



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 1, 2021

Tšilhqot'in Nation calls for Resignation of Mayor Cobb ...

Williams Lake, BC: The Tšilhqot'in Nation is calling for the resignation of Walt Cobb, the Mayor of Williams Lake, after the Mayor shared a lengthy opinion piece on social media that purported to share the “other side” of residential schools, including such statements as “[t]he churches do not need to apologize for trying to educate the poor in the only system that would work for nomadic peoples” and “many of the new generations just want to be victims and feel the money would solve their pain”.

This is not an isolated incident for Mayor Cobb and the Williams Lake Council. In June 2020, Mayor Cobb and Councillor Marnie Brenner reportedly opined about the need to understand “both sides of the story” when it comes to residential schools, in discussions with Williams Lake First Nation about an unrelated matter. Despite efforts to educate Williams Lake City Council about the realities of the residential school system, and despite the confirmation of unmarked graves at Tk'emlups residential school and other sites across Canada, and despite the active site investigation efforts at St. Joseph's Mission in the area and the Indian Hospital and Day School grounds at Tl'etinqox, Mayor Cobb continues to deny and dismiss the trauma experienced at these institutions by First Nations peoples and families in Williams Lake and the surrounding communities.

This is irresponsible and unacceptable conduct for a mayor in 2021. The Tšilhqot'in National Government (TNG) calls for the resignation of Mayor Cobb and encourages others – who can rightfully take pride in the region as the home of “Orange Shirt Day” – to join this call and demand new leadership and direction for the City of Williams Lake.

Nits'il?in (Chief) Joe Alphonse, TNG Tribal Chairman

“Anywhere else in Canada, at any level of government, endorsing these types of comments about residential schools would disqualify you from public office. Why is it still acceptable in Williams Lake? Other regions of British Columbia and Canada are finally acknowledging the trauma of the residential schools and the ongoing impacts for our communities. Other regions are building relationships with First Nations peoples and communities – but not Mayor Cobb. This type of mentality has to end. It is an embarrassment to the City and the region. Mayor Cobb should finally make a positive contribution to reconciliation and resign

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as Mayor, immediately, and make room for the real leadership this region urgently needs. If Mayor Cobb does not resign, then Williams Lake Council should hold him accountable and fire him.”

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