



**Council Member Motion
For the Council Meeting of October 13, 2016**

Date: September 20, 2016

From: Councillor Ben Isitt

Subject: Advocacy for Clemency for Leonard Peltier

Background:

Leonard Peltier, an indigenous activist from Chippewa and Dakota Sioux territory in the present-day United States, has been detained within the American prison system since his extradition from Vancouver, Canada in 1975.

Since that date, a growing movement has emerged in Canada and around the world demanding freedom for Peltier (see Appendix 1).

This advocacy extends from Bishop Desmond Tutu in South Africa, to the Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of British Columbia, the Right Reverend Dr. Logan McMenamie (Appendix 2), to the Venerable Alastair McCollum, of St. John the Divine Parish in Victoria, who appeal to United States President Barack Obama to free Peltier by granting a Presidential Pardon prior to the conclusion of his term of office in January 2017.

This appeal has also been endorsed by leaders and organizations including: the Dalai Lama, the European Parliament, Nelson Mandela, Amnesty International, and Warren Allmand, Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in the Government of Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau. This advocacy is imbued with a personal connection to the current Government of Canada, with the Honourable Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould's grandmother Ethel Pearson, an elder of the Musgamakw Tsawataineuk Nation, offering Leonard Peltier asylum here on Vancouver Island in the 1970s to prevent his extradition from British Columbia.

It is therefore recommended that Council endorse Bishop Tutu's appeal for clemency and request that the Mayor, on behalf of Council, write to Canada's Minister of Justice and Prime Minister, adding the City of Victoria's voice to the request for clemency for Leonard Peltier as an act of reconciliation with the indigenous peoples of North America prior to the conclusion of President Obama's term of office in January 2017.

Recommendation:

THAT Council endorse Bishop Desmond Tutu's appeal for clemency for Leonard Peltier and request that the Mayor, on behalf of Council, write to the Federal Minister of Justice and Prime Minister of Canada, urging them to write and advocate to the President of the United States in support of a Presidential Pardon for Leonard Peltier prior to the conclusion of President Obama's term of office in January 2017.

Respectfully submitted,



Councillor Ben Isitt

Attachments.

Amnesty International Issue Brief on Leonard Peltier's Case

Letter from the Reverend Gary Gordon, Bishop of the Diocese of Victoria

Letter from the Right Reverend Dr. Logan McMenamie, Bishop of the Diocese of British Columbia

Letter from the Venerable Alastair McCollum, Rector of John the Divine Anglican Church

Letter from Dr. John Lutz, Chair of the Department of History, University of Victoria

Letter from Dr. Larry Hannant, Adjunct Professor of History, University of Victoria