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Dear Mayor and Council:

As a Professor of Geography and Chair of the Committee for Urban Studies at the University of Victoria, I am writing to Council in support of the recent student-led petition to rename Trutch Street. Over the past two decades, I have studied the politics of place naming in cities around the world, and, based on this experience, I can say that commemorative street names are not simply neutral signs used to remember the past; they are honorific commemorations that bestow honor on the historical figures who are commemorated.¹ When a historical figure's views, actions, or policies come to be understood as inconsistent with present-day values, this often leads to a re-evaluation of their legacy and whether it continues to deserve the honor that is bestowed upon it through honorific naming. The case of Trutch Street is a textbook example of a street that deserves to be renamed because it honors a historical figure whose racist views were extreme even for his own time, and he not only held such views but put them into practice by dramatically reducing the size of First Nations land reserves in the province. It is therefore long past time to rename Trutch Street in Victoria.

Historical scholarship provides ample evidence that Trutch's land policies played a major role in the dispossession of Indigenous people, going far beyond his predecessor James Douglas's land policies in the systematic reduction of reserve lands.² So dishonorable is Trutch's legacy that, in 2003, Lieutenant-Governor Iona Campagnolo described Trutch as the "least illustrious" person to ever serve as Lieutenant-Governor in BC's history, and that Trutch's "prejudices and injustices" are a "stain" on "our provincial history."³ It is for this reason that the University of Victoria decided to remove Trutch's name from a student residence hall in 2017 after over a decade of student efforts to rename the building. As the then Vice-President of External Relations, Carmen Charette, explained, "Trutch's negative approach to the land rights of First Nations people and disregard for their concerns conflict with UVic's mission, vision and values."⁴ After UVic had renamed Trutch Hall, a group of us together with the Indigenous Solidarity Working Group organized a community dialogue in January 2018 to discuss Trutch's legacy and the need to rename Trutch Street, which, as a 2-block long street, is one of the shortest streets in the city. The event was well attended and sparked a public dialogue about renaming Trutch Street.

¹ Rose-Redwood, R., Alderman, D., and Azaryahu, M. (eds.) (2018). *The Political Life of Urban Streetscapes: Naming, Politics, and Place*. New York: Routledge.

² In particular, see Fisher, R. (1971/72). "Joseph Trutch and Indian Land Policy." *BC Studies* 12: 3-33; Abbott, G. (2017). "Persistence of Colonial Prejudice and Policy in British Columbia's Indigenous Relations: Did the Spirit of Joseph Trutch Haunt Twentieth-Century Resource Development?" *BC Studies* 194: 39-64.

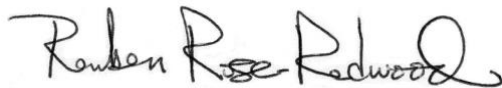
³ As quoted in Foster, H., Raven, H., and Webber, J. (2007). *Let Right Be Done: Aboriginal Title, the Calder Case, and the Future of Indigenous Rights*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 217; also, see Abbott, "Persistence of Colonial Prejudice...", 39.

⁴ As quoted in University of Victoria. (2017). "Trutch Name To Be Removed From Residence." *UVic News*, June 2, accessible at: <https://www.uvic.ca/news/topics/2017+trutch-residence-renaming+ring>.

In the months that followed, the effort to rename Trutch Street was put on pause when it was announced that the City would be removing the statue of John A. Macdonald. Those of us who had supported the renaming of Trutch Street then shifted our attention to supporting the City's decision to remove the Macdonald statue. It has now been three years since the last campaign to rename Trutch Street, and I am very pleased to see that a group of UVic students has launched a petition calling for the renaming of this street, which has received over a thousand signatures in support so far. Their request to Council and its rationale are clear: that the City of Victoria should rename Trutch Street as a small but significant step forward in reckoning with the ongoing legacy of historical injustice committed against Indigenous peoples.

Victoria's City Council took a courageous step toward reconciliation in removing the Macdonald statue in 2018, and it is high time to rename Trutch Street as well. I therefore strongly support moving forward with a Notice of Motion to Council to dename Trutch Street and for the City to then work together with local First Nations to find a suitable replacement name. Thank you very much for your time and for considering this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Reuben Rose-Redwood". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Reuben Rose-Redwood, Ph.D.
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Professor
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