



**PRAIRIE TO PINE**  
REGIONAL COUNCIL  
The United Church of Canada



**Prairie to Pine Regional Council, United Church, opposes the refusal to search the Prairie Green landfill**

13 July 2023

To: Premier Stefanson, Province of Manitoba CC: Chief Danny Smyth, Winnipeg Police; Mayor Scott Gillingham, City of Winnipeg; Hon. Marc Miller, Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister.

Dear Premier Stefanson,

The chairpersons of Prairie to Pine Regional Council of the United Church of Canada wish to express their dismay and anger with the decision to not search the Prairie Green landfill for the bodies of murder victims Morgan Harris and Mercedes Myran.

We fully support the [Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs' July 6 statement](#) that "... the government's inaction and denial to commit funds send a distressing message across the province and the country that First Nations' lives do not matter to the provincial government. The refusal to provide funding for the search perpetuates the pain and anguish experienced by the victims' families. It undermines the efforts toward reconciliation and meaningful partnerships between the government and First Nations."

As noted in our Regional Council's [December 2022 call for a search](#), failing to search for the women sends a strong and deeply disturbing message that their lives are not valued: not valued as Indigenous people, and not valued as women. Allowing the landfills to remain in use throughout most of this time is an unspeakably disrespectful decision that makes the path forward much harder. Consulting and then ultimately dismissing community, family, and organizations causes immense harm and undermines any real reconciliation.

Cambria Harris, Morgan's daughter and leader in the community movement for a search, reminds us that, "This is a problem across all of Canada and this shouldn't just be an Indigenous people's problem. This should be... everybody's problem." That includes all levels of government and the Winnipeg Police Service, and all citizens.

Concrete ways of stemming this violence have been put forward by First Nations, Métis, and Inuk groups many times, and then ignored. The United Church and its predecessor denominations were very much part of enabling that violence through residential schools, and the many other ways in which we supported colonization. We continue to carry responsibility, and we write to you today in the spirit of that shared responsibility. **We urge you to reconsider your decision and we request your response to this letter.**

Sincerely,

Patricia Bird and Erica Wittevrongel,  
Co-chairs, Prairie to Pine Regional Council  
(the United Church of Canada in Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario)

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