



Honourable John Horgan, MLA
Premier of British Columbia
West Annex, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C.
V8V 1X4

June 1, 2021

Dear Premier Horgan,

The horrific discovery of a burial site of 215 children at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School is absolutely heartbreaking and has deeply impacted Indigenous people and people throughout the country.

Yesterday's statements from all parties in the Legislature were deeply moving and demonstrated a clear commitment from all of us to continuing to move forward with meaningful reconciliation.

I was very encouraged by your comments this week in response to the MLA for Skeena when you committed to "whatever steps we can take, whatever resources need to be brought to bear, working with Indigenous Nations across this province to see what we can do to bring all these things together. ...With his help and with the help of other members of this House, I'm confident that we can bring together a plan that all of us can be proud of."

To bring together that plan, I am requesting that you activate the Select Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs. This is an existing mechanism that is available for us to work together openly and transparently to accomplish our shared goal.

In addition to continued engagement with the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc, I believe that the Committee's mandate should include removing barriers and provide the resources needed to identify and repatriate the remains of children to their home communities, related to residential school cemeteries or other sites at which residential school children were buried.

Furthermore, I ask that you provide the committee with assurance and confirmation that whatever funding is required to give effect to their work will be drawn from the government's identified contingencies of \$3.25 billion in Budget 2021.

I believe from comments today in the legislature that the Third Party also supports the activation of the Select Standing Committee. Now, more than ever, is a time for all of us to work together as elected representatives of all British Columbians and move forward from words to action.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
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As we join the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc and others in mourning, we commit to remembering, honouring, healing, and learning while re-affirming our steadfast commitment to meaningful reconciliation.

Again, I am encouraged by your comments indicating a willingness to work together and offer this as a tangible means by which we may achieve our shared goals.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Shirley Bond
Interim Leader of the Official Opposition
MLA, Prince George-Valemount

CC: Honourable Murray Rankin, Minister of Indigenous Relations & Reconciliation
Peter Milobar, Opposition Critic for Indigenous Relations & Reconciliation
Sonia Furstenaus, Leader of the Third Party
Ellis Ross, MLA for Skeena
Adam Olsen, MLA for Saanich North and the Islands