative as it takes shape in the years ahead, as well as strengthening the bonds within our communities.

Sincerely,

Chief Lydia Hwitsum