



June 28th, 2012

The Hon. Christy Clark (premier@gov.bc.ca) ,
The Hon. Steve Thomson (FLNR.minister@gov.bc.ca),
The Hon. Mary Polak (ABR.minister@gov.bc.ca) .

Dear Sir/Madam:

Re: Protection of the Musqueam Village and Marpole Midden site of C'esna?em

The BC Nurses Union (BCNU) represents about 32,000 nurses and allied healthcare workers. Our purpose is to "protect and advance the health, social and economic well being of our members and our communities".

BCNU stands with and supports the Musqueam people's effort to protect their sacred site at the Marpole Midden from development. We strongly encourage their opportunity for repatriation and a respectful and culturally appropriate burial of their ancestors' remains.

First Nations, Inuit and Métis people of Canada experience enormous social, economic, political and cultural challenges as they struggle to overcome the legacies of colonialism, racialization and a political process that has done little to address their needs. As a consequence of these systemic inequalities the health and well-being of Aboriginal Peoples has been, and continues to be, profoundly compromised.

It is a stark reality that Canadians as a whole remain far better off than First Nations in almost every measure of health. One of the six key strategic directions outlined by the Mental Health Commission of Canada (2012) is to "Work with First Nations, Inuit and Métis to address their mental health needs, acknowledging their distinct circumstances, rights and cultures".

The outcome and experience of the Marpole Midden directly impacts the health of the Musqueam people today and possibly could for generations. We know the impact of denying cultural practice the residential school policy has left on all of Canada's Aboriginals.

It is our understanding that the Musqueam people have expressed openness and willingness to work with all parties involved. Their idea to transform the land into a public cultural heritage park (with no loss to the developer, city, or tax payers) and share their traditions with all peoples indicates they are a committed contributor to reconciliation within the Province.

In the spirit of health our 32,000 nurses and Allied Health care workers of BCNU strongly urge a proactive engagement where the Provincial Government acknowledges and acts on the distinct circumstances, rights, and culture of the Musqueam people. The time for reconciliation is now, and the Musqueam people have long indicated they are active participants and are at the table. Please join them in dialogue and action for a healthier, dynamic future for all British Columbians.

Yours truly,

BRITISH COLUMBIA NURSES UNION

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Debra L McPherson".

Debra McPherson
President

CC: Chief Ernest Campbell (bandmanager@musquem.bc.ca)

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