

Responding to Racism and Hate – Dufferin County Council Statement

For Immediate Release – June 10, 2021

Today, right now, this period in time is a crossroads for us. It's time for us to determine our direction for the future. Do we let hate take hold, or do we stand for something better? What type of country do we want to live in? One of hate, or one of peace?

Leadership starts with us. We have the ability to set a course to a better way through our actions. It's not an easy task, but it is a necessary one, and one we can do.

We must continually strive to re-commit ourselves to the tenants of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in all that we do. Whether we are talking about issues of a planning nature, for example the Cayuga Snipe Chief's announcement of a moratorium on development in the Haldimand deed lands, or about the 215 innocent children who were found at a residential school site in Kamloops. There is no room for contradiction in our policy or our direction. We cannot demand righteousness on one hand while stonewalling on the other.

There is a learning curve here. A steep one in some respects and one that some will struggle with more than others. I know there has been much to learn from my perspective and I know that there is still so much that is still to come. I suspect many of you feel the same. While the onus is on us to actively participate in that learning, it's so important that we realize what we really need to do more of is listen.

If we as leaders cannot commit at the very least to this, perhaps we should consider if we deserve to hold the seats we have at all.

To our Muslim Brothers and Sisters, we offer this:

We were all so very saddened to learn of the terrorist attack in London, ON that took the life of four members of a family and left a nine-year-old boy injured.

We mourn with you and share in your grief, and can only hope that we can help soothe some of your pain.

Please know that for every one person who would strike out in anger and hate, those who stand with you in peace and love and understanding number in the hundreds

Please don't despair, together we are better than the hatred of one.

It's time for us to speak up, so that ignorance is not the loudest voice of all.

Sincerely,

Warden White and Members of County Council

At the regular meeting of the County of Dufferin Council held on June 10, 2021 Council unanimously adopted the following motion:

WHEREAS a responsible Canada includes indigenous peoples from all across the nation, and whereas Canada's indigenous peoples are entitled to the same rights and freedoms as guaranteed all under the charter of rights and freedoms;

AND WHEREAS "genocide" is defined as "the deliberate harm or killing of a large number of people from a particular nation or ethnic group with the aim of destroying that nation or group";

AND WHEREAS residential schools existed for more than a century in Canada, the aim of which was to assimilate indigenous peoples into society and to destroy their indigenous identity;

AND WHEREAS the residential school system perpetrated a genocide on indigenous children the fullness of which is only now becoming evident;

AND WHEREAS the government of Canada and many of its churches were complicit in this national tragedy both by their actions and by their silence;

AND WHEREAS many churches excepting the Roman Catholic Church have already apologized for their role in the residential schools system;

NOW THEREFORE be it resolved that the County of Dufferin demand that the Government of Canada in conjunction with Canada's indigenous people determine a plan to investigate all residential school sites as needed to find any of the lost or missing children;

AND THAT in the spirit of reconciliation the Roman Catholic Church be petitioned and/or legally compelled to provide the truth about actions taken as part of the residential school system.

AND THAT the Government of Canada demand in the strongest possible terms the release of all church documents in Canada and at the Vatican that pertain to actions taken at residential schools in Canada, and that Pope Francis, leader of the Roman Catholic Church offer an apology to the indigenous peoples of Canada for their actions

AND FURTHER THAT the Government of Canada take all necessary steps to provide for equitable access for Canada's indigenous peoples to clean water, safe housing, health care, education and safety and security.

AND THAT this resolution be forwarded to the following:

- **Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, Rt Hon. Justin Trudeau**
- **Office of Cardinal Thomas Christopher Collins, Archdiocese of Toronto**
- **Dufferin Caledon MP Kyle Seeback**
- **Dufferin Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones**
- **All Dufferin County municipalities**

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