



REPRESENTATIVE FOR  
CHILDREN AND YOUTH



March 18, 2016

Ref: 21808

Mark Sieben  
Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Children and Family Development  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor – 765 Broughton Street  
Victoria, BC V8W 1E2

Dear Mark,

Further to our earlier discussion regarding the transition process for implementing the 11 recommendations from *Decision Time*, the interim child welfare report, I wanted to share my views of how I can support your process.

I believe RCY can monitor the transition process and join an advisory oversight body as an adjunct member. I am very keen to support your effort to bring more resources and improvement to quality assurance.

I would personally serve as the adjunct and on occasion be joined in that role with the monitoring, audit and research lead for RCY, Alan Markwart. You will appreciate that we may be called upon to report on the progress of the implementation of this plan but I do not believe such a role will present any conflict or concern.

While we are facing transitions in leadership at RCY at the end of this calendar year, I want to assure you that staff are united and supportive of this proposal to be involved as an active observer and supporter of improvement.

I look forward to the time when oversight is no longer needed in terms of the audit, monitoring and review function and while this is certainly not practical in 18 months, this process might lead to a clearer timeframe based on ministry performance improvement in reporting on outcomes.

I would be pleased to discuss this further.

Thank you,

Dawn Thomas-Wightman  
Deputy Representative



April 15, 2016

VIA E-MAIL

Ref: 227623

Dawn Thomas-Wightman  
Deputy Representative for Children and Youth  
E-mail: [rcy@rcvbc.ca](mailto:rcy@rcvbc.ca)

Dear Ms. Thomas-Wightman:

Thank you for agreeing to assist the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) in developing a multi-year plan to guide developments in child welfare in our province by participating as a member of the Minister's Advisory Council.

The role of the Council will be to provide guidance and advice in the construction of a plan that Minister Cadieux intends to bring to government in the fall of 2016. Operational responsibility for the plan lies with the Deputy Minister of MCFD who chairs an Implementation Team comprised of the ministry's Executive. Consistent with a recommendation outlined in a report received by the Minister this past December, the plan must contain measurable milestones, outputs and outcomes, and address themes and suggestions arising from the public report which will be provided to you.

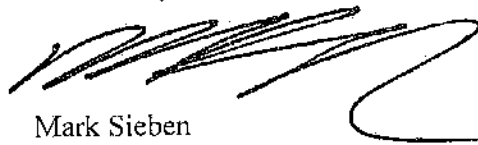
As Deputy Minister, I look forward to benefiting from your knowledge, expertise and perspectives as we build a roadmap to guide developments in child welfare over the next four years. I understand that as community and business leaders, your time is in great demand. In order to move forward as quickly and efficiently as possible, we have prepared background materials and a Terms of Reference to help you better understand the issues at hand, your role as a council member, and the work ahead. Please let Carolyn Kamper, Executive Director, Executive and Strategic Coordination, Lean and Corporate Communications, know if you would like to receive these materials as a hard copy mailed to you directly, or sent by e-mail.

Thank you in advance for receipt of your recent biography and a photograph within the next two weeks. Carolyn's office will provide you with proposed dates for meetings so you can plan ahead. We will also confirm with you the date upon which Minister Cadieux will publicly announce the Advisory Council.

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Please note, on May 30th, 2016, Lori Wanamaker, currently Deputy Minister for Public Safety and Solicitor General, and I are exchanging roles. Lori will be joining me at our initial meeting in order to ensure your questions are answered and any support functions you may need as an advisory group are attended to. We are both eager to help you get started on the process of developing the multi-year plan. Until then, please contact Carolyn or myself should you have any questions.

Yours truly,

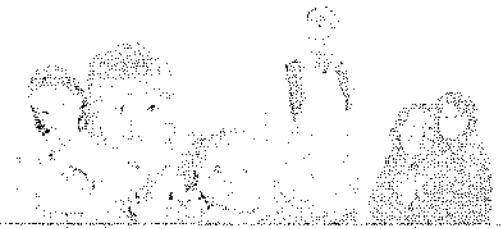
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Sieben', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mark Sieben  
Deputy Minister

cc: Lori Wanamaker  
Carolyn Kamper



REPRESENTATIVE FOR  
CHILDREN AND YOUTH



May 17, 2016

Ref: 21727

Mark Sieben  
Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Children and Family Development  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor – 765 Broughton Street  
Victoria, B.C. V8W 1E2

Dear Mark:

I am writing to follow up on our recent discussions regarding RCY involvement with an advisory committee to the ministry. As you know I've identified Dawn Thomas-Wightman, Deputy Representative, and Alan Markwart, Associate Deputy Representative, as observers to support this initiative.

