



FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

NEWS RELEASE

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First Nations Summit Supports Day School Class Action against Federal Government

Coast Salish Territory (Vancouver, BC) – The First Nations Summit (FNS) is voicing support for the filing of a class action lawsuit against the Federal Government by leaders of the Tk'emlups te Secwepemc Indian Band and Sechelt Indian Band for damages arising from the forced attendance of their community members at Indian Residential Schools that operated in their territories from 1890 until the 1970's.

In 2008, the federal government issued an apology to survivors of Indian Residential Schools and subsequently set up a process of compensation. However, the compensation process only applied to live-in survivors and unfairly excluded Residential School survivors who only attended these horrific institutions during the day.

"Indian Residential Schools were created to strip our people of every element of our culture and assimilate us into Canadian society" said Grand Chief Edward John of the First Nations Summit political executive.

"We all know the devastating impacts these horrific institutions had, and continue to have, on our peoples to this very day as a result of the physical and emotional abuses that took place. While a process of reconciliation and compensation has been created for the live-in survivors, the federal government must not forget about those who attended these institutions during the day. They too, are survivors of these dreadful institutions and should be included in any process of compensation" added Chief John.

"We commend Chief Garry Feschuk and Chief Shane Gottfriedson for taking this fight to the Federal Court of Canada on behalf of their community members who were Indian Residential School day scholars. This will be an important case for other day scholars across the country who continue to fight for recognition and compensation of the atrocities they suffered", added Dan Smith, also of the First Nations Summit political executive.

"The federal government has attempted to address these longstanding issues with the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement as well as the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, which was

created to research and learn the truth about what happened in the residential schools and to inform all Canadians about what happened in the schools. They must realize, however, that there will never be true reconciliation in Canada regarding this issue without the full inclusion of day scholars in the reconciliation, healing and compensation process", concluded Chief Doug White of the FNS political executive.

-30-

The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in treaty negotiations in British Columbia. The Summit is also a NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Further background information on the Summit may be found at www.fns.bc.ca.

For further information:

Colin Braker

Communications Director

First Nations Summit

Phone: (o) 604-926-9903 (c) 604-328-4094