

Dear Prime Minister Martin,

At this point in time, I respectfully request your review of the attached document as it pertains to the Victoria Island Project. The attached email outlines a request for consultation with Algonquin Elder William Commanda as well as background information on this project.

If you have any questions and/or comments regarding the attached document, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Meegwetch,

Don

Don Caverley

phone/fax (250) 656-1076

e-mail: [don.caverley@shaw.ca](mailto:don.caverley@shaw.ca)

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"That the Saanich Gulf Islands Executive strongly supports the implementation of the Victoria Island Project & furthermore, requests that The Hon. David Emerson & his BC Caucus colleagues encourage our Prime Minister to meet ASAP with Algonquin Elder William Commanda to discuss this

matter."

Cc The Hon. Ethel Blondin-Andrew, Minister of State (Northern Development)

Kim Recalma-Clutesi, President BC APC

Wayne Helgason, VP (Policy), National Executive APC

Colin Topham, Executive Director, Federal Liberal Party in BC

Moved by: Ken Harrison

Seconded by: Jag Dhanowa

Motion carried unanimously.

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181 Ste-Élizabeth Road

Cantley, Québec J8V 3E9

(819) 827-9295

12 August 2004

Mr. Paul Martin

Prime Minister of Canada

Cabinet of the Prime Minister

80 Wellington Street

Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

Mr. Prime Minister,

This week, I feel more at peace in me heart and soul, and also more optimist towards life and the global situation in general. One of the reasons is that I just spent a couple a days in Maniwaki at grandfather William Commanda's spiritual gathering. I hope you had the chance to meet and exchange with this wise man of extraordinary goals.

Us Canadians are very fortunate to live in a country like ours where to grow in Freedom is still possible. 'Freedom', that powerful word, so different for each of us and yet often difficult to express considering the workload we carry, the debts we're in, the level of stress or simply that we forgot how 'to be' (être) because nowadays having (avoir) seems to prevail. These past few decays we have greater evolved in the physical and technological fields but where have gone the 'real people' with values close to their hearts. It seems to me the essentials were forgotten such as connecting with Mother Earth, who supports and nourishes us on many aspects for so long and yet we keep abusing and exploiting her.

Mr. Martin, we have arrived at a critical and fragile period of man's evolution on this earth and I sincerely hope that your future decisions will be inspired with values of environmental protection and support to individuals in comparison to temporary and derisory enrichment. Now that I've express some of my concerns, I would like your deep consideration for an innovative project that is of great importance to me, I'm talking about the healing center on Victoria Island right here in Ottawa. Just a few hundred meters from parliamentary hill, we wish for a one of a kind centre that would be dedicated to unification of the races, to the knowledge and recognition of different cultures; a place where the criteria of admissibility would be respect, love, responsibility and forgiveness. As you already know many of our fellow citizens feel misunderstood and unrecognized, so this would be a great place to open the doors of communication and where freedom of expression would trigger a healing process and re-establish an atmosphere of multi-ethnics exchanges.

Racial reconciliation is a project of long implication that is becoming necessary for the unity of mankind and very important in people's heart. Our First Nations people have a message of great importance that is becoming more and more urgent, I hope you will be the man who will unify our country and show to the rest of the world the true values of Canadians.

I thank you for your precious time in considering my words, and I hope that my little letter will have a great impressions in your future decisions.

Josée Brisebois

Canadian Citizen and Public Servant

C.C. M. William Commanda, Circle of all Nations

M. David Smith, Member of Parliament, Pontiac County

From the internet site: [www.circleofallnations.com](http://www.circleofallnations.com)

A circle of all the nations... A culture of peace

'It was predicted that a time would come when the voice of the people of First Nations would rise once again, after five hundred years of silence and oppression, in order to guide us towards a new eternal fire of peace, love and friendship between all nations.'

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Greetings Jeff,

Congratulations on all your endeavors on behalf of ABORIGINAL PEOPLES as illustrated in the recent "HISTORIC" Roundtable consultations.

It was with much pride as an ALGONQUIN citizen that once again GRANDFATHER WILLIAM COMMANDA was front & centre with the PM @ this monumental gathering.

Having said that,& with the full knowledge that the Pikwakanagan FN Chief & Council passed a Band Resolution on Aug. 11/03 to support the creation of the VI Indigenous Centre on Traditional Algonquin Territory [NCC is also fully aware of this file],I respectfully request that you personally intervene on this file with Prime Minister Martin....this could be a powerful legacy for the PM to individuals who have waited so,so long to come to personal closure & to move on & move forward with their dreams & aspirations as PROUD CANADIAN CITIZENS.

In closing, I shall continue to intervene where ever possible with Grandfather's blessing especially as he continues to enjoy every day with PATIENCE& HOPE that this very "SPECIAL" initiative can come to fruition.