I am more than committed to working as an adjunct member (as per our March 15, 2016 letter to you) of, or in some fashion with, such a committee provided the circumstances are conducive to its effective work and if any such role is consistent with my statutory mandate. In that regard, I believe two things are required.

First, I think it is necessary for the ministry to clearly indicate whether and to what extent it is prepared to accept recommendations one and two in my recent special report, *Implementation of the Plecas Review, Part One: Decision Time, April 2016*. This will clarify whether the purpose of this committee is to engage in meaningful consultation on the matters addressed in the Plecas report, *Plecas Review, Part One: Decision Time*, or whether it is simply seized with implementing conclusions that are a *fait accompli*.

Second, I believe it would be necessary for the committee to contain membership from a wide range of communities of interest. I believe that this should, at minimum, include significant representation from Aboriginal communities that have been selected with the input of Aboriginal political leaders. I appreciate the role of Grand Chief Edward John in permanency but also note he has signed a clear letter endorsing the RCY report and calling for proper involvement by First Nations Leadership and not just him (copy of April 28, 2016 letter attached).

BC Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief, Shane Gottfriedson, recently added "As Indigenous Peoples, our families, our communities and our children are central to who we are and why we do what we do. The Plecas report and the government's response with respect to it is unacceptable. We must be innovative in our approach by

... /2

focusing on prevention and permanency. The Plecas report tells us what we already know about the child welfare in BC, however now is the time to engage our leadership and those in our communities to ensure we take an inclusive and collaborative approach to addressing the child welfare crisis...". (from FNLC May 3, 2016 news release).

Please be assured that I am 100% committed to working constructively on these matters, but the ministry's response to the above questions could potentially affect the form and extent to which engagement with the advisory committee could be of use.

Your correspondence to my deputy on April 15, 2016, refers to building a roadmap for child welfare with the input of this advisory committee. I know Minister Cadieux has referred to Mr. Plecas' report as a roadmap and I would not want there to be confusion with respect to this committee and its role.

Proper involvement of Aboriginal leadership and their chosen representatives is essential so that no token individual is singled out for consultation without a deeper commitment to the core issues in child welfare for those most impacted by the ministries more intrusive mandate.

I am pleased to discuss this further with you or Lori Wanamaker, or both, and am available all day today and tomorrow.

Sincerely,



Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond  
Representative for Children and Youth

Attachments

pc: Grand Chief Edward John  
Chief Shane Gottfriedson, Regional Chief, BC Assembly of First Nations





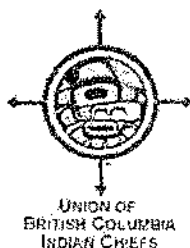
312-345 Chief Alex Thomas  
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# FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Premier Christy Clark  
Premier of British Columbia  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC  
V8V 1X4

Minister Stephanie Cadieux  
Ministry of Child and Family Development  
PO BOX 9057  
STN Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC  
V8W 9E2

Dear Premier Clark and Minister Cadieux,

We are writing with respect to the Province's acceptance and implementation of Mr. Plecas' report *Decision Time*, which was released in October 2015. We understand that the Province has identified \$100 million dollars to develop a workplan to implement recommendations from this report.

As articulated in our previous correspondence of December 14<sup>th</sup> 2016, Mr. Plecas' report presents a wide-ranging, biased survey of child welfare and politics, including a unilateral public assessment of the value of independent oversight and the performance of the current Representative for Children and Youth (RCY). We found his report to be unhelpful and inappropriate, especially with respect to commentary regarding the oversight role of the RCY.

Furthermore, Plecas did not meet with representative organizations which in turns reflects the absence of perspective and important information regarding the child welfare crisis in BC. It is unacceptable that the Province chooses to fund recommendations from a report that clearly lacks important and relevant information that would provide for informed recommendations.

