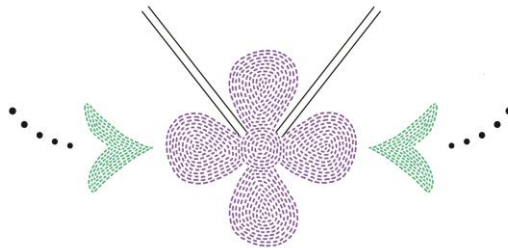


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



Enquête nationale
sur les femmes et les filles
autochtones disparues et assassinées

**National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part 1 Statement Gathering
Garden River
First Nations Indian Reserve**



PUBLIC

**Thursday, October 18, 2018
Statement - Volume 554
Statement of Linda Deibel,
In relation to Tasha Marie Smith**

**Statement gathered by Daria Boyarchuk
& Debbie Bodkin**

International Reporting Inc.

41 - 5450 Canotek Road, Ottawa, Ontario, K1J 9G2
E-mail: info@irri.net - Phone: 613-748-6043 - Fax: 613-748-8246

II
NOTE

Where not required by other statute, redactions to this public transcript have been made pursuant to Rule 55 of the Commission's *Legal Path: Rules of Respectful Practice*, which provides for "the discretion to redact private information of a sensitive nature where it is not material to the evidence to be given before distributing the information to the Parties. The National Inquiry will consider the public interest in releasing this type of information against the potential harmful impact on the individual whose personal information is at issue."

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Statement Gatherers: Daria Boyarchuk & Debbie Bodkin

Documents submitted with testimony: none.

1 Garden River First Nations Indian Reserve

2 --- Upon commencing on Thursday, October 18, 2018 at 11:32 a.m.

3 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Okay Linda, thank you
4 for inviting myself and Daria into your home to hear your
5 story. Today is Thursday, October 18, 2018, and right now
6 it's 11:32 in the morning. I'm Debbie Bodkin, I'm a
7 statement gatherer with the National Inquiry. This is
8 Daria Boyarchuk, also a statement gatherer with the
9 National Inquiry. And we know that you are Linda Deibel.
10 Am I saying your surname right? Yeah? We are at your
11 house at [address], Bracebridge, Unit [number] or Apartment
12 [number]. I'm honoured to be here to meet you and to
13 listen to your story, and to hear what you want to share
14 with us. You said you're all comfortable and you mentioned
15 to us that you're comfortable with the audio and video
16 taping.

17 **MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** M'hmm.

18 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** And we went over the
19 consent form with you. We all have our cell phones turned
20 off.

21 **MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** Well no.

22 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Double check that.

23 **MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** Yeah.

24 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Are we good? Okay. And
25 you're here voluntarily. I called you and you invited us

1 to come here and to hear your statement here, that's
2 correct. So I think -- did I miss anything there?

3 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** I think you're good to
4 go.

5 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** I've got the date, time,
6 location. So I'm going to turn it over to you. And as I
7 said, if you wouldn't mind starting out with your name,
8 your full name, your birth date, and maybe tell us a little
9 bit about the history of your family, and then tell us --
10 share with us what you want to share.

11 **MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** Okay.

12 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** And we may not have
13 mentioned, we know it may be difficult and emotional, if
14 you need a break just tell us, we can take a break and
15 start up again. But you're in charge now, okay?

16 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yes, and if you ever
17 want to stop and say look I've had enough, I don't want to
18 do this anymore, it's too much for me, we can stop as well.

19 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** That's fine as well.
20 You're in charge.

21 **MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** Yeah.

22 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Okay?

23 **MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** Okay. So my name is
24 Linda Deibel. My daughter's name is, or was, Tasha Marie
25 Smith. She was missing when she was 28, and she was found

1 dead, actually floated up from the Grand River, four years
2 later and a fisherman found her. I had power of attorney
3 for personal care for my daughter because although she was
4 older, she was slow from head trauma. And the
5 neurosurgeon, one of them that operated on her brain in
6 Ottawa, said that she wouldn't grow up past 14, she'd be 14
7 forever. And so I took care of her.

8 Now what happened was, I was moving from
9 Toronto -- or from North Bay I'm sorry, to Toronto. When
10 my daughter came up for a visit from Haileybury, she was
11 staying with somebody there, and because my daughter had
12 dual diagnosis with her -- because of the head trauma and
13 that, she had a hard time. Because of that -- like I said,
14 I used to take care of her. But I asked her father to
15 please watch her while I moved from a small town to the big
16 city. I was afraid of her getting overwhelmed and excited,
17 and maybe wandering and getting lost because I didn't know
18 anybody there.

