

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

News Release

For Immediate Release

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FNLC DEMANDS FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN MCFD TREATMENT OF FIRST NATIONS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Coast Salish Traditional Territory/Vancouver: The First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) is disturbed by the findings in an Auditor General report released today, which found that the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) has failed to protect the lives and the rights of First Nations children and youth in their care.

The report from the Office Auditor General (OAG), *“Oversight of Contracted Residential Services for Children and Youth in Care”*, gives MCFD a failing grade in effective monitoring, quality assurance, and contract management with respect to contracted residential resources. This is amplified for First Nations children who are routinely placed into resources that are not culturally safe or appropriate. This lack of effective oversight by MCFD over contracted residential resources has consistently placed First Nations and Indigenous children and youth in care at risk of harm.

This review was triggered by a 2014 report by the former Representative for Children and Youth, in which she found serious inadequacies within contracted residential resources. Prior and subsequent reports directed towards MCFD have called for a significant overhaul of residential resources, especially for First Nations children and youth in care.

Kukpi7 Judy Wilson, Secretary-Treasurer of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, stated, “This report shows us the system is not changing quickly enough and First Nations children and youth are the ones suffering. First Nations and others have been calling on MCFD to investigate and address these issues for years. Immediate and concrete action must be taken by MCFD to address these issues, including seeing the transfer of jurisdiction over First Nations child welfare transferred to First Nations”.

The FNLC is equally concerned by the lack of communication and consultation by MCFD and the Auditor General’s Office during this review. “First Nations leaders in BC refuse to accept the ongoing damage caused by the child welfare system to our children and we will not be excluded from processes that concern them,” said Cheryl Casimer of the First Nations Summit Task Group. “In order for the systemic change to occur that is so obviously needed, MCFD must fully include First Nations leaders and families in the implementation of these recommendations. Real change requires working with First Nations to keep children and youth connected to their families and communities, and to build services and supports that reflect our Indigenous values, laws and beliefs that all children are cherished and belong.”



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“MCFD is aware of the work that needs to be done. They know where the deficiencies lie and the steps that they need to take. First Nations in BC want to see fundamental and actual change for our children and youth,” said Regional Chief Terry Teegee.

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

For further comment please contact:

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[Full report of the Auditor General](#)

[RCY Report - Who Cares? BC children with complex medical, psychological and developmental needs and their families deserve better](#)

[Final Report of Grand Chief Ed John on Indigenous Child Welfare in BC](#)