Meegwetch,

Don

STANDING TOGETHER---ONE VOICE

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Dear Prime Minister Martin,

I am contacting you to ask for your support in facilitating the realization of Grandfather William Commanda's vision of creating the **Indigenous Center at Victoria Island**. I believe this very important step in creating a place for inter-cultural and social exchange, communication, celebration and healing. Please help make this vision a reality for all the people of Canada.

Sincerely,

Jeffry L. Anderson, M.D.

105 Marin St.

San Rafael, CA 94901

USA

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[Chambly, le 27 mars 2005](#)

[M. Paul Martin, premier ministre du Canada](#)

Chambre des Communes

Ottawa, Ontario

K1A 0A6

Monsieur le premier ministre,

À l'occasion de l'ouverture de votre première table ronde du Canada avec les peuples autochtones, le 19 avril 2004, vous avez

fait un discours où vous reconnaissiez qu'il y avait des améliorations à apporter dans les relations entre le Canada et les premières

nations qui y vivent. Vous avez également parlé de la nécessité d'assister les premières nations au niveau des soins de santé et de la façon qui leur est particulière. Les nations européennes qui sont venues s'établir ici en Amérique n'ont pas beaucoup respecté les premiers habitants du continent. Nous nous sommes installés sur leurs terres ancestrales et nous les avons entassés sur de petits territoires exigus sous la supervision de Sa Majesté la Reine et de son Gouverneur général en Conseil. Cette façon de faire a causé parmi les populations autochtones de graves problèmes de déséquilibre physique et psychologique. Il y a un immense travail de guérison à faire.

Vous n'êtes pas sans savoir qu'un de leurs leaders spirituels les plus respectés, M. William Commanda, de Kitigan Zibi, arrière

petit-fils de Pakinawatik, le chef héréditaire Anicinabe qui a conduit son peuple sur leurs territoires traditionnels de chasse et de

trappe le long de la rivière des Outaouais, maintenant âgé de 89 ans, a dans ses vieux jours le souhait et la vision de voir s'établir

sur l'île Victoria, entre la colline parlementaire et la ville de Gatineau, un Centre de guérison et de paix pour favoriser l'harmonie

entre les peuples. L'architecte du Palais de la civilisation, M. Douglas Cardinal, a même fait les plans de ce que pourrait être ce

bâtiment.

Au début de votre exposé du 19 avril 2004, vous avez remercié M. Commanda d'avoir fait la prière d'ouverture et d'avoir invité

tous les participants à venir se rencontrer sur le territoire traditionnel algonquin. Du fait que vous reconnaissez que la région

d'Ottawa est territoire traditionnel algonquin qui a été envahi par la société canadienne, et du fait que vous savez que M. Commanda n'a pas les moyens financiers de se lancer dans un projet d'une telle envergure, ne serait-il pas tout indiqué, si vous avez vraiment l'intention de favoriser la guérison des populations autochtones, d'assister M. Commanda dans la réalisation d'un tel centre de guérison en tant que chef du gouvernement canadien actuel? Ne serait-ce pas là un moyen significatif et efficace d'alléger la dette de la société canadienne envers les premières nations et de remettre un peu de ce qu'on leur a pris?

En tant que Québécois d'origine française, je considère que notre avenir en terre d'Amérique ne peut se fonder que sur le

rétablissement de l'harmonie et du respect entre les divers groupes et peuples qui y vivent.

Merci de l'attention que vous voudrez bien porter à ma requête.

Votre tout obligé,

Jacques Boucher

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To Canadian Prime Minister, Paul Martin

As peacemakers and filmmakers dedicated to honoring indigenous peoples and helping broadcast their messages to wider audiences, we want to express our support of Grandfather William Commanda's vision for the creation of an Indigenous Center on Victoria Island.

A Center such as this will be of help to all Aboriginal Peoples and set a powerful example to the world as a place where People from All Cultures can gather in Peace.

Marguerite Lorimer, Co-Founder and Executive Producer

John Vincent Veltri, Co-Founder and Director

EARTHALIVE COMMUNICATIONS INC

415-459-3338 [www.earthalive.com](http://www.earthalive.com)

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Dear Mr. Martin:

I have been a visitor to your beautiful country for the past ten years, and look forward to my annual visit this year. This is all due to the work of

Algonquin Elder William Commanda. He has worked tirelessly to promote peace and healing for all people. His work is known worldwide and his devotion to a culture of peace has inspired many of us to work toward that end. His vision for the healing center has been in my mind since he first began to work on it.

I personally work with at risk youth in the USA and there is such a need for centers such as this. We must heal the wounds of the generations in order to sustain our countries, communities, and our planet.

