



June 16, 2023

Peace River Regional District
Box 810
Dawson Creek, BC V1G 4H8

Attention: Board of Directors

Re: Failure to Address Anti-Indigenous Remarks during the June 8 Committee of the Whole Meeting

We are writing regarding the Committee of the Whole meeting held on June 8, 2023, at the Pomeroy in Fort St. John. As the leadership of the Doig River, Halfway River, Prophet River and West Moberly First Nations (the "First Nations"), we feel compelled to bring to your attention our concerns and to seek accountability for the Peace River Regional District's (PRRD) failure to address the highly inappropriate and anti-Indigenous remarks made during the meeting.

Our First Nations have been committed to working collaboratively with PRRD to foster business and economic development and promote reconciliation between our communities. Reconciliation requires respect and trust, and we are becoming increasingly concerned that recent events demonstrate a fundamental misunderstanding of the concept of reconciliation and threatens the relationship between our Nation and PRRD – both socially and economically.

It is with great consternation that we witnessed the June 8th meeting quickly escalate into an environment filled with disrespect and hostility, fueled by members of the public who espoused misguided and inflammatory views based entirely on online misinformation spread by local provocateurs about the recently proposed Land Sharing Network.

Not one person from PRRD stood up to dispel the misinformation and the anti-Indigenous, derogatory comments contrary to your own policies and the commitments your government has made to moving forward in a reconciliatory manner.

As the Board of Directors should fully understand, the Land Sharing Network is a concept designed to facilitate the practice of traditional treaty rights by Indigenous peoples on private lands with the prior consent of the landowners. It operates on a voluntary basis, serving as a platform for private individuals to engage in mutually beneficial agreements without involvement or intervention from any level of government. Contrary to the misinformation being disseminated, the Land Sharing Network absolutely does not seek to infringe upon anyone's rights or private property. Instead, it provides an opportunity for dialogue and collaboration between Indigenous people and private landowners who are willing to allow access to their

lands. This program, founded on principles of mutual respect and understanding, recognizes and upholds the rights of both parties involved and the spirit and intent of Treaty 8.

Evidently, the false information being spread online misled dozens of members of the public, who flooded the Committee of the Whole meeting to angrily denounce the concept without regard for the facts. As the meeting exceeded its capacity, it became evident that the fire code regulations were being violated. Despite this clear breach, the PRRD failed to take immediate action to halt the meeting, which would have been the responsible and necessary course of action. Additionally, we find this failure to act particularly distressing given the existence of the PRRD's Anti-Racial Discrimination and Anti Racism Policy (Policy No. 0340-015, approved June 25, 2020), which sets out clear principles aimed at promoting inclusivity and ensuring a safe space for all individuals. Section 4 of this policy explicitly highlights the principles needed to foster an environment free from discrimination, hatred, and racism. Furthermore, we draw your attention to section 4.3(c) of the PRRD's Directors Code of Conduct (Policy No. 0340-009, approved October 24, 2013), which emphasizes the duty to confront and address disrespectful behavior during meetings.

It is deeply disheartening that not a single person in attendance was reprimanded or asked to leave the meeting, despite the blatant disregard for respect and decorum displayed by certain members of the public. This failure by the PRRD to enforce its own policies and code of conduct reflects a disregard for the principles it purports to uphold. By allowing the meeting to proceed without taking appropriate action, the PRRD failed in its duty to lead by example and provide a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all participants. The PRRD's inaction also detracted from the annual 'Doig Day' event, when Doig River First Nation opens the community to their neighbors to experience Dane-zaa culture in order to build bridges, foster respect, appreciation and understanding of the traditional way of life of the Indigenous peoples who have lived in the area for over 10,000 years.

The First Nations firmly believes that fostering inclusion, enhancing trust, and building relationships are fundamental to promoting unity within our communities and the region as a whole. The lack of action by local officials from the PRRD during the Committee meeting has undermined these essential values and further eroded trust between our communities and your organization. It is also contrary to the PRRD's Cultural Safety Statement, that explicitly adopts the principles of inclusion, leading by example, earning trust, respecting treaties and building meaningful relationships.

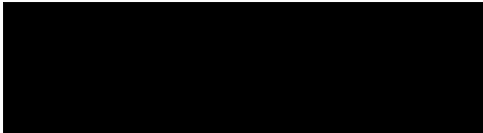
The PRRD should take immediate and tangible steps to address the Board's failure to act in accordance with its own policies and Cultural Safety Statement. A thorough investigation into the events that transpired during the meeting should be carried out, identifying the reasons behind the failure to halt it promptly and reprimand those responsible for their disrespectful behavior. We urge you to implement appropriate measures to ensure that future meetings are conducted in accordance with the PRRD's policies and code of conduct, as well as the principles of respect, inclusivity, and fairness as represented in the PRRD's Cultural Safety Statement.

Furthermore, we request that the PRRD issue a public apology to the Treaty 8 First Nations and all members of the public who were subjected to the distressing and offensive comments made during the meeting. This apology should acknowledge the gravity of the situation, the failure to

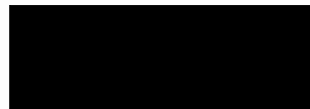
address the violation of fire code regulations, and the disregard for the PRRD's own anti-racism policy, code of conduct and Cultural Safety Statement.

We expect to be informed of the steps being taken to address these concerns and to rectify the damage caused by the PRRD's failure to act appropriately during the June 8th Committee of the Whole meeting.

Sincerely,



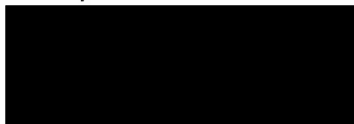
Chief Trevor Makadahay
Doig River First Nation



Councillor William Field
on behalf of Halfway River First Nation Band Council



Chief Valerie Askoty
Prophet River First Nation



Chief Roland Willson
West Moberly First Nations

cc. Dale Bumstead, Scion Strategies

Dale Morgan, BC, Regional Executive Director, Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

Dan Davies, MLA, Peace River North

Murray Rankin, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

Anne Kang, Minister of Municipal Affairs