



For Immediate Release

May 4, 2011 – West Coast LEAF and Ending Violence Association of BC (EVA BC) Granted “Limited Standing” at Missing Women Commission of Inquiry

Vancouver – West Coast LEAF and Ending Violence Association of BC (EVA BC) have been granted “limited participants” status according to the Ruling on Participation and Funding Recommendations released yesterday by Wally Oppal, head of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry.

The ruling granted ten groups “full participation” status and eight were given “limited participation” status. All participants have access to documents disclosed to the Commission, but limited participants will only make submissions at the conclusion of the evidentiary hearings and will need to apply on an individual witness basis to Mr. Oppal for the right to cross examine.

“We’re glad to see those most impacted by this issue given full participation and made central to the inquiry,” says West Coast LEAF interim Executive Director Alison Brewin. “We wanted grassroots organizations to be front and centre. However, it concerns us that there was no transparency about what led to a division between limited and full standing for participants *before* applications were accepted, and there is continued confusion about how financial resources will be allocated. We weren’t given an opportunity to speak to this division.”

West Coast LEAF and EVA BC, both well established non-profit organizations with long track records of working to create positive systemic change to improve the status and safety of women in BC, will bring critical analysis of the issues surrounding the missing women investigations to the proceedings.

“The Commission must look at why the justice system neglected this file involving so many poor, Aboriginal, substance using women in the sex trade and must take steps to improve the response so as to increase the safety of the most vulnerable,” says EVA BC Executive Director Tracy Porteous.

The commission is expected to begin with study forums in Northern BC next month, and legal proceedings are expected to begin later this year. A list of all participants can be found on the Commission’s website: missingwomeninquiry.ca

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