19 So he of course was upset because he always
20 was, and he sees it as taking care of -- babysitting for
21 me. He just didn't get it right, that he was a parent. So
22 he done that, but I guess what happened was to Tasha, was
23 that -- sort of like I guess he kidnapped her because he
24 wouldn't give her back. And I had no vehicle, and of
25 course all my money got spent, I just moved to Toronto and

Statement - Public
Linda Deibel
(Tasha Marie Smith)

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1 paid first and last, hookup charges, all this. I'm broke,
2 I have no money for gas, nothing. So I couldn't pick her
3 up, and I kept asking him to bring her and he wouldn't.

4 Then I got mad one day and I said to him
5 bring Tasha to me -- I was mad. I said bring her to me and
6 let me take care of my own daughter like I'm supposed to.
7 I was told as he spoke in his, what I call his evil voice,
8 that will never happen. The phone hung up and she
9 disappeared.

10 Then I -- when I didn't hear from the police
11 after a couple of days after she was found by a fisherman
12 in the Grand River, she had floated up, I waited for the
13 policeman to call me in and interview me. There was no
14 call. And so after whatever period of time I called,
15 because I got the number from my ex, and I called and I
16 asked like how come -- like am I getting interviewed, how
17 come I haven't heard from anybody? And I was told no, no
18 I'm not going to be interviewed. And I asked why. I said
19 what do you mean why? I said I'm the mom, you're not going
20 to interview me? Well I was told that you don't know
21 anything.

22 That was very, very disheartening and I
23 asked, I said, or maybe stated, do you take orders from the
24 public now, what do you mean somebody told you that I don't
25 know anything? I didn't know you took orders from the

1 public, like I thought you worked for the people. I don't
2 understand, what are you saying to me, how come I'm not
3 being interviewed? How do you know, or how does this other
4 person know what I know? Maybe I do know something, maybe
5 I don't, but that's not the point. Aren't you supposed to
6 talk to the people directly or you take somebody else's
7 word?

8 So of course that didn't go good, and he was
9 very pissed off. And then so the next thing that happened
10 to me was I moved from -- because I started to look for my
11 own daughter myself. Oh, and I should say because I was in
12 North York, I did call the North York police and asked if
13 they would assist me with a case so that I could be
14 informed and whatnot. And they showed up, two police
15 officers, pissed off again at me. And I was told about the
16 statement, that he's mad because he has to put it in the
17 file now because I called the station.

18 And I said okay, so are you going to look
19 for my daughter, like what happens from here, like
20 whatever, normal questions. And no, we're not looking.
21 Well what do you mean you're not looking for my daughter?
22 No, we don't have time, do you know how many people live in
23 Toronto, how many people go missing? In other words,
24 making me look like I'm being a problem, and yet that's
25 their job.

1 So then I was very disheartened again and I
2 wondered how I'm going to find my beautiful daughter by
3 myself in a city and I don't know even one person. So then
4 that's what I did, I went and I went on the street and I
5 looked for my daughter like that. I slept at Nathan
6 Phillips Square. I found another lady that was homeless,
7 and we teamed together and slept in a tent. And we went
8 out looking every day because I am not going to find my
9 daughter in my house. She's on the street, going to
10 homeless shelters and trying to find a place to live and
11 food to eat, so that's where I wanted to be if I'm going to
12 find her.

13 So there was several times I did find my
14 daughter, but I wasn't able to access because I'm only a
15 person. I can't go into people's houses and I can't do
16 anything, I'm just a person. I'm just a mom like all the
17 other moms that have missing children, and all the other
18 fathers that care about their children and grieve also.
19 Just parents, that's it. That's all we want is our
20 children.

21 So I talked to people on the street of
22 course, I showed them many pictures, people saw my
23 daughter. My daughter told them that she was being
24 molested, and I guess that's maybe why it went the way it
25 went. I don't know, I don't understand any of it because I

1 took care of my daughter. I don't understand, but anyway.

2 There was another time when I was still in
3 North York and these people came in to fix something
4 because I was right beside the garbage room, and there was
5 problems with whatever kind of bugs you get from garbage.
6 So I told them to seal it all around, these two men that
7 came. And I was talking about my daughter and I showed
8 them the picture.