I urge you to aid this vision to become a reality.

Sincerely,

Pat Nicholson

Education Coordinator

Mid South Mediation Services

20 West Main St.

Hohenwald, TN 38462

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Dear Prime Minister Martin

I wish to express my heartfelt support for the vision that Grandfather William Commanda is holding for the creation of the Indigenous Centre at Victoria Island and for the invitation he has extended to you to attend the June 21 Pipe Ceremony. Your support, commitment and attendance is important to strengthening the resolve of creating such a Centre and a tangible endorsement of your courage and willingness to explore with others how to make this a reality. Please show your support, please attend this gathering – it is important for our World.

With best wishes,

Sarah Whiteley

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*hosting people to reveal sustainable realities and practices*

**Sarah Whiteley** *Process Designer and Host* T: ++44(0)8712 501535 M: ++44(0)7815 935252

[sarahwhiteley.hara@virgin.net](mailto:sarahwhiteley.hara@virgin.net) <http://www.haraconnection.com>

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I am sending my support regarding the use of indigenous ceremonies and the need at this time in history to honor native peoples and their culture. We, as a people, have neglected the earth, destroying cultures and becoming more and more unbalanced while lacking compassion. I am writing from America although we all have a responsibility to take at this point in time.

I would like to send my support for Grandfather William Commanda's vision for an Indigenous Center at Victoria Island. It seems that this is the type of opportunity that is needed to help make needed changes. Please consider supporting this center.

Thank you,

Laura Kroepel

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Honorable Prime Minister Paul Martin:

I write to support a request made to you by an old friend. I have recently learned that William Commanda is seeking your assistance to establish an Indigenous Center at Victoria Island. I am assuming that others have apprised you of this project of which I have only recently learned. Here I want to attest to the significance of Mr. Commanda's activity. I presently teach anthropology at Hunter College in New York City. Over the years I have had many occasions to impart some of the knowledge I gained from Mr. Commanda to my students on subjects ranging from religious philosophy to woodworking. This is surprising to me because my anthropological work is based on long-term fieldwork with the Sioux of western South Dakota from 1972 to the present. My contact with Mr. Commanda was short-term -- limited to the period 1977-78 while I was living in Montreal. Nevertheless, in my analyses his perspective often overshadows that of Sioux informants and friends with whom I've interacted for a quarter century, in helping me understand and

explain indigenous issues in North America, and North American history as well.

William Commanda is significant in North America as a whole, and I expect he is in a unique position to make a contribution to Canadian community strength and Canadian culture as a whole. His commitment to his people's indigenous rights led him to unite with people from other bands and reserves as early as the 1940s, despite occasional hostility from the non-Indian population. Obviously he has maintained that commitment, but never with recourse to harsh invective. I recall his thoughtful critique of a PQ plan of the '70s to turn Indian Reserves into municipalities as masking the removal of rights held in common with the mere illusion of more power within a separated Quebec.

Like many Indian people, he has been an astute critic of mass media, including news programs in both French and English. However, he learned from the media and used the information to link the problems his own people faced, to ecological crises just beginning to be understood in 1978.

Finally, his participation in the Canadian workforce from a laborer to a judge of timber should be acknowledged. Certainly it allowed

him some independence and respect, that Indians of the US miss. His life as a wage-earner reveals a dynamic in cultural change missed by anthropologists, and some Indian spokespeople, in the last half century (at least in the US) -- acculturation does not necessarily lead to assimilation. If people continue to participate in the communities in which they were raised, the community continues to supply social support. Just as Indian communities retain their autonomy, but participate in the Canadian process, other ethnic communities function well in Canada. Hopefully, Canadian pluralism will be emulated by us other North Americans. William Commanda's life and vision speaks to the success of cultural autonomy as a building block of a democratic state built on cultural pluralism. The Canadian process works because it is negotiated not forced. Mr. Commanda's envisioned Indigenous Center would aid Canada in documenting its pluralism and making the Canadian success story visible to other governments of the world suddenly coming to terms with indigenous and new immigrant populations.

I hope you are able to investigate William Commanda's project on Victoria Island and put some of Canada's resources behind it.

Thomas Burgess

Department of Anthropology

Hunter College

NY, NY

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Dear Prime Minister Martin,

I am writing in support of Grandfather William Commanda's vision for the Indigenous Center at Victoria Island, Ottawa, Canada which would create a place where indigenous peoples from around the world can gather together in the spirit of unity. This Center is critical for facilitating balance between diverse people's and for supporting the remembrance and teaching of Aboriginal knowing and cultural heritage that is so critical for all of humanity in these times. Please support Grandfather William Commanda's vision to manifest this Center Now in all ways possible to one in your position. In so doing you will be a prime contributor to the creation of a global Circle of All Nations and a Culture of Peace.

