



August 30, 2017

17-17

Special Prosecutor Approves Charge

Victoria - The BC Prosecution Service (BCPS) announced today that Special Prosecutor Brock Martland has approved one charge of sexual interference of a person under the age of 16 years against Roger William, elected Chief of the Xeni Gwet'in First Nation. The offence is alleged to have occurred on or about May 12, 2017, in Williams Lake, British Columbia. Chief William's first appearance on this charge is scheduled today at Williams Lake Provincial Court on court file number 34880.

Mr. Martland was appointed a Special Prosecutor on August 28, 2017, shortly after a Report to Crown Counsel relating to this charge was received by the BCPS. Assistant Deputy Attorney General Peter Juk, Q.C. appointed Mr. Martland under s.7 of the *Crown Counsel Act* because he considered it in the public interest to do so. The appointment of a Special Prosecutor is intended to avoid any potential for real or perceived improper influence in the administration of justice.

Mr. Martland is a Vancouver lawyer in private practice. He was given a mandate to provide legal advice to the RCMP investigators as may be necessary, conduct any related charge assessment and assume conduct of the prosecution if charges were approved.

The BCPS policy on Special Prosecutors and a related Information Sheet can be found at:

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/law-crime-and-justice/criminal-justice/prosecution-service/crown-counsel-policy-manual/spe-1-special-prosecutors.pdf>

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/law-crime-and-justice/criminal-justice/prosecution-service/information-sheets/role-special-prosecutors.pdf>

The Charge Assessment Guidelines applied by the BCPS and Special Prosecutors in reviewing all Reports to Crown Counsel are established in Branch policy and are available online at:

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/law-crime-and-justice/criminal-justice/prosecution-service/crown-counsel-policy-manual/cha-1-charge-assessment-guidelines.pdf>

Announcement of the appointment of the Special Prosecutor was initially postponed pending completion of the investigation and approval of charges. Following consultation with the Special

Prosecutor, and taking into account the specific circumstances of the case, the Branch concluded that issuing a Media Statement announcing the appointment was appropriate at this time.

As this matter is now before the Court, neither the Special Prosecutor nor the BCPS is able to release additional information or comment further at this time.

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