In addition to his disrespectful approach, we also took offense to his cavalier observation that the deaths and serious injuries to children known to the Ministry of Children and Families (MCFD) rarely occur. From July 2007 to September 2015 there were 2981 instances of critical injuries and deaths. To be clear, the MCFD is aware of 814 deaths and 2077 critical injuries in the last eight years. For the 2015-2016 fiscal year, there are 380 critical injury reports and 90 deaths of children in care. We need to bring closure and honour the grieving families.

It is stunning that your government is supporting the recommendations from this report and acting on them with significant implementation funding. We cannot emphasize enough the importance and need to reconsider your government's approach to Mr. Plecas' recommendations. As we engage our communities and leadership at the upcoming First Nations Child and Family Meeting in May, we urge you to work with us, our leaders, experts and child-servicing agencies to ensure any investments made actually help and directly support First Nations children, youth, families and communities.

Significant and real change is required, as well as direct investments to First Nations communities to support First Nations children and families. We have clearly heard from Grand Chief Ed John in his capacity as special advisor to the Province on Children and Families that investments need to be made at the community level, especially the need for more social workers. Investments would be better suited in First Nations communities rather than within the Ministry. The Plecas Report and your government's financial commitment to implement it is a wasted opportunity to effect the positive change in Indigenous child welfare that is so desperately needed in BC.

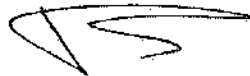
Sincerely,

**FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**

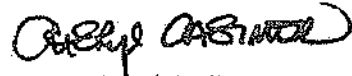
On behalf of the **FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT**



Grand Chief Edward John



Robert Phillips



Cheryl Casimer

On behalf of the **UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS**



Grand Chief Stewart Phillip

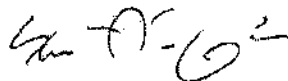


Chief Bob Chamberlin



Kukpi7 Judy Wilson

On behalf of the **BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS**



Regional Chief Shane Gottfriedson

# FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

## NEWS RELEASE

May 3, 2016



BRITISH COLUMBIA  
ASSEMBLY OF  
FIRST NATIONS

312 - 345 Chief Alex  
Thomas Way,  
Kamloops, BC, V2H 1H1

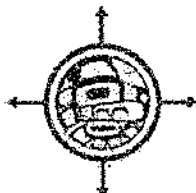
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### **First Nations Leadership Council Strongly Supports RCY Report Condemning Wide-Ranging and Biased Plecas Review**

(Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver) Senior First Nations leadership in BC are thanking Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, BC's Representative for Children and Youth, for her recent special report detailing serious concerns about the unbalanced review carried out by Mr. Bob Plecas for the Province of BC.

The RCY's report is titled "Implementation of the Plecas Review, Part One: Decision Time" and highlights that the Plecas Review was created without any input from Aboriginal leadership or the RCY Office.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of UBCIC, stated, "We fully support and totally commend Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond for continuing to fight for the inclusion of Aboriginal voices into highly sensitive top-level discussions around child welfare. Mr. Plecas' complete and offensive disregard for Aboriginal input reflects an absence of a balanced perspective and indicates that his report is lacking important and essential information regarding the child welfare crisis in BC."

BCAFN Regional Chief Shane Gottfriedson added, "As Indigenous Peoples, our families, our communities and our children are central to who we are and why we do what we do. The Plecas report and the government's response with respect to it is unacceptable. We must be innovative in our approach by focusing on prevention and permanency. The Plecas report tells us what we already know about the child welfare in BC, however now is the time to engage our leadership and those in our communities to ensure we take an inclusive and collaborative approach to addressing the child welfare crisis in BC. We need action and not just words, our children's future depends on it."

Cheryl Casimer, First Nations Summit, concluded, "The First Nations Leadership Council organizations have consistently and clearly stated that significant and real change is required, as well as direct investments to First Nations communities to support First Nations' children and families. What is certain is that there are far too many First Nations children in care in this province and we must work together to effect the positive changes so desperately needed to lower the disproportionate and dreadful statistics."



### **Background**

In 2015 Mr. Plecas was hired as a special independent advisor to Premier Clark and the Minister of Children and Family development, Hon. Stephanie Cadieux, to review the J.P. case, but his mandate was expanded to include an "interim report on the comparative analysis of applicable legislation, policy, standards and practice and recommendations for the improvement of Ministry and other systemic processes."