9 Well before I showed them the picture they
10 looked at me, and they looked at each other, and then they
11 said does she look like you? And I said well many people
12 say she does and I showed them the picture, and they did
13 the same thing again. They looked at each other, and they
14 looked like very kind of surprised or shocked, and they saw
15 my daughter and they knew where my daughter was. And they
16 gave me an idea, they didn't have the exact address, but
17 they had worked there. And of course I don't know Toronto,
18 I'm just one person, I'm not a police force.

19 And so he described it and I wrote it down,
20 but I couldn't find it. And he said that he went in there
21 to do whatever work, and the girl that was my daughter came
22 and looked down the stairs, and looked really terrified and
23 started to scream and went into the cupboard or the -- what
24 do you call it? Not the cupboard the closet. Went into
25 the closet and was rocking back and forth, and screaming

1 and screaming and holding a teddy bear. And that there was
2 a mattress on the floor and blanket, and that's all,
3 nothing else really in the room.

4 And it's the same vision like I had of my
5 daughter when I was doing some dream walking to look for
6 her. I see her on the floor and she kept getting filled
7 with needles every time she'd wake up. And she'd get upset
8 and scream and try to get away. She would -- there were
9 constant -- that was just in my dream though. I don't know
10 if that part is reality, but that's what happened and it
11 sounded like the same thing.

12 So then that -- I couldn't -- every time I
13 tried to call the police, all they did was not call me back
14 first of all, that was the big thing. If they did call me
15 back because I reported them to the -- whoever internal
16 police that they're not talking to me and they won't give
17 me information. He called me back on a private line and he
18 gave me -- was giving me a very hard time, was very upset
19 with me. With me. And I have the missing daughter, and
20 he's mad at me because I'm telling on him that he's not
21 helping my beautiful daughter. So there's been lots of
22 abuse against me as a human being and a mother, a parent.

23 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Take your time.

24 **MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** I want people to know,
25 this is the kind of thing that goes on all the time, and

1 it's not right. It has to change. We are people. So then
2 that was the second time I could have for sure found my
3 daughter. The next time was my friend and I, we went to
4 London.

5 We got a tip about London and we went there.
6 And I went to the Salvation Army Food Bank and I asked the
7 girl, which I wouldn't have really needed to anyway, but I
8 asked the girl, I showed her my daughter's picture, I
9 showed her my daughter's ID, and she looked really
10 surprised. And she said I have to go to the back for a
11 minute. I won't get anybody in trouble, but they're not
12 supposed to legally -- they're supposed to protect people
13 that come in. And she turned it around -- I had to sign it
14 anyways, my daughter's name was right there. She was there
15 that day.

16 So I went to the police and I asked them,
17 the local police -- because I had called the detective and
18 he said he would call the police and let them know that I
19 was on my way. But he lied again. And there must have
20 been somebody in the room because normally he doesn't lie,
21 he just was abusive to me.

22 So then I went there and there was this
23 lovely lady working there that was more than happy to help
24 me. She was very compassionate and very kind. And she
25 said she never got no phone call from no police. And so

1 she couldn't help me. So again my beautiful daughter, she
2 didn't get found because the police officer, the detective,
3 his neglect killed my daughter. That's what killed my
4 daughter. She could have been found.

5 Now that's three times I know of for sure.
6 There was other incidents too, but we won't go into it.
7 Because I had -- I was down on the ground with the people.
8 So that's why I almost found her those times. They didn't
9 do their job, I had to do their job for them, and still
10 they dismissed me.

11 Then when I moved from North York to
12 Downtown Toronto, which was for the purpose of spending
13 more time looking for Tasha. Because I was spending an
14 hour and a half each way, every day, on the TTC. Three
15 hours of not looking for my daughter, just travelling.
16 That was no good.

17 So then I lived right downtown, it was
18 earlier for me. Because I would get up in the morning --
19 this is how it went every day for four years. I would get
20 up, I would go right away with my little doggie that I had.
21 I had a little Pomeranian. And we would go from the time
22 that I would get up until the time I fell asleep every day.
23 Every day I looked for Tasha.

24 So then one day I tried to change my address
25 and I went to Toronto to say my name, my daughter's name,

1 blah, blah, blah. They looked it up, okay here it is. Oh
2 no. I go what do you mean no? No, no, no, we can't take
3 your information. And I go what do you mean, I'm the
4 mother. Like I moved now. My number's the same but I
5 moved, so how are they going to get a hold of me if they
6 find Tasha? Well I'm sorry, no, no no, no. And they like
7 close everything and they're just like stonewalling me.

