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Hon. Teresa Wat
Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism
Room 342, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4
Via Email, Original to follow by mail

December 17, 2013

Dear Minister Wat,

Thank you for your telephone call on December 13, 2013. I appreciate your sending the news release advising of the remaining six dates, venues and times that the Ministry has planned.

With regard to further discussion on the consultation process, I was glad to hear that you heeded my call to expand the consultation beyond the three original locations (Victoria, Lower Mainland, Kelowna). While I appreciate that your Ministry has added Kamloops and Prince George to the consultation schedule, you may recall that my original recommendations emphasized the need to reach into the parts of the province where there is historically a strong Chinese history such as Nanaimo, Prince Rupert, and the Cariboo.

This recommendation was intended, however, not just to list locations but to advise of the need to incorporate venues that would provide the best access for the community to participate in this process. For example, as noted in our previous conversation, geographically Prince George is only the mid-point of the province. As I am sure you are aware, discriminatory practices against the Chinese and other ethnic communities look place across the province of BC, not just in one or two isolated locations; it is therefore particularly important that the process for reconciliation is broad-based and inclusive.

It is essential that all British Columbians know about this history and become aware of the purpose of this apology. This consultative process should inform the government to better understand what reconciliation means for all stakeholders and what redemptive actions are necessary.

With regard to the notice for the upcoming public events, while there was only one week's notice for the December 19th Kamloops event, I do appreciate that last Friday's announcement has provided some advance notice for the January events taking place in Prince George and the Lower Mainland.

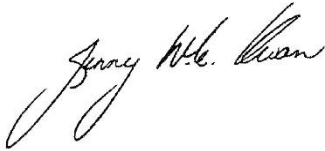
That said, it is important that the government consider additional means by which to notify the public about these forums. A posting on a website and a press release alone are not sufficient to reach all of those who should be at the table and attending these meetings as participants.

I appreciate that you have offered for me to invite any stakeholders which may be known to me to participate in these forums. I expect that it is the role of your Ministry to take all necessary measures to ensure that all stakeholders and members of the public are invited to attend and participate in this consultation. I therefore trust that your Ministry will devote adequate staff and resources to ensuring that this will take place.

Finally, I highlight again what most important about this process; it is not just about an apology, it is about the process of reconciliation. The role of the government therefore should be to facilitate the public's opportunity to provide input on the reconciliation process that goes beyond asking how to word the apology. Moreover, this is a crucial moment to educate the general public around our Province's history and the government should be looking at additional formats by which this may be done.

Thank you for your attention on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jenny Wai Ching Kwan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'J'.

Jenny Wai Ching Kwan, MLA
Vancouver – Mount Pleasant