



Media Statement

Monday, March 5, 2012

Independent Counsel Withdraws from Missing Women Commission of Inquiry

Vancouver – Robyn Gervais, Independent Counsel for Aboriginal Interests at the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry has withdrawn from her position effective immediately.

Ms. Gervais cites the delay in calling Aboriginal witnesses, the failure to provide adequate hearing time for Aboriginal panels, the lack of ongoing support from the Aboriginal community and the disproportionate focus on police evidence as her reasons for withdrawal.

Ms. Gervais said, “This inquiry is fundamentally about missing and murdered women, a disproportionate number of whom were Aboriginal. Despite 38 days of police testimony, the commission has yet to hear from an Aboriginal witness.”

“As I leave, I regret that I could not find a way to bring the voices of the missing and murdered Aboriginal women before the Commissioner”, said Ms. Gervais.

The inquiry appointed Ms. Gervais as independent counsel on August 11, 2011 with a mandate to serve the public interest. She was appointed after the provincial government refused to fund legal services to First Nations groups.

Robyn dean Gervais graduated from University of British Columbia Faculty of Law in 2008. She is Metis, and grew up near Edmonton, Alberta. She previously represented the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council at the inquiry before the group decided to withdraw because of lack of funding.

The commission was appointed by the B.C. government in 2010 to probe the Vancouver police and RCMP investigations of women reported missing from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside between Jan. 23, 1997 and Feb. 5, 2002.

-30-

Contact:

Robyn dean Gervais
Email: gervais@rogelaw.ca
Twitter: @RobynGervaisMWI
Phone: 604. 812. 9694

Gervais Law Corporation

#2809 - 128 West Cordova Street, Vancouver, BC

C: 604.812.9694

F: 604.608.5386

gervais@rogelaw.ca