

From: Terry Rees, FOCA
To: Minister Doug Downey, Attorney General
October 2020

Dear Minister Downey,

As representatives of a large group of rural Ontarians, FOCA is concerned about the provision of critical services to our northern and rural populations. FOCA represents the 250,000 families who live at the waterfront in Ontario, whether seasonally or year-round.

A tragic incident on Lake Wahnapiatae in 2013 led to a coroner's inquest and finally to recommendations which were issued in 2018. You can read about our perspective on rural emergency response, and our background on this particular incident, on the FOCA website:
<https://foca.on.ca/emergency-response-in-remote-areas/#>

Our correspondence today is specifically to request an update on the 19 recommendations made in November 2018 by the Office of the Chief Coroner under The Coroners Act.

(See:

<https://www.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca/english/Deathinvestigations/Inquests/Verdictsandrecommendations/OCCInquest911Deaths2018.html>) We understand that (per Coroner's recommendation #18) by no later than December 1, 2019, and then annually for five years, there were to be reports made available regarding the progress made with respect to these recommendations.

We appreciate that systemic change can be complex but we also believe it is vital to incorporate important changes to our vital public services especially when informed by real-life incidents and thoughtful review after the fact. Our rural and northern residents deserve to be informed of the state of, and any changes to, the services they rely on. Many of our members remain concerned that 911 services do not adequately serve their needs, and that alternate delivery methods may be appropriate in some circumstance or locations. Broader availability of cellular and broadband services is also part of the challenge / solution.

Thank you for taking your time to update us on the status of these recommendations. Please know that on behalf of our members we are always happy to contribute to the communications from the Province through rural and northern Ontario on these type of critical matters.

Regards,

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