Thank you for your sincere consideration.

In Peace with Aloha,

Dawn L. Ferguson

Composer and Founding Director

Children Singing Peace Around the World

(Division of 21st Century World- a 501(c)3 non profit organization)

Www.childrensingingpeace.com

1-888-324-6251

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Mr. Paul Martin

Office of the Prime Minister

80 Wellington Street

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0A2

Respected sir:

I am writing to express my support of the beautiful vision of Native Elder William Commanda for an Indigenous Center at Victoria Island dedicated to a culture of peace and healing among all peoples (please see below).

It was my honor to hear this great soul speak at an interfaith service yesterday in New York State. Despite the overwhelmingly American audience, Grandfather delivered his speech in French as well as English, out of the respect he feels for the Canadian people and Canada's multi-cultural heritage.

I urge you to send word of your support of his vision to him by June 21, 2005, when he will host the fifth annual Gathering of Nations Pipe Ceremony at Victoria Island.

The native peoples of our countries have been forced for too long to take a back seat while they watched the march of progress laying waste to the natural beauty of their lands. It is time for them to have a front seat for the healing.

Thank you for your understanding, and for your leadership in a culture of peace.

May Peace Prevail on Earth!

Deborah Moldow, Director

The World Peace Prayer Society

<http://www.worldpeace.org>

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Aloha,

I am contacting you at the request of Grandfather William Commanda.

As you know Grandfather is a leader of his people and recognized as a metaleader for indigenous peoples of many Ways:

**William Commanda is the 87 year old traditional Native American Algonquin Elder from Kitigan Zibi, Quebec. The great grandson of Pakinawatik, the hereditary Algonquin chief who led his people to settle in their traditional hunting and trapping grounds in the Ottawa River area in the mid 19th century, Elder Commanda is Keeper of three Wampum Belts of historic importance, including the Seven Fires Prophecy Wampum Belt.**

Please take action in support of Grandfather's vision of a center where indigenous ways and values can be cultivated and shared. This is a vision of power for our times. By supporting this vision, you are expressing your breadth of vision and realization that all Earth's peoples have the opportunity to work together in our time for harmony, healing and peace.

Blessings,

Linda S. Masterson

PO Box 856

Hanalei, HI USA 96714

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Dear Prime minister,

In the United Nations Decade for a Culture of Peace, I actively support the work and vision of Grandfather William Commanda to develop a fully inclusive indigenous peace-building cultural centre on Victoria Island .

We see churches, cathedrals, synagogues, temples and mosques reflecting the great diversity of cultures here, but there is still no place where indigenous peoples can gather together in the spirit of unity

that used to mark the heritage of the ancestors of  
this land.

There is a saying that Turtle Island would not find  
true peace until the relationship with the first  
peoples of this land was healed, and they occupied  
their rightful position in the heart of this country.

Please support this vision so that the concrete  
manifestation of this commitment is visible to all  
people.

With blessings

Barbara Swetina

[www.sacredsongs.net](http://www.sacredsongs.net)

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Mr. Prime Minister,

This email is to express my support for the initiative of Elder William Commanda's Vision for the Indigenous Center at Victoria Island.

Grandfather William has, at great personal sacrifice, given his life for his people - and in his heart, we are all his people. It would surprise me if you weren't fully aware of his dream for the Island so I therefore won't elaborate or be repetitious.

People from all over the world have Grandfather's full respect. In fact, it is probably true to say that if he had been born in some other country, his vision would have been supported in full by both the people in general and the government. Don't you find it sad to think that we have such a wise Elder in our midst who has the first-hand knowledge of his Ancestors and is still being denied?

For years he has been sharing the teachings of his ancestors. One treasure he shares is "My ancestors used to say the most nutritious walnuts emerge after the coldest winter." Mr. Prime Minister, THIS PAST WINTER WAS A VERY COLD ONE!

Please, please Mr. Prime Minister, look into your heart and hear for yourself the true vision of our people as Grandfather has taught. Help us to once again be a proud Nation. Help us to help Mother Earth and the next Seven Generations (which includes yours).

Respectfully submitted

Heather Sole (Mi'kmaq Nation of Nova Scotia)

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Dear Prime Minister

I am writing today to express my deep conviction that the proposed healing centre on Victoria Island, in the Ottawa River, will be an outstanding testament to Canadian culture.

We are a nation of liberals, who believe in healing our nations past ( treatment of our

First Nations Peoples) and in creating a bright and peaceful future. We do not travel narrow paths (as some nations are choosing presently). We represent vision, hope, and peace to the rest of the world.

