

Online petition seeks lighting, cameras on local waterways

Council being pressured to act in wake of two more Aboriginal deaths in Thunder Bay rivers.

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The OPP underwater search and recovery unit found a body in the McIntyre River on Thursday. (Matt Vis, tbnewswatch.com)

THUNDER BAY – An online petition asking city council to install

cameras and better lighting near Thunder Bay waterways is quickly attracting attention.

The change.org [petition](#), posted by Robyn Oram, was posted on Saturday night and within hours 121 people had signed their names. “Myself and many others would like to have cameras and improved lighting installed along all waterways within the city, to improve safety for our youth and our entire community,” the petition reads.

“In the event of a tragedy, cameras may provide the answers people are so desperately seeking, while improved lighting may prevent a tragedy.”

The petition was begun after two Indigenous teenagers were found dead this month in local waterways.

Tammy Keeash, 17, disappeared on the night of May 6 and was discovered by a passerby the next night in the Neebing McIntyre Floodway.

Josiah Begg went missing the same night. Police on Thursday night recovered a body matching his description in the McIntyre River.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation leaders and family members have confirmed it was the missing teen, although neither the police nor the coroner’s office have made a positive ID.

Keeash, who hailed from North Caribou First Nation was living in a local group home, while Begg, who lived in Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation, was visiting Thunder Bay with his father for medical appointments.

They are the sixth and seventh Aboriginal youths to die in local waterways since 2000.

Oram said she started the petition for one reason.

“I am signing because I want to make a difference,” Oram said.

Others gave different reasons for signing their names.

“I am signing because three of those young Native students lived with me, when I used to live in Thunder Bay,” said Red Deer, Alta.’s Beth Sutherland.

Andrew Cheechoo says he signed out of fear.

“I’m signing because I’m an Aboriginal youth myself and I’m scared every day in this city just because this could happen to me anytime or anyone in that fact,” he said. “But it would help the community.”

“We need to do more. This has to stop,” wrote Thunder Bay’s Linda McKillop.

It’s a priority, said Deborah Shaw.

“We need this. Need, not want,” she said.