

Request to Appear as a Delegation

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Name of Delegation: Descendants of the Komagata Maru Society
Name of Primary Contact Person: RAJ SINGH TOOR
Name(s) of Delegation Member(s) in Attendance:

RAJ SINGH TOOR

Purpose of Delegation:

KOMAGATA MARU Recognition

Details of Request:

Please See Attachment

FIPPA s. 22

FIPPA s. 22

Additional Information in Support of Request

FIPPA s. 22

From: Raj Singh **FIPPA s. 22**
Subject: Port Moody Komagata Maru recognition request
Date: Mar 16, 2021 at 3:58:42 PM
To: Raj Singh **FIPPA s. 22**

Hello Respected Mayor and Councillors City of Port Moody,

My name is Raj Singh Toor. I am the grandson of one of the passengers on the Komagata Maru, and Vice President and spokesperson for the non-profit Descendants of the Komagata Maru Society.

I represent the Descendants of the Komagata Maru Society, in which there are 15 families all over Canada who are direct descendants of the passengers (children, grandchildren or great grandchildren). The entire South Asian community supports us because we are the ones who suffered in losing loved ones and who deeply shared the pain of our parents, grandparents, or great grandparents being rejected by Canada in 1914.

The Komagata Maru arrived in Vancouver on May 23, 1914 with 376 passengers, one of which was my grandfather. His name was Baba Puran Singh Janetpura. The passengers were British subjects from India of Sikh, Muslim, and Hindu origin, seeking to enter Canada.

The passengers of the ship were all British subjects and thus British passport holders. I remember my grandfather telling us about his painful experience connected with this trip on the Komagata Maru. He told us how the Canadian government denied entry to all the passengers.

No food, water or medication was provided by the government, even though it was the government's discriminatory law that prevented the passengers from disembarking. Only the local South Asian community provided the passengers with food and water and medication. Furthermore, this help was limited by the Canadian government because it restricted the South Asian community from accessing the ship. Often the passengers went for 24 hours without food and water, and sometimes 2 or 3 days or more. Passengers were getting sick.

Komagata Maru passengers were starving, they were thirsty, and they were getting sick. They had a very painful, hard time. The ship was sent back to India after two months, forcefully, under the shadow of a military ship as a result of a discriminatory act by the Government of Canada, without allowing the passengers to disembark.

The British were ruling India at that time, and when the Komagata Maru arrived in India, British troops shot at the passengers. Around 20 people were killed on the spot. Many were injured, and the rest of them were put in jail for a long period of time.

The Descendants of the Komagata Maru Society worked for more than 15 years for apologies from both provincial and federal governments. We never asked for any compensation.

On a request by the Descendants of the Komagata Maru Society, the BC Government apologized in 2008, and the Government of Canada apologized in 2016 for this act of discrimination. Both governments committed to learn from the mistakes of the past to ensure they would never be repeated. On June 10, 2020, at the request of the Descendants of the Komagata Maru Society, the City of Vancouver apologized for its role in the 1914 Komagata Maru incident.

The City Council of Brampton, Ontario officially opened the Komagata Maru Park in memory of the Komagata Maru Passengers on June 22, 2019. What made this event special is that even though they are 4300 kilometres away from where the Komagata Maru was detained, the people of Brampton felt it was important to recognize those who were hurt by this incident.

In July 8, 2019, in response to a request of The Descendants of the Komagata Maru Society, Surrey councillors approved the renaming of 75A Avenue between 120 Street and 121A Street to "Komagata Maru Way." They also approved the installation of a storyboard at R. A. Nicholson Park, explaining the history of the Komagata Maru. In memory of the Komagata Maru passengers, on July 31, 2019, Mayor Doug McCallum and myself unveiled the Komagata Maru Way Street sign. Last October the City of Surrey installed a Komagata Maru storyboard at R.A. Nicholson Park.

As a result of my work with the Delta City Council, at the December 14, 2020 council meeting, a motion was passed to recognize the injustice suffered by the passengers of the Komagata Maru.

Soon, the city will install a Komagata Maru storyboard in the North Delta Social Heart Plaza so that residents may be better informed of the hardships and struggle that the passengers of the Komagata Maru endured.

On March 1 2021 the City of New Westminster passed the Motion unanimously and recognized the Komagata Maru passengers and QtoQ Ferry docks and also the trail connected to Queensborough dock rename to the Komagata Maru in memory of the

Komagata passengers behalf of the Descendants of the Komagata Maru Society request which was written by me.

The Komagata Maru incident took place in Vancouver at Burrard Inlet. Port Moody is part of Metro Vancouver, and the South Asian Community is a very important part of Port Moody . The South Asian Community was very important in the development of modern-day Port Moody.

I am wondering if the City of Port Moody can name a park or street or some civic asset in memory of the Komagata Maru. Another consideration could be to install a storyboard at park or plaza. This would be greatly appreciated, not only by descendants of the passengers, and by the South Asian Community in Canada, but by every Canadian who believes in treating all humans with dignity and respect.

Thanks,

Raj Singh Toor

Descendants of the Komagata

Vice President and spokesperson for the Descendants of the Komagata Maru Society

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