Grandfather William Commanda (Spiritual Grandfather of the Algonquin Peoples) has long proposed a healing centre on the Ottawa River. He turns 91 years old today and he has spent the last thirty years bringing the four tribes together finding unity and community and generosity. in the hearts of all Canadians.

The plans are well under way and well supported, but still require an OK from Ottawa. Let us create something beautiful and important in the world.

Please refer to his website [www.circleofallnations.com](http://www.circleofallnations.com)

Thank you

Merci

Meegwetch

Kim Elkington

President

The Algonquin Tea Co.

RR5 Eganville ON K0J1T0

ps I am attaching an article I wrote in Toronto's Vitality Magazine (Sept issue) about a recent Commanda gathering, to give you a sense of who he is, and what he is creating.

Vitality sep 04

## Sacred Journey's

In retrospect it is clear that the last year has been very much about water as a life force, guardian, provider, spiritual teacher and friend. To the point in fact that I wear a vial of water from the Glastonbury Well around my neck at all times, representing both the nourishing blood of Mother Earth and the nectar of a vast Spirit of Creation. Not surprisingly water, in her guise as a guardian and teacher, lead me to the Circle of All Nations gathering hosted by William Commanda, Elder and a Spiritual leader of the Algonquin People, at his home on Bitobi Lake, Kitigan Zibi Reserve, Maniwaki Quebec.

At sunrise each day, we rose from our tents and moved silently down to the waters edge and the sacred fire to gather around the elders and pipe carriers attending from around the world, for a traditional sunrise ceremony. Prayers rose in the tobacco giving thanks for 'all our relations'; water, mineral, fire and air; our animal and plant relations; the stars and the planets; the moon and sun; and everything visible and invisible that is part of creation and therefore part of each of us. We were reminded and remained so, that each of us, and the grounds we walked on, were sacred. It was incredible to be at an Algonquin style conference. The mornings were spent in circles where various teachers, medicine people, mayors, folks like me and folks who, at first glance, did not seem to be like me, all spoke and shared how they were living on the Red Road.

The Red Road is not just the way of the indigenous people (in the sense of the world being divided into the red, white, black and yellow races) but also means to walk a path rooted in Mother Earth and connected always to Great Spirit above. (The Black Road, it's opposite, feeds the delusions of power hungry egos who fear responsibility to others). Whether we were from Japan (as many were), or from Haiti or Cameroon as others were, native, or white like me, all of us shared an indivisible love and respect for walking the Red Road and it was a joy to be together without judgment, but in full acceptance and celebration for our efforts to live with integrity.

As it was an indigenous gathering women were asked to wear skirts or shawls over their pants so that a sacred circle (their hems) would protect the opening to their wombs. Showing a lot of skin or having alcohol was forbidden and women were make-up free by the second day. Perhaps most enjoyable was the respect given to elders throughout the four days.

William Commanda is now in his 90's and has been focused on peace building, racial harmony, social justice and sharing indigenous healing wisdom of Mother Earth since the early sixties. When he was not sharing the red road with friends like Pierre Trudeau or Nelson Mandela he always made time as a master craftsman, to make birch bark canoes. As he saw the trees and

water become ill, he saw that cancer was also destroying the humans and he was forced out of the forest he loved to share his broken heart and share ways for us to heal the Earth. He now carries The Seven Fires Prophecy Belt which now offers an urgent choice to move into forgiveness, compassion and reconciliation with all our relations so that we can come together in peace and light the eighth fire where we become "A Circle of All Nations: A Culture of Peace".

This year we came together around water. The water table is drying up because the governments are selling the spring water in the water sheds to huge companies as bottled water, which affects everything below it in the water chain. The trees and plants are all being torn up in the moraines and the water is not being held longer by the plants or given shade on the rivers, so it is evaporating and rushing faster to the lakes and oceans without staying to do its job in the watershed. We talked about things we can do and are being done around the world in villages by groups of ten people or more and by governments. Shiroh Tenge a Sony executive that co-created the cd technology, author and walker of the Red Road shared a great success story. Tokyo harbour was so bad you had to pinch your nose for five hours sailing out of the harbour before you could breathe. Only 10% of the city council cared but it was enough to get regulations for the industries. Then at the national level only 1% of the government cared but it was enough to implement those rules throughout the watershed around Tokyo and now, forty years later people swim and fish right in the harbor where forty million people live. Watersheds affect everyone and everything within them, they connect us as a community and a family. The health of our water reflects our own health. There was a presentation on Masaru Emoto's work with sending words, feelings and music into water for a period of time (two hours) and then freezing the water and photographing the crystalline structures. When I hate you was said into the water the structures broke down and looked like industrial waste. When I love you and thank you were focused onto the water the crystalline structures were complex and beautiful. Thank you even produces a heart in the center of the snowflake pattern. Please read his books if you've not already Messages From Water (Volumes 1 and 2).

