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October 28, 2021

The Honourable Katrine Conroy, M.L.A.
Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development
PO BOX 9352 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9M1

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Re: Emergency Motor Vehicle Closures under the Motor Vehicle Prohibition Regulation

Dear Minister Conroy:

District of Sicamous Council has learned that the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development has proposed Emergency Motor Vehicle Closures (MVC) under the Motor Vehicle Prohibition Regulation of the *Wildlife Act* (Section 109), and that these closures will impact recreational use of Owlhead Trailhead within our municipality.

Council agrees with the Ministry's intent to protect affected wildfire areas from further damage; however, it does not support the hasty development of these proposals as the decision lacks meaningful consultation with municipalities and recreational user groups, particularly those with Recreation Sites and Trails BC (RSTBC) partnership agreements.

Council would like to know how RSTBC partnership agreements will be handled during the temporary closures, which could extend beyond 18 months as the Motor Vehicle Prohibition Regulation does not include a 'sunset clause'. Without this clause, there is no guarantee these measures will remain temporary.

Furthermore, Council would like the Ministry to consider the economic burden these closures will have on communities who rely on recreational tourism to support the local economy during shoulder seasons. According to the "Economic Impact Assessment of the Snowmobiling Industry in Sicamous" prepared by MNP, the 2020/21 snowmobiling season alone generated an estimated \$5.6 Million in direct economic input. Sicamous is one of many communities who will be negatively impacted by the proposed MVC.

Council understands the Ministry would prefer that the MVC are established prior to the expiration of Area Restrictions put in place by BC Wildfire Service but asks that further consultation with stakeholders be pursued. Council also asks that an exemption for the Eagle Valley Snowmobile Club to operate the Owlhead Trailhead during the winter season be considered, as the Two Mile Wildfire Road Wildfire did not directly impact the recreational area.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terry Rysz", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Mayor Terry Rysz,
DISTRICT OF SICAMOUS

c.c. Greg Kylo, M.L.A Shuswap
Mel Arnold, M.P. North-Okanagan Shuswap