8 And this is what happened. So I wasn't able
9 -- I was blocked from everything. Blocked from getting
10 information, blocked from changing my information, blocked
11 from the media. When I tried to get my story into the
12 media every time they were good. And then all of a sudden,
13 well we have to verify the story and we have to talk to the
14 police, and no more. That's it, no don't talk to me no
15 more.

16 I don't understand. I only love my child.
17 And all the mothers love their children too and the
18 fathers. Why, why does this happen? It has to change, it
19 must. We are the people, they -- the police officers are
20 not the people. What happened to we are the people? What
21 happened to the tribe, where's the tribe? I don't get it.
22 What is wrong with me wanting to take care of my beautiful
23 daughter?

24 So my daughter, she turned up dead. She
25 floated up from the Grand River and a fisherman found her

1 with no hands I'm told. Everything is hearsay because the
2 police don't tell me. And apparently also she had a big
3 thing on the back of head, but in the paper it was put no
4 foul play. And the police did not call me when my
5 beautiful daughter was found. They did not call me and let
6 me know. My son had to call me and tell me that his sister
7 was dead, so that I could bury her. That's not right.

8 And that's about the end of it. She died
9 and I buried her. And then a week later my son and I, he
10 was driving me home and we died in a car accident. He
11 never came back. He stayed in like a coma. He just died,
12 he died about a year and a half after that. And now I have
13 no children, and I have no grandchildren, and I'm 61 years
14 old.

15 I have to start my life over. My life was
16 my children. And now I have to start over. How do I do
17 that? Because of one man and he doesn't want to do his
18 job. My daughter's dead, my son is dead. He wouldn't have
19 been dead if he wouldn't have been travelling on the road
20 because we buried Tasha. And I was dead but I came back
21 because God asked me. And I said I have to come back for
22 my son, because he didn't die. He was in like the coma.

23 So that's what I did, and now both my
24 children are with the Creator and they're safe. And that's
25 all I want is change. That's it. I want respect for our

1 children and all of the parents who care. That's it.
2 That's the change that we all need. We need to be a tribe
3 again. We have to stand together and we have to face the
4 dark and bring the light. We have to bring the light back
5 to the earth. This is no good. I think that's about all I
6 have to say.

7 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Well thank you for
8 sharing a very difficult story for you to talk about.

9 **MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** It's so important. I
10 want people to know people didn't care. I really
11 appreciate you taking the time to listen because nobody
12 cared before. It's very important to me that you do care.

13 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** We do.

14 **MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** I know. You're very --
15 being very kind. Thank you.

16 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Thank you.

17 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Take a minute and just
18 gather. There's a couple of little questions I want to ask
19 you, but I want to give you a minute to just --

20 **MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** Okay, I'll just get some
21 Kleenex.

22 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Sure. I was looking for
23 some but couldn't see any. You're a very strong woman to
24 be able --

25 **MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** Creator.

1 MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: -- to keep pushing on.

2 MS. LINDA DEIBEL: Creator. What else are
3 you going to do?.

4 MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Yeah. Are you okay with
5 just a couple of little questions?

6 MS. LINDA DEIBEL: Yes.

7 MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Very easy ones.

8 MS. LINDA DEIBEL: Yeah.

9 MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: What year was it that
10 Tasha was found, do you remember?

11 MS. LINDA DEIBEL: In 2004, July 28th.

12 MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: And you said the Grand
13 River, but in what city, what police service was initially
14 involved?

15 MS. LINDA DEIBEL: Well it's Cambridge, and
16 they called themselves I think the Waterloo.

17 MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Waterloo, okay.

18 MS. LINDA DEIBEL: Yeah.

19 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: The Waterloo Police
20 Department? Okay.

21 MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: But initially when she
22 went missing she had been living in Toronto, so it was
23 Toronto Police you were -- no, she went missing from
24 Cambridge area?

25 MS. LINDA DEIBEL: North Bay is where I

1 live.

2 MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay.

3 MS. LINDA DEIBEL: And asked her father to
4 take care of her while I moved and got organized.

5 MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay.

6 MS. LINDA DEIBEL: Because I was moving like
7 in a week. And then I wasn't like set up for two people, I
8 just got the one place like, you know, for me.

9 MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Yeah.

10 MS. LINDA DEIBEL: So I had to get a bigger
11 place.

12 MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: So you had Tasha with
13 you in North Bay, and then you --

14 MS. LINDA DEIBEL: She was just getting out
15 of the psych and she went to live -- she asked me can I
16 live with a person and I said is that what you want? Yeah.
17 Oh well, okay then. But then because Tasha has dual
18 diagnosis, sometimes she would have little storylines that
19 would go on in her head. You know like I wasn't her mom,
20 and she was from the States and her dad was a biker and
21 died in an accident, blah, blah, blah. Just different
22 storylines. I never knew if they were true or if they
23 weren't.