As our bodies, like the Earth's body, are 70% water, and as water is a reflection of its environment, imagine what the water in our bodies looks like when we are angry all the time. Imagine how much it would help the water table if you thanked your water before and after you bathe. Simple powerful solutions that require the humility to acknowledging that we are all connected to each other and part of a vast Spirit of Creation that responds to a pure and open heart's intention.

After our talks each day around 4pm the fires began for the evening sweat lodges. Between seven and fourteen sweats were run each evening well into the night on the sacred ground. Imagine if meetings in Ottawa and Washington began with a Sunrise Ceremony and ended with a multi-lingual sweat-lodge each night.

If you can attend the Circle of All Nations next year please do. All are welcome and you will be recharged by the generosity of our indigenous elders and the integrity of life on the Red Road [www.circleofallnations.com](http://www.circleofallnations.com).

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## The Algonquin Tea Co

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Farm : RR1 Golden Lake ON, Canada K0J 1X0 613-625-1106

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[spirit@algonquintea.com](mailto:spirit@algonquintea.com)

"The Universe is made of stories, not atoms." - Muriel Rukeyser

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-----Original Message-----

From: LThornto@ncc-ccn.ca [mailto:LThornto@ncc-ccn.ca]

Sent: Thursday, December 09, 2004 5:14 AM

To: don.caverley@shaw.ca

Subject: RE: Victoria Island

Thanks for your note Don. The Chairman of the NCC, Marcel Beaudry, has

received copies of the letters, regarding William Commanda's centre for peace and healing, sent by, and as responses to, members of the Ottawa Valley Algonquin First Nation communities, via the Prime Minister's Office, and the Offices of Ministers Scott and Frulla. The NCC does agree with these responses to Algonquin representatives to the extent that the NCC has and can play a leadership role in advancing the Victoria Island aboriginal centre proposal. We are, however, a small Crown Corporation, with a limited mandate and budget. We are responsible for planning the future use of federal lands in the Capital, and for ensuring that these land uses build a more representative and meaningful Capital for all Canadians and for international visitors.

The NCC does not, however, have either the mandate or the budget to construct major cultural institutions. This scope of undertaking would, in our view, need not only the planning support of the NCC, but the broad program and financial support of the government. The Departments of Canadian Heritage and Indian Affairs & Northern Development, and perhaps Public Works & Government Services Canada may be organizations that will play an important role in the realization of an initiative such as this.

Responses to the Algonquin representatives who have sent their compelling letters to Ministers do support the proposal of the centre. This project would have to be considered within the broader federal funding strategy. I

am confident that the NCC Chairman will, whenever the opportunity arises, push very strongly for federal government support of this important project.

I regret that I cannot give you a more promising answer at this time.

Lori Thornton

-----Original Message-----

From: Don Caverley [mailto:don.caverley@shaw.ca]

Sent: Monday, December 06, 2004 3:32 PM

To: LThornto@ncc-ccn.ca

Subject: Victoria Island

Importance: High

Hi Lori,

FYI...I was led to believe [by another colleague] that Minister Frulla had a working relationship/interest in this file. Nonetheless, any update re. the above mentioned. Cheers, Don

-----Original Message-----

From: min\_frulla@pch.gc.ca [mailto:min\_frulla@pch.gc.ca]

Sent: Monday, December 06, 2004 12:22 PM

To: don.caverley@shaw.ca

Subject:

Dear Mr. Caverley:

I am writing in response to your correspondence of October 14, 2004, to the Honourable Liza Frulla, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Minister responsible for Status of Women, regarding the Victoria Island project.

Ms. Frulla appreciates your advising her of your interest in this matter. It should be noted, however, that this issue falls under the purview of the National Capital Commission (NCC), an autonomous Crown corporation that operates independently of the Government and is responsible for its own day-to-day operations. In view of the independent nature of the NCC, I suggest that you contact Mr. Marcel Beaudry, Chairperson of the NCC, regarding the Victoria Island project. He can be reached at:

202 - 40 Elgin Street

Ottawa, Ontario

K1P 1C7.

I trust that this information is useful. Please accept my best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Luc Rouleau

Director

Ministerial Correspondence Secretariat

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Dear Prime Minister Martin,

I hear there is talk of a new Indigenous People's Center at Victoria Island. I think this is a marvelous idea and want to offer my support for it!

We live in Ferndale, WA... just 14 miles south of the US/Canadian Border and take many little adventurous day trips into Canada. One of our favorite pastimes is history. One of our favorite things about Canada is how you incorporate the First Peoples of your country into everything you do... national art, brochures, names of towns etc.

