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Prime Minister of Canada Mark Carney
Office of the Prime Minister
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RE: Continued Funding for National Advisory Committee on Unmarked Residential School Graves

Greetings and Congratulations from Indigenous Action Canada.

As you begin your term of office and implement your plan for national unity, economic strength and resilience and strength for Canada (<https://markcarney.ca/time-to-build>), we want to remind you of the importance of Truth and Reconciliation as one of the cornerstones of Canadian identity and values in this new era, as our nation develops an alternative narrative to the hopefully out-dated story of colonialism, cultural imperialism and racism of early nation-building. Truth and Reconciliation is especially important as Canadians solidify our sovereignty and distinguish ourselves from the United States.

There is still time to confirm funding for the National Advisory Committee on Unmarked Residential School Graves but action is urgent because the current funding agreement is scheduled to end on March 31, 2025. As of the date of this letter, the committee's request for continued funding has been denied.

"The National Advisory Committee was established to meet a vital need—to ensure Indigenous communities have access to independent, trusted and expert information in their efforts to identify, locate, and commemorate their missing and disappeared children," said committee member Kisha Supernant. "We are extremely disheartened and disappointed by the decision not to renew funding for this work, which is so important to reconciliation and to healing for our

people.” (<https://www.aptnnews.ca/national-news/residential-school-committee-disappointed-money-cut-from-program/>)

There are other important programs for Indigenous Services also coming to an end (such as [Inuit Child First Initiative](#) (ICFI)). None of these programs can be renewed without Parliamentary Authority and renewal. As you know, the funding is part of the Main Estimates for Indigenous Services’ government spending plans and is part of the business of supply process by which the government submits its projected annual expenditures for parliamentary approval. This is a confidence motion.

We ask that you prioritize continuation of funding for the National Advisory on Unmarked School Graves, either as part of upcoming Main Estimates for Indigenous Services if your government decides to submit its projected annual expenditures for parliamentary approval or as part of the platform if you decide to immediately call an election.

The Truth and Reconciliation Committee in 2015 shocked the nation when it concluded that at least 3,200 children had died in residential schools as part of a federal custodial program.

At the time, Murray Sinclair, who chaired the commission, told CBC News that because burial records were often incomplete, he was "absolutely convinced the number is much higher, perhaps as much as five to 10 times as high."

https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/funding-ends-for-national-advisory-committee-on-residential-school-missing-children-1.7460534?_vfz=medium%3Dsharebar

Ten years later, Canadians are learning that the number of deaths is even greater than projected by Murray Sinclair. The sharing of coroner’s records and accessing vital statistics is an extremely challenging process, involving extensive negotiations and the role of NAC has been crucial for technical guidance, “support with forensics, ground-penetrating radar, geographic work and archival and genealogical research”. (Ibid) More than 100 Indigenous communities are actively searching for unmarked graves.

The continued search for the unmarked graves is crucial for the Truth and Reconciliation journey of Canada. In Canada, we are all Treaty People - either as Indigenous people, or descendants or newly arrived Settler People. In the current climate of defending Canadian national sovereignty, there is renewed attention to the sanctity of US-Canada trade agreements and historic treaties. As people who demand integrity and adherence to historical treaties, we rely on our leaders to make sure we are ethically consistent in the Truth and Reconciliation process which at its heart is about revitalizing the original Treaties between Indigenous and Settler People.

Thank you for your leadership.
On behalf of Indigenous Action Canada,

Lorraine Rekmans

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