

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

News Release

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FNLN Outraged BC Prosecution Services Stay Manslaughter Charges in the Dale Culver Case

(xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliiwətał (Tseil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C.) The First Nations Leadership Council (FNLN) is furious at the BC Prosecution Service's (BCPS) decision to stay manslaughter charges against constables Paul Ste-Marie and Jean Francois Monette, RCMP officers involved in the arrest and death of Dale Culver in Prince George on July 18, 2017.

"The spark of hope I had for a new direction in policing and the justice system has been extinguished with the announcement to stay manslaughter charges against these two RCMP officers. The lack of transparency, the time it took to process this case, and the failure to deliver justice have left us all frustrated and bereft. The situation highlights the need for thorough and culturally sensitive investigations that prioritize the well-being and rights of First Nations, especially in encounters with law enforcement," stated Regional Chief Terry Teegee, BC Assembly of First Nations.

"It is categorically unacceptable that Dale Culver's family and community will not see justice for the loss of their loved one. Once again, the justice system has let First Nations people down as it fails to move this case forward to trial, and I question the ability of the current system to deliver justice in a fair and equitable manner. Becoming a police officer does not come with a license to kill with no repercussions. Today's decision alarmingly conveys the message that First Nations lives are disposable, as well as adding to the abhorrent and grim statistics of First Nations people killed by the RCMP," remarked Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. "We demand change, and we demand justice for Dale."

"Dale Culver's family have been flagging problems with the justice system procedures for years as they closely followed the criminal cases of the RCMP officers involved in his arrest and death. The family's anguish and continued quest for justice highlight the need for a more responsive and culturally aware approach to addressing such tragedies within the fractured justice system. It is time to address the root causes of the disproportionate injustices faced by First Nations people and communities," concluded Hugh Braker, First Nations Summit's Political Executive.

35-year-old Dale Culver was a father of three and a member of the Wet'suwet'en and Gitksan First Nations.

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The First Nations Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN), First Nations Summit (FNS), and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC).

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