The many varied and vibrant cultures that made up the entirety of the lands we call the Americas deserve to be celebrated and it is a fine thing you are contemplating to honor those who were here first.

If there is a mailing list or a website where we can learn more and/or donate to this worthy cause, please let us know.

Sincerely,

Evelyn & Joe Garcia

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Dear Mr. Martin

I write to support Chief Commanda's vision of an Indigneous Centre at Victoria Island. As the G8 meets to decide on issues related to Africa, may its Canadian members also consider the importance of our Indigenous Peoples to Canada and the world.

Gwynneth Evans (K1N 8E4)

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Please help Grandfather Commanda create this cultural center on Victoria Island, that is of such great importance for all peoples.

That the honoring and messages, meetings and gatherings, the sharings and close interactions can again bring powerful connectedness, a new energy to an ancient source, SPIRIT. That which is all of us.

Let us not forget, and in the remembering, that we chose what is sacred, and serves all Creation.

Let the role for those who where elected and chosen to serve a country, a government, a political party, a people,

let that commitment be to serve, "All of Creation".

May we live in Peace,

Francis Jansen.

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Dear Prime Minister, I am writing to express my support for Elder William Commanda's proposal for an Indigenous Centre at Victoria Island - where this year the 5th annual Gathering of Nations Pipe Ceremony will take place. June 21st is Indian Day since 1945 and formally recognized by the Governor of Canada as National Aboriginal Day. The native people welcomed our ancestors to this great land hundreds of years ago. We need a culture of Peace and respect for Mother Earth to create a Circle of All Nations. This is especially important today in the face of war and environmental disaster. We need to return to the teaching of the native people in this regard. Will the Prime Minister be attending?

Karen Richardson, Project Coordinator

Seeking Alternatives Youth Project

Industry Education Council

139 St. Lawrence St. East,

Madoc, Ontario K0K 2K0

613-473-4183

[www.indedco.ca/programs/prog\\_youth](http://www.indedco.ca/programs/prog_youth)

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## EXCERPT OF MESSAGE TO PM

On a final note, I would like to extend to you a special invitation to attend the "pipe" ceremony of Elder William Commanda described in the attached. You likely know of the terrific work of William and one of his closest friends, Douglas Cardinal, in regard to the Victoria Island project, and perhaps are familiar with their efforts to see a tribute to Canada's native peoples built on that Island. Such a facility would not be tremendously expensive for Canada and would be a very appropriate venue for Canadians in recognizing in the heart of the nation's capital, the collaborative role and contributions of Canada's native peoples in building our country. But more than that, it would serve as a true source of pride-building for our native young people in particular. New generations of natives are just beginning to learn to appreciate the role of their ancestors in nation-building, yet most Canadians of both native and European descent are still for the most part, hopelessly unaware of the many aspects their history and the tremendous contributions they made as equal partners in the building of Canada and North America for that matter. It would seem to be most appropriate for the government of Canada to take a lead role in supporting this effort rather than one of back seat observor so that in years to come, it might be recognized that the Government of Canada in this case took on the role of leader in setting the history books straight with regards to our native peoples, to at least initiate a program which might help right the wrongs of so many years of perhaps well-meaning, but in many

ways mis-guided policies with regard to these cultures in such a way as to facilitate their own ability to properly rebuild, reflect and reconstruct the history of the nation. Being located at the seat of the federal government in Ottawa and in a popular and developing tourist area servicing both Ontario and Quebec, this effort might also help, through direct exposure of those who come to visit the centre, do away with many of the stereotypical opinions and attitudes which have arisen between our two cultures as the result of several decades of mis-treatment, mis-understanding and mis-information.

I cannot say whether or not attending the "pipe" ceremony with some of your ministers will be an entirely pleasant experience (although William and his colleagues are the most pleasant and humble people you will ever meet and share time with), but there are many issues concerning native land rights and industrial use of Canadian resources which often arise in the course of speeches and sensitivities remain in that regard. Just one small example would be the dispute over whether or not the new "War Museum" was built on native lands and what might be done to rectify it -- i.e. providing funding for the Victoria Island centre. Moreover, I wouldn't be surprised if Mr. Jean Chretien chose to attend, should he hear of it, since Elder Commanda often responded to Mr. Chretien's requests to open many public ceremonies with a sweet grass invocation. But these are issues which will remain with us for many years, if not centuries to come, and what I believe to be

important would be to have the Canadian Government represented at the highest levels possible, i.e. either by yourself or the Governor General as your representative or both of you, and additionally, some high ranking Canadian government officials and other dignitaries.

