



MUSQUEAM INDIAN BAND

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May 9, 2012

To Our Respected Friends and Relations,

Re. Demonstration to stop the destruction of the ancient Musqueam village and burials at čəsnaʔəm

This letter is a call to action as we work to prevent the ongoing destruction of čəsnaʔəm (commonly known as the Marpole Midden) in Vancouver. In recent months, Musqueam has taken steps to care for our ancestors at the ancient village and burial sites at čəsnaʔəm, part of Musqueam's Traditional Unceded Territory. This site was looted extensively by archaeologists in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (including the removal of over 100 intact remains) for research and storage in museums both locally and internationally. We want to share with you information about the ongoing destruction at čəsnaʔəm, and seek your support as we work to end the desecration of the remains of our ancestors and violation of this sacred site.

In addition to the uncovering of an intact burial of an adult ancestor in January, continued work on the site has unearthed two partially-uncovered infant burials. The developer has applied for permission to remove these remains. On May 3, 2012, in response to this development, over 100 Musqueam and supporters marched to čəsnaʔəm to demonstrate commitment to the appropriate and respectful care of our ancestors and to demand action. The developer has chosen to suspend work at the site while Musqueam protestors and supporters maintain vigil around the clock.

Musqueam's Chief & Council and Administration have been in discussion with the developer, the City of Vancouver, and the BC Government since March 2012 reach a solution. Musqueam has proposed a land swap and the creation of a public heritage park celebrating Musqueam cultural history and ensuring long-term protection of čəsnaʔəm. We applaud the City of Vancouver for their ongoing co-operation, the developer for their continued engagement, and the BC Government for the recent appointment of a facilitator. We continue to work with these parties to come to a timely resolution. This Thursday, May 10, the provincial NDP will be raising this issue in the BC Legislature. Musqueam is planning to send a contingent to the Traditional Unceded Territory of the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations in Victoria to demonstrate our steadfast support for our ancestors. We write to request your support at this vital demonstration of the unfailing resolve and solidarity of First Nations in BC.

hay čxʷ qə

Chief Ernest C. Campbell