The Union of BC Indian Chiefs, First Nations Summit, and BC Assembly of First Nations, working together as the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC), have been extremely vocal in their opposition to the Plecas Review recommendations to limit the RCY position, as articulated in an open letter on December 14, 2015 (attached). The FNLC sent a further letter dated April 28, 2016 (attached), expressing concerns about the Province's identification of \$100M to develop a workplan to implement recommendations from a report that is so clearly biased.

-30-

*The First Nations Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit, and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs.*

### **For further comment please contact:**

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President, Union of BC Indian Chiefs:	604-684-0231
Cheryl Casimer, First Nations Summit Political Executive:	778-875-2157
Regional Chief Shane Gottfriedson, BC Assembly of First Nations:	250-852-1143

# FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

December 14, 2015

Premier Christy Clark  
Premier of British Columbia  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC  
V8V 1X4

## OPEN LETTER: FNLC Opposes Plecas Report Recommendations to Limit RCY

Dear Premier Clark,

Mr. Plecas has written a report called *Decision Time* as a special independent advisor to you and the Minister for Children and Families. Mr. Plecas was originally hired to review the J.P. case but his mandate was expanded to include an "interim report on the comparative analysis of applicable legislation, policy, standards and practice and recommendations for the improvement of Ministry, and other, systemic processes".

Unfortunately, Mr. Plecas presents a wide-ranging, biased survey of child welfare and politics, including a unilateral public assessment of the value of independent oversight and the performance of the current Representative for Children and Youth. We find this attack on this valued oversight role to be deeply offensive and inappropriate. Let us be clear in stating that we fully support the important work of the Representative for Children and Youth.

The report references Grand Chief Edward John being brought on "to help find ways to address the over-representation of Aboriginal children in care". We find this to be an attempt by Mr. Plecas to minimize a need to consult with First Nations' on these important issues by offloading and mischaracterizing Grand Chief Edward John's important role as Special Advisor.

We must point out that Grand Chief John has our support in his role as a Special Advisor to the Ministry of Children and Families and his mandate to specifically:

- *Provide a focused role on creating permanency for Aboriginal children in care, particularly those in care through continuing custody orders (in care until reaching the age of majority);*
- *After the release of the Council of the Federation report, assign follow-up for British Columbia (encourage national-level leadership and facilitate provincial level discussions) and;*
- *As necessary, assist the MCFD Minister in developing advice to cabinet members on these areas.*

We take great offense at Mr. Plecas' cavalier observation that the deaths and serious injuries to children known to the MCFD "occur rarely." From July 2007 to September 2015 there have been 2981 instances of critical injuries and deaths. To be clear, the MCFD is aware of 814 deaths and 2077 critical injuries in the last eight years. For the current fiscal year of 2015-2016, there are 380 critical injury reports and 90 deaths of children in care. We need to bring closure and honour the grieving families.



312 - 345 Chief Alex  
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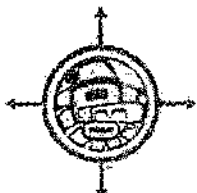
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Mr. Plecas confirms what the Representative has already reported on extensively, that the MCFD budget has a shortfall of at least \$100 million over the past number of years. We urge you to make immediate financial investments. More importantly though, we urge you to work with us to ensure those investments actually help First Nations children and youth who are the mainstay of the children in need in BC.

We have asked the Representative to convene a meeting among herself, the First Nations Leadership Council, the First Nations Health Council and your Deputies to discuss the state of child welfare and how to move forward in the most appropriate manner.

We will also be writing to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly to indicate that we hope the utterly unfair review of the performance of the Representative can be withdrawn fully and that should such a review be conducted, it should be done in the proper forum, before the Standing Committee on Children and Youth that the Representative has worked closely with for 9 years and has appeared before in excess of 30 times.

What is certain is that significant and real change is required, as well as direct investments to First Nations communities to support First Nations' children and families. Unfortunately, the Plecas Report falls significantly short and appears to be an attempt to discredit the important work of a respected First Nations individual and office holder. This report represents a wasted opportunity to effect the positive change so desperately needed in BC.

