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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Time Will Tell If We Have Learned the Hard Lessons of Frank Paul

*First Nations Leadership Council's Statement on the Final Report
of the Davies Commission*

(Coast Salish Territory / Vancouver – June 23, 2011) The First Nations Leadership Council is expressing disappointment in the final report of the Frank Paul Inquiry which was publicly released yesterday.

“The family of Frank Paul, First Nations in British Columbia, and the public at large, have waited for the final report of the Davies Commission in the hopes that the Commission would fully explore all perspectives of the tragic circumstances that led to the death of Frank Paul. We are disappointed that based on the final report of the Commission, it is apparent that Commissioner Davies chose to accept the evidence of various Crown counsel when substantial evidence presented by the legal counsel of participating parties strongly suggested that he should be wary of doing so”, said Grand Chief Edward John of the First Nations Summit Political Executive. “It remains our belief, founded upon the evidence that charges should have been brought forward in this case. We are disappointed the Commissioner chose not to issue a finding of whether charges should have been laid.”

“The final report of the Davies Commission and the 2009 interim report clearly validated the deep and troubling concerns expressed by Mr. Paul’s family who pushed for years for a public inquiry into his tragic death. It remains our firm belief, founded upon the evidence, that Frank Paul’s physical state and Aboriginal status were undeniably factors in his death. We are sorely disappointed that this was not the conclusion reached by Commissioner Davies in his final report,” said Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. “While this Inquiry has missed the opportunity to address the systemic racism that was, in part, responsible for the death of Frank Paul, we are hopeful that the many recommendations, including sobering centres and the changes to the charge assessment process, contained in the final report as well as the 2009 interim report, will help prevent such unnecessary deaths. Our people should not die alone and cold.”

“We are appreciative of the great efforts and hard work Commissioner Davies and his staff have put forth over the past three years in examining the complex circumstances surrounding the death of Frank Paul,” said Jody Wilson-Raybould, Regional Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. “While

the Commissioner welcomed and was respectful of First Nations involvement, it is apparent, based on the recommendations contained in the final report, that he is concerned with preserving the public confidence in the Prosecution Service in British Columbia. In the end there is no question that the system failed Mr. Paul. The Vancouver Police Department failed to safeguard his life, services for the homeless were severely lacking and most significantly, the police investigations were fundamentally flawed. We are hopeful that the Attorney General's office will implement the recommendations contained in the final report and continue to implement recommendations contained in the 2009 interim report to ensure this tragic event is not repeated in the future."

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