



MMIWG Coalition dismayed by essential transport service cuts; calls for safe, affordable, reliable transit

(August 15, 2018 – Coast Salish Territories) The recent elimination of Greyhound services across western Canada has had a devastating and chilling effect upon Indigenous community members, especially upon Indigenous women and girls. The Coalition on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (“the Coalition”) calls upon the government of British Columbia to implement a permanent transit solution for affected areas, especially those that are rural and remote, and one that is safe, affordable and reliable.

Greyhound’s cuts to service will have an immediate impact on those trying to reach essential services in urban areas, such as medical appointments, as well as trying to access family and friends across western Canada. Furthermore, women and their families who are seeking to flee violence will face yet another barrier with this lack of transit. Community members, advocates, and survivors fear that these transit cuts will lead to an increase in hitchhiking, which is directly correlated to the ongoing crisis of murdered and disappeared Indigenous women and girls across the country.

Six years have passed since the final report of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry (Oppal Inquiry) was released, which called upon the Province to act immediately on two of its 65 recommendations. One of these urgent recommendations calls for an enhanced public transit system connecting northern BC communities, particularly along Highway 16— colloquially known as the "Highway of Tears," this stretch of isolated highway between Prince George and Prince Rupert got its name due to the disappearances and murders of several Indigenous women along this route over several decades.

While the BC government has committed to implement 12 months of service along and around the Highway of Tears, this is not a permanent solution. This will not create a safe transit solution for rural and remote communities, and will contribute further to violence against Indigenous women if a suitable replacement is not immediately implemented.

This Coalition was formed in response to the failures of the Oppal Inquiry, and will continue to advocate for justice and dignity for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

Signatory Coalition Members:

West Coast LEAF

WAVAW Rape Crisis Centre, *Beverly McEwan, 604-255-6228 ext: 242*

Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing Centre Society

Union of BC Indian Chiefs, *Chief Judy Wilson, 250-319-7383*

Union Gospel Mission

Vancouver Rape Relief & Women's Shelter

Provincial Council of Women of BC

Neskonlith Indian Band

Myrna Cranmer

Ending Violence Association of BC

Butterflies in Spirit, *Lorelei Williams, 778-709-6498*

BC Native Women's Association

BC Federation of Labour

BC Civil Liberties Association, *Meghan McDermott, 778-783-3011*

BC Assembly of First Nations, *Regional Chief Terry Teegee, 250-981-2151*

Atira Women's Resource Society

Amnesty International - Canada

Aboriginal Women's Action Network, *Fay Blaney, 778-714-0161*

The Coalition on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in BC is comprised of family members and survivors, and more than 40 entities including Indigenous nations, Indigenous organizations, front-line service organizations, feminist and women's organizations, legal advocates, faith-based groups and provincial organizations.