Sincerely,

**FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**

**On behalf of the FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT:**

  
Grand Chief Edward John

  
Robert Phillips

  
Cheryl Casimer

**On behalf of the UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS:**

  
Grand Chief Stewart Phillip

  
Chief Bob Chamberlin

  
Chief Judy Wilson

**On behalf of the BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS:**

  
Regional Chief Shane Gottfredson

CC: Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, Representative for Children and Youth  
Grand Chief Doug Kelly, First Nations Health Council  
Hon. Stephanie Cadieux, Ministry of Children and Family Development

# FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016



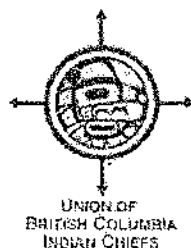
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Premier Christy Clark  
Premier of British Columbia  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC  
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Minister Stephanie Cadieux  
Ministry of Child and Family Development  
PO BOX 9057  
STN Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC  
V8W 9E2

Dear Premier Clark and Minister Cadieux,

We are writing with respect to the Province's acceptance and implementation of Mr. Plecas' report *Decision Time*, which was released in October 2015. We understand that the Province has identified \$100 million dollars to develop a workplan to implement recommendations from this report.

As articulated in our previous correspondence of December 14<sup>th</sup> 2016, Mr. Plecas' report presents a wide-ranging, biased survey of child welfare and politics, including a unilateral public assessment of the value of independent oversight and the performance of the current Representative for Children and Youth (RCY). We found his report to be unhelpful and inappropriate, especially with respect to commentary regarding the oversight role of the RCY.

Furthermore, Plecas did not meet with representative organizations which in turns reflects the absence of perspective and important information regarding the child welfare crisis in BC. It is unacceptable that the Province chooses to fund recommendations from a report that clearly lacks important and relevant information that would provide for informed recommendations.

In addition to his disrespectful approach, we also took offense to his cavalier observation that the deaths and serious injuries to children known to the Ministry of Children and Families (MCFD) rarely occur. From July 2007 to September 2015 there were 2981 instances of critical injuries and deaths. To be clear, the MCFD is aware of 814 deaths and 2077 critical injuries in the last eight years. For the 2015-2016 fiscal year, there are 380 critical injury reports and 90 deaths of children in care. We need to bring closure and honour the grieving families.

It is stunning that your government is supporting the recommendations from this report and acting on them with significant implementation funding. We cannot emphasize enough the importance and need to reconsider your government's approach to Mr. Plecas' recommendations. As we engage our communities and leadership at the upcoming First Nations Child and Family Meeting in May, we urge you to work with us, our leaders, experts and child-servicing agencies to ensure any investments made actually help and directly support First Nations children, youth, families and communities.

Significant and real change is required, as well as direct investments to First Nations communities to support First Nations children and families. We have clearly heard from Grand Chief Ed John in his capacity as special advisor to the Province on Children and Families that investments need to be made at the community level, especially the need for more social workers. Investments would be better suited in First Nations communities rather than within the Ministry. The Plecas Report and your government's financial commitment to implement it is a wasted opportunity to effect the positive change in Indigenous child welfare that is so desperately needed in BC.

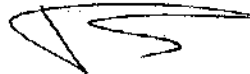
Sincerely,

**FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**

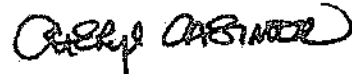
On behalf of the **FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT**



Grand Chief Edward John



Robert Phillips



Cheryl Casimer

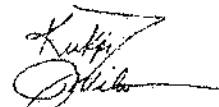
On behalf of the **UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS**



Grand Chief Stewart Phillip



Chief Bob Chamberlin



Kukpi7 Judy Wilson

On behalf of the **BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS**



Regional Chief Shane Gottfriedson



May 18, 2016

Ref: 228108

Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond  
400 – 1019 Wharf St  
Victoria BC V8W 2Y9

Dear Mary Ellen:

Thank you for acknowledging the discussion between our offices regarding Deputy Representative Dawn Thomas-Wightman's participation with the Advisory Council. In addition to speaking with Dawn on Monday, there have been a number of exchanges with Dawn and her office confirming her participation since her original expression of interest in March. The terms of reference provided on April 27 outline the scope, mandate, and work of the Advisory Council. I am currently out of town but would be pleased to meet with you to discuss this matter later this week. I am hopeful we can continue to look to Dawn's participation with this Council.

