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Prime Minister Mark Carney
mark.carney@parl.gc.ca

Dear Prime Minister Carney,

I am writing about your recent comment at a press conference on March 30, in which you said you could “outlast” an Indigenous woman suffering from mercury poisoning. That woman was Chrissy Isaacs of Grassy Narrows, who was there trying to speak with you about the mercury poisoning affecting her community.

I wish to join Chief Sherry Ackabee of Grassy Narrows and Chief Rolly Fisher of Wabaseemoong in urging you to deliver an apology to these nations in the Grassy Narrows community. Regardless of the intention, your “joke,” and the laughter it elicited from other political leaders, were hurtful to a community that has been ignored by Prime Ministers for decades. Ms. Isaacs, standing for her community, was fighting to be heard by you.

Grassy Narrows seeks fair compensation for ongoing health, environmental, cultural, and economic harms caused by mercury contamination in their community. I acknowledge the federal government’s commitment to build a mercury care home in Grassy Narrows; however, continuing accountability is needed at both the federal and provincial levels to address the poison that has plagued the community for decades.

Ms. Isaacs was born with mercury in her system. It is fundamentally wrong that in Canada, a resource-rich and wealthy country, children are born with mercury poisoning. Indigenous Peoples have a right to truth, justice and reparations. The decades-long crisis of mercury poisoning in Grassy Narrows requires steady and ongoing attention.

Your words on March 30 caused harm. Your words can also help mend that harm. An apology from you, delivered in person in Grassy Narrows, would be an important step toward accountability and respect—a step toward right relations. It would give you a chance to see and understand the generational harm that mercury poisoning has wrought on this First Nation. Grassy Narrows demands fair compensation for decades of harm caused by mercury poisoning and an end to the pollution still being produced by the

Dryden Mill, which continues to worsen the poison affecting Grassy Narrows First Nation and Wabaseemoong Independent Nations.

We are all God's children.



The Right Rev. Dr. Kimberly Heath,
45th Moderator of The United Church of Canada

The Moderator is the elected, presiding officer and spiritual leader of the church and serves as the primary spokesperson and representative for The United Church of Canada.

CC:

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