24 She said some things disconcerting, so I
25 said well you stay -- you're going to stay with me. But I

1 had to still move -- there was no room, like how are you
2 going to stay there, I'm in a bachelor pad. And I only had
3 a walkway to the bathroom and to my bed, and I had the
4 mattresses and stuff all piled up around me. And it was
5 just like a maze. But there was no room. I had a single
6 bed and she -- Tasha was a bigger girl. There's no room
7 for her to sleep. And so that's why she -- I asked her
8 father to let me get organized.

9 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Right.

10 **MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** And then of course she
11 was moved from here, moved to there, moved -- and I said
12 what are you doing? You're putting her places, you're the
13 dad. Why are you doing that? She's coming to live we me,
14 she doesn't need a place, she doesn't need an apartment.
15 Or why are you putting her in a group home, I take care of
16 her, like it's just temporary. None of it made sense to
17 me, you know.

18 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** But what year did she
19 go missing in North Bay?

20 **MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** In Cambridge?

21 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Or in --

22 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Cambridge.

23 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** She was found in
24 Cambridge you said?

25 **MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** She floated up from the

1 Grand River.

2 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: In Cambridge in 2004.
3 But because you did -- you did say she was found four years
4 later after she went missing, right?

5 MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Missing out of North
6 York? Is that where her father was?

7 MS. LINDA DEIBEL: She went missing from
8 Cambridge.

9 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Oh okay, Cambridge.

10 MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Oh, her father --

11 MS. LINDA DEIBEL: Where her father had
12 placed her.

13 MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Okay. Oh from a home in
14 Cambridge, not with her father? She was in like -- when
15 you say placed her in a --

16 MS. LINDA DEIBEL: He put her in a group
17 home.

18 MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: A group home, okay.

19 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: And so that was in
20 2000 -- 2000 then, right?

21 MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: Two thousand.

22 MS. LINDA DEIBEL: Yes.

23 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Okay.

24 MS. DEBBIE BODKIN: And how old was Tasha
25 when she was found dead, and how old would she have been?

1 **MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** Well anywhere after 28 to
2 32. She could have been any of those ages. But when she
3 was found she was only -- I was told, hearsay, that she was
4 only bones with the no hands. That's all I know.

5 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** And that wasn't from a
6 police report, that was just from someone --

7 **MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** No, my sister grilled my
8 ex for some information.

9 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** And were there any
10 police officer names that you wanted to name?

11 **MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** [Detective 1] was the
12 detective that was on my daughter's -- supposed to be on my
13 daughter's case.

14 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Okay. And he was with
15 Waterloo Police?

16 **MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** Yes.

17 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Okay.

18 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Do you have his name
19 Debbie, full name? Okay, perfect.

20 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** [Detective 1].

21 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** [Detective 1].

22 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Did that make you think
23 of anything else, just those few questions? Anything else
24 specific, did you want to show any pictures?

25 **MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** Yes.

1 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** You brought out that
2 picture.

3 **MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** Yes.

4 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** If you can just hold it
5 up kind of in front of the camera? You don't have to go
6 real close but a little --

7 **MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** This is my beautiful
8 daughter here, Tasha. Can you see?

9 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yes.

10 **MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** Okay.

11 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** And that was your son
12 there too?

13 **MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** And this was my son.

14 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Thank you.

15 **MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** Here is something they
16 can see too. This is my daughter now, because of people
17 not doing their job. And there was no need for my daughter
18 to die. Or any women because of that.

19 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** And during the police
20 investigation was your ex involved, like in trying to get
21 the police to do more too, or was he not really involved in
22 it like you were searching?

23 **MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** They did different things
24 on him and his wife. They did interviews like on TV and in
25 the paper, and they gave -- they communicated back and

1 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** So it is now eight
2 minutes after 12. Thank you again Linda, it was an honour
3 to meet you and hear your story. And we will shut the
4 equipment and go from there.

5 **MS. LINDA DEIBEL:** Thank you for coming.

6 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** You're welcome.

7 --- Upon adjourning at 12:08 p.m.

LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

I, Sherry Hobe, Court Transcriber, hereby certify that I have transcribed the foregoing and it is a true and accurate transcript of the digital audio provided in this matter.



Sherry Hobe

January 10, 2019