If at all possible, an announcement of a decision by the Government of Canada to go forward with funding support, with numbers and schedules of some sort attached, for the native centre would be ideal and well-received not only by those in attendance, but I believe by all Canadians. This has been the subject of many meetings between government officials, William Commanda and Douglas Cardinal, among others, for many years and this venue would be an ideal time to make some sort of positive announcement in that regard, as a tribute to William and a well-deserved gift to him and his people in celebration of his life. The centre could, and in fact, in my opinion, should be named for him. It would be very important and comforting for William who is now in his nineties if something along these lines could be set in motion during his lifetime. More on this initiative is also provided in the attachments hereto.

Sincerely,

Michael E. Greco

6333 Fortune Drive

Orleans, Ontario, Canada

K1C 2A4

Tel.: 613-282-5700

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Attention: Prime Minister Paul Martin,

Dear Prime Minister Martin,

I am writing this in support of William Commanda's gathering at Victoria Island on June 21, 2005 and would urge you to support his vision and extend your support to the farthest reaches of your influence.

His message is one that will benefit not only Canada but the entire world and it is one that is gathering great notice among the world and its leaders. Please be among those who are influenced by his message of peace and wisdom in these troubled times.

Most Sincerely,

Colleen and Fred Goodchild

Smiths Falls, Ontario

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Hi I agree the vision center and i support Willam Commanda for the all nation circle Please hear the  
Native Peoples            Seyhwa F La Pointe

1220 Des Berges App 101

Terrebonne J6W 6G8

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Attention: The Honourable Paul Martin,  
Prime Minister of Canada

Dear Mr. Martin:

I am writing in strong support of Elder William Commanda's Vision for an International Indigenous Healing Center for Victoria Island.

As you may be well aware, internationally renowned architect Douglas Cardinal shares this vision with Grandfather William Commanda.

Please offer your assistance, in whatever way you can, as Canadian Prime Minister, to make this dream a reality.

By supporting Grandfather's vision of 'A Circle of All Nations, A Culture of Peace', you can be a significant part of the healing process that needs to happen between Canadian government officials and First Nations Peoples.

Sincerely,

Ray Sunstrum

216, Du Grand Calumet,

Gatineau, QC J9J 1L3

(819) 685-1352

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The Right Honourable Prime Minister of Canada,

John Henri Commanda n'dizhnikaaz, I am an anishnabe (Ojibway) from Dokis First Nation and I am of the Eagle Clan. I am also a husband and father. I will soon participate in an official naming ceremony where I will receive from an elder of the community my ojibway spirit name. I recently completed my 25th year of service with the federal public service (April 30, 2005) and I am eager to take on new and exciting challenges.

I am also a participant in the Career Assignment Program (CAP). I am one of 23 successful aboriginal candidates who, hopes to make a difference in the federal public service for my people. I have chosen to follow this path for, I truly believe, I can make a difference and make a valuable contribution towards the federal public service becoming the "employer of choice" for my people.

However, my reason for writing you today is of a personal nature and pertains to the aforementioned subject. I moved to the National Capital Region in June 2001 with my family and in early 2003 I had the privilege and honour of meeting with Grandfather William Commanda. At this meeting we agreed that we may be related however, we have not pursued any further research into this subject. It was during my first encounter with Grandfather that I was made aware of his efforts to establish an Indigenous Centre on Victoria Island. I was intrigued by this project that I conducted further research in the background work he has done. From the literature I have been able to gather, it has become apparent to me that this initiative is on the cusp of becoming a reality however, the time has arrived for all levels of government (Federal, Provincial, Municipal, First Nations) to now step front and centre to make this dream become a reality.

For over 400 years our people have heard from the various levels of government that things could not be done for various reasons. I am certain you will agree that the time of saying no must end and we must now begin to say what must we do together to make it happen. As I stated earlier, the time has arrived for the governments at all levels to begin working together to assist Grandfather William in realizing his dream of an Indigenous Centre on the meeting place of the First Nations People known as Victoria Island.

The goal is to create a Centre of teaching, learning and gathering. We have and will always teach people to understand who we are as First Nations People, in order to reduce and hopefully eliminate discrimination, racism and harassment. We also teach so that one day the Four Nations of the world will live in harmony. We believe that by teaching others about ourselves, we instil knowledge which in turn eliminates fear thus giving people power. Power to work together because we will understand each other's differences and will accept these differences as opposed to being afraid of them.

Your help in initiating discussions amongst the decision makers at the federal level with Grandfather William and his supporters will most certainly be a first step in realizing the goal of one day opening the Indigenous Learning Centre on Victoria Island.

Chi-miigwetch for taking the time to read this communiqué. Please provide any response directly to The Circle of All Nations website at the following link:

<http://www.circleofallnations.com/>

All my relations,

***John Henri Commanda***

***"Listen or your tongue will keep you deaf. - Native American Proverb -"***