



May 10, 2016

Honourable John Rustad  
 Minister, Aboriginal Relations and  
 Reconciliation  
 PO Box 9100, ST PROV GOVT  
 Victoria, BC, V8W 9B1  
 Via facsimile: (250) 953-4856

Honourable Mike Morris  
 Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General  
 Room 028, Parliament Buildings  
 Victoria, BC, V8V 1X4  
 Via facsimile: (250) 356-2142

Honourable Suzanne Anton  
 Minister of Justice and Attorney General  
 PO Box 9044, STN PROV GOVT  
 Victoria, BC, V8W 9E2  
 Via facsimile: (250) 387-6411

**OPEN LETTER: Coalition Extremely Disappointed with BC’s Failure to include all Family Members in Event to Remember BC’s Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls**

Dear Minister Rustad, Minister Anton, and Minister Morris:

We are writing with respect to the event you are holding on Tuesday May 10<sup>th</sup> at 12:15pm to “remember the lives of BC’s missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and unveil a lasting legacy” at the Parliament Buildings of BC in Victoria. We understand that a quilt will be made public which was created at the BC Family Gathering in Prince George, Lheidli T’enneh Territory, in January 2016. At that event, family members were invited to create a piece of the quilt to honour their loved one, and these pieces were then stitched together.

We wish to collectively express our profound disappointment that this invitation was not provided to all family members of murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls in BC. At the very least, this invitation should have been provided to all family members who were invited to the Family Gathering, and optimally, the invitation should have been circulated publicly and broadly so that all family members had the opportunity to be aware of the event and decide if they wanted to attend. We are confused that invitations were provided to some family members and not others, including some mothers whose daughters were murdered or are missing.

We are particularly concerned and upset that at least one family member who worked on producing the quilt at the Family Gathering was not invited to the event.

Equally important, we stress that funding should be provided to family members to attend the event. Given the extreme and unimaginable devastation and sorrow that many family members experience day after day, it might be enormously traumatizing knowing that the Province is holding an event to honour their loved ones without their involvement. At the very least, we suggest that the event should be livestreamed with screens publicly available at central locations so that all family members have the opportunity to watch and comment.

Honouring murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls cannot simply be a photo opportunity- any true honouring must be done with full involvement and of family members and a minimal focus on provincial politicians. We were alarmed to receive the invitation (attached), some of us indirectly, and see that the majority of the page is devoted to the names of the three ministers who will be present at the event in a large font, while there is only one sentence in small font about the actual murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls. We suggest that at the very least and out of respect, the invitation should have included a listing of names of the murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls or some other prominent form of recognition.

We wish to make clear that we are in no way boycotting the event, and of course some of our members who received the invitation will be attending to honour their loved ones. We only wish that the event had been open and inclusive of all family members. For future provincial events pertaining to honouring murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls, we implore you to ensure that they happen in a respectful, transparent and constructive way to facilitate healing for family members.

Sincerely,

BC Assembly of First Nations  
BC Civil Liberties Association  
BC Federation of Labour  
Brenda Wilson, Family Member  
Butterflies in Spirit  
Carrier Sekani Family Services  
Carrier Sekani Tribal Council  
CeeJai Julien, Family Member  
Downtown Eastside Women's Centre  
February 14<sup>th</sup> Women's Memorial March  
Committee  
First Nations Summit  
First United Church  
Michele Pineault, Mother of Stephanie Lane

PACE: Providing Alternatives Counselling &  
Education Society  
PHS Community Services Society  
Pivot Legal Society  
Power of Women (POW)  
RainCity Housing and Support Society  
Union of BC Indian Chiefs  
Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing  
Centre  
Vancouver Council of Women  
Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter  
West Coast LEAF  
WISH Drop-in Centre Society



## **The Honourable John Rustad**

Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation

And

## **The Honourable Suzanne Anton**

Minister of Justice and Attorney General

And

## **The Honourable Mike Morris**

Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General

invite you to an event to remember the lives of B.C.'s missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and unveil a lasting legacy.

**Tuesday, May 10, 2016**  
**12:15 p.m.**

Reception Hall  
Parliament Buildings of British Columbia  
501 Belleville St.  
Victoria, B.C.

*All visitors to the Parliament Buildings may be subject to security screening.  
Please allow extra time for check-in.*

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Please RSVP to Michelle May – Event Coordinator  
[Michelle.May@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Michelle.May@gov.bc.ca)