



**October 6, 2023 (Yellowknife)** – On October 6, 2023, with Indigenous Government leaders in attendance, Commissioner Margaret Thom granted assent to the *Forest Act*, the first statute to receive assent under the Legislative Assembly’s *Process Convention* for legislation drafted in collaboration with the Intergovernmental Council of the Northwest Territories (IGC).

This new *Forest Act* represents several years of hard work, across the life of two legislative assemblies. Under the IGC Legislative Development Protocol and the Process Convention, representatives of Indigenous Governments were actively involved throughout the process.

The IGC Legislative Development Protocol serves as the basis of a collaborative process of development of legislation and regulations with respect to lands and resources by IGC members, including the land and resources departments of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), and participating Indigenous Governments.

The Process Convention outlines the procedures that the Legislative Assembly follows to ensure that IGC members have the opportunity to participate in the consideration, review, amendment and passage of new legislation—from the introduction of a Legislative Proposal, review by legislative committee, through Assent by the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. The *Forest Act* explicitly recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and treaty rights, including the commitments of land, resources and self-government agreements, and recognizes the role of co-management bodies. Proposed language for the affirmation of these rights was based on the *Wildlife Act*, with modernizations as proposed by Indigenous Governments through a Technical Working Group and consultation.

### Quick facts

- On March 7, 2023, the Caucus of the 19th Legislative Assembly adopted a Consensus Government Process Convention to guide how legislation drafted collaboratively with the IGC will be introduced, considered and enacted in the Legislature moving forward.



- On December 2, 2020, the Intergovernmental Council (IGC), comprised of leaders from nine Indigenous Governments and the Government of the Northwest Territories, unanimously agreed to adopt a Legislative Development Protocol that will guide future collaborative work on NWT land and resource legislation.

## Links

- [Intergovernmental Council of the Northwest Territories website](#)

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