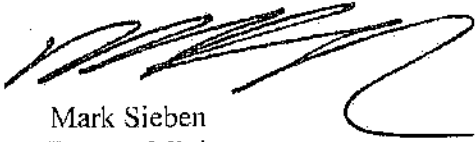
As indicated by Minister Cadieux, the ministry's commitment is development of a multi-year plan that addresses the themes in the Plecas report, and the development of milestones for the purpose of guiding implementation. The extent to which implementation occurs in any area will depend upon work done to date, work in the upcoming months, consultation through the period leading up to the plan's conclusion, and, importantly, advice from the Advisory Council. In a few areas work and consultation outside the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) has started already such as the development of a job description for an Assistant Deputy Minister responsible for Aboriginal affairs and business in MCFD consistent with recommendations from your office, among others. We look forward to sharing this information with the Advisory Council in due course prior to steps taken towards implementation.

While the Advisory Council consists of seven members at its commencement, I am aware Minister Cadieux will consider adding to the Council subject to advice from Council members and others over the next few weeks.

I appreciate your acknowledgement of Grand Chief Ed John's role and work as a Special Advisor to Minister Cadieux. This work is separate from, and as important, as work associated with multi-year plan. Grand Chief Ed John's final report, which Minister Cadieux anticipates receiving at the end of July, should also be considered and discussed to inform planning and decision making in MCFD and government. MCFD is hopeful the upcoming 'Child and Family Gathering' will also inform planning and decision making to improve outcomes for children and families currently in contact with the child welfare system, children currently in care, as well as indicate priorities for future work and common interests. All this work will benefit from consultation with Indigenous leaders, agencies and groups as the work unfolds.

Thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

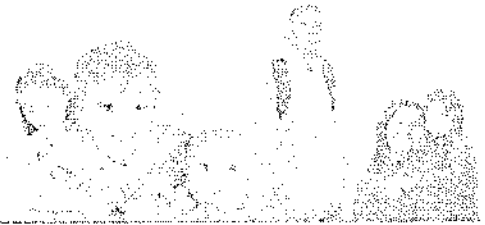
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Mark Sieben  
Deputy Minister

pc: Dawn Thomas-Wightman  
Grand Chief Ed John  
Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President, Union of BC Indian Chiefs  
Chief Shane Gottfriedson, Regional Chief, BC Assembly of First Nations



REPRESENTATIVE FOR  
CHILDREN AND YOUTH



May 18, 2016

Ref: 21727

Mark Sieben  
Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Children and Family Development  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor – 765 Broughton Street  
Victoria, B.C. V8W 1E2

Dear Mark:

Thank you for your letter of today. I regret that the ministry continues to avoid directly addressing the two simple points in my letter of yesterday (pause implementation of the Plecas report pending assessment on it by the advisory committee, and enhance Aboriginal involvement in the advisory committee through their own chosen representatives). In the absence of such a response, my Office is not in a position to participate in the ministry's advisory committee. We will of course monitor its work and related matters to the extent relevant to my mandate. Dawn Thomas-Wightman and I are available to take your call at 3:00 p.m. today if you wish to discuss.

Sincerely,

Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond  
Representative for Children and Youth





May 19, 2016

Ref: 228117

Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond  
Representative for Children and Youth  
400 – 1019 Wharf St  
Victoria BC V8W 2Y9

Dear Mary Ellen:

I acknowledge receipt of your letter yesterday advising Dawn Thomas-Wightman, Deputy Representative of Children and Youth, will not be available to participate in the Advisory Council.

Dawn would be a tremendous asset for the committee given her perspective as a First Nation woman with a strong background in child welfare, her experience working in government, and her knowledge and contacts with Indigenous Leaders and organizations. We were particularly pleased to receive confirmation of her participation while recognizing her role would be slightly different than other members given her role with the Office of the Representative.

Regarding the two points referenced in yesterday's letter:

- As set out in the terms of reference for the Council, the Council's role will be to advise on development of a multi-year plan with milestones which address the themes of the report. This work will include reflection on reports and recommendations received by the ministry relating to similar themes and topics as well as research and consultation associated with the theme or issue. There is very little implementation to 'suspend' at this point aside, perhaps, from the Ministry of Children and Family Development's (MCFD) ongoing staffing initiative which was instigated prior to the report. MCFD will not suspend its ongoing recruitment and retention initiatives.
- The Ministry will be looking to enhance the Aboriginal membership on the committee. While the Minister ultimately determines who might sit on a Minister's Advisory Council, the ministry is very open to suggestions regarding participation consistent with the terms of reference for the Council. The draft 'Information Bulletin' indicates the Minister may add to the Council. We intended to speak with Council Members, including Dawn, regarding enhancing the Council. This is now more important given Dawn is not participating as had been anticipated and confirmed a number of times during the last few weeks including as recently as Monday.

