



BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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PRESS RELEASE

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BCAFN Calls for a New Missing Child Alert System in Canada

(Lheidli T'enneh Territory, Prince George, BC) – The BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) is urgently calling for a new missing child alert system, similar to the Amber Alert, to address disparities regarding the protection of First Nations children. Recently, members from two First Nations communities, one in northern British Columbia and the other in northern Manitoba, were frantically searching for a missing six-year-old child. The two children were on the autism spectrum, and both were non-verbal and did not have the Amber Alert system activated for their cases, as the circumstances for their disappearances did not meet the established criteria.

“The Amber Alert system in Canada was established to help locate abducted children quickly by broadcasting urgent messages to the public. First Nations communities require a similar system to effectively serve their needs,” stated Regional Chief Terry Teegee. “The circumstances of First Nations children going missing often differ from those relevant in urban settings, requiring a responsive framework that can address these variances. A dedicated alert system would allow for more flexible criteria that can accommodate diverse situations in which First Nations children may become lost or go missing.”

BCAFN expresses relief and joins the parents of Oaklynn Schweder in celebration, as she was located in satisfactory condition last night. Sadly, Johnson Redhead was found deceased near his community of Shamattawa First Nation.

Building this alert system would prioritize quick activation, integrating community resources and communication networks that can mobilize immediately. It will not only recognize the specific needs and realities of First Nations communities, but it is a necessity rooted in justice and equity. This initiative can save lives, restore trust and empower communities to take action for the safety and protection of their children.

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