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FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

News Release

For Immediate Release
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First Nations Leadership Council Supports Paige's Story Report

(COAST SALISH TRADITIONAL TERRITORY / VANCOUVER – May 14, 2015) – The BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit and Union of BC Indian Chiefs fully support the findings of the Representative for Children and Youth, Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond's report *Paige's Story: Abuse, Indifference and a Young Life Discarded*.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs stated "It is beyond deplorable that we continue to have aboriginal children and aboriginal families falling through the cracks. Paige's story is heart-wrenching. She was a child who never received the stability, encouragement and guardianship that she so desperately deserved. I unreservedly agree with Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, the system of care in BC is broken due to the professional indifference fostered by the ingrained institutionalized racism that discounts the value of some children's lives due to their ancestry."

"What happened to Paige is absolutely tragic. This is yet another example of the collapse and failure of the existing social system that aboriginal people in BC are forced to deal with. Lessons must be learned from this heartbreaking case to ensure similar circumstances do not occur in the future. We fully support the report's challenge to the Attorney General to charge those accountable for Paige's death. The provincial government can no longer ignore their legal obligations and responsibilities regarding the care of aboriginal children. MCFD simply can't afford to sit on another report. The government must take the necessary steps to implement the recommendations as the stakes are far too high, particularly when children's lives are at risk," said Cheryl Casimer of the First Nations Summit political executive.

Chief Maureen Chapman, Spokesperson for the BC Assembly of First Nations stated "The recommendations outlined in the Special Representative's Report echo our relentless calls for better supports for Aboriginal children and youth in care, stronger enforcement of policies meant to protect the vulnerable, and increased collaboration between the Province and First Nations families and organizations. Not only is systematic change needed, but as the Special Representative highlights, there is a dire need for a cultural shift in agencies responsible for children and youth. Paige mattered and all of our children matter and we are at a critical point where more tragedies like this will continue to occur if we do not undertake to change how we treat our children and families."

For further comment please contact:

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