.../2

Ministry of  
Children and  
Family Development

Office of the Deputy Minister

Mailing Address:  
PO BOX 9721 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, British Columbia V8W 9S2

Telephone: 250 387-1541  
Facsimile: 250 356-2920

A place at the Advisory Council will remain available to Dawn should you choose to revisit your decision and allow her to participate. The Ministry would also be pleased to receive suggestions regarding individuals to enhance Aboriginal participation consistent with the Council's terms of reference.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Sieben', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mark Sieben  
Deputy Minister

pc: Dawn Thomas-Wightman



REPRESENTATIVE FOR  
CHILDREN AND YOUTH



May 24, 2016

Ref: 21853

Mark Sieben  
Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Children and Family Development  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor, 765 Broughton Street,  
Victoria, B.C., V8W 1E2

Dear Mark:

I have reviewed the correspondence you sent to the Representative last week regarding the Advisory Committee on the Plecas report.

I am disappointed that you would characterize my participation as something that would somehow cover off Aboriginal child welfare issues for the Advisory Committee. The Information Bulletin released by MCFD does not capture the discussions we had regarding the purpose and intent of the Committee, which now appears to be focused squarely on the Plecas review without addressing serious problems associated with that review as determined by our Office or hearing the concerns of Aboriginal organizations and leadership through their own representatives.

First Nations should choose their own Committee representation. That should not come through government appointing somebody to cover this perspective. The Committee process as laid out by the Information Bulletin does not meet the required standard of consultation. In addition, First Nations have been clear that Mr. Plecas did not conduct a child welfare review, but instead produced a report that seriously misunderstood the issues for Aboriginal children and families.

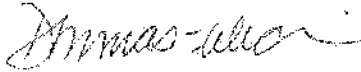
I previously expressed my disappointment with the fact that you and your ministry also continue to refer to Grand Chief Ed John's role as an Aboriginal response to the Plecas report. Grand Chief John is under contract to the government, to advise on permanency. His time to focus on this task is limited and he is not contracted to respond to the Plecas review. Further, Grand Chief John has co-authored no less than three letters to the Premier or Minister saying the Plecas report is not workable on a go-forward basis.

I did not agree to participate in this Committee based on the role you describe, nor was I approved to by my organization to do so. I was prepared to observe the Committee process and RCY as an organization believed this was important as we have been completely thwarted from reviewing any Plecas source materials or government materials on how it accepted this report.

.../2

As conveyed to you by the Representative in correspondence May 17 and May 18, I am unable to participate in this committee until MCFD has substantially addressed RCY's recommendations from its report *Implementation of the Plecas Review, Part One: Decision Time (April 2016)*.

Sincerely,



Dawn Thomas-Wightman  
Deputy Representative





May 26, 2016

Ref: 228171

Dawn Thomas-Wightman  
Deputy Representative for Children and Youth  
400 – 1019 Wharf St  
Victoria BC V8W 2Y9

Dear Dawn:

Please see the attached which informed drafting of the Information Bulletin that was shared with your office in advance of its release. There was time and a willingness to revise the Information Bulletin to describe your role to be an observer or as something other than an Advisory Council member.

It was not and is not a material issue for the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). I acknowledge your role with the Advisory Council would be different than other Council members given your role with the Representative's office. You and I discussed that. Recognizing a decision has been made not to participate on the Council, I can reiterate MCFD will remain open to participation consistent with the Terms of Reference for the Council.

With time winding down on my time at MCFD, I want to acknowledge the cordial nature of our contact with a willingness on both sides to find a way for regular work to flow in the interests of our staff, and children and families that we serve. It has been a pleasure to work with you in your Deputy Representative role, Dawn. I am confident that you and Deputy Minister Lori Wanamaker will construct a similarly useful and professional relationship.

I look forward to crossing paths in new roles.

Regards,



Mark Sieben  
Deputy Minister

Attachment

pc: Lori Wanamaker