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May 17, 2018

The Honourable John Horgan, M.L.A.
Premier of British Columbia
West Annex Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC
V8V 1X4

Re: Highway Safety and Economical Impact to Revelstoke on Hwy 1 at 3 Valley Gap

Dear Premier,

The Revelstoke Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Centre are connecting with you on behalf of our business community, and visitors, regarding ongoing safety and economical concerns regarding the stretch of Highway 1 at 3 Valley Gap. This letter is to implore you to recognize, acknowledge and act on the ongoing safety and economic crisis on the 3 Valley Gap stretch of the Trans-Canada Highway, for our community and visitors alike. Please treat this as a priority.

First, we do want to commend our current and previous Provincial leaders who have leaned in and listened to our Municipal Government, who have long been advocating for improved safety on this stretch of highway. The most recent infrastructure that has been put in place for avalanche control, road upgrades and adjustments in speed limits to match road conditions have brought improvements towards safety and consistent travel. However, after another year of numerous accidents, deaths and closures due to land and snow slides, there is still much that needs to be done.

As the only primary roadway that connects Canada from coast to coast, the value of ensuring safe travel and transport of goods is vital to not only Revelstoke's economy, but our nation's economy. In Revelstoke, our local businesses and tourist attractions are dependent on this route remaining open 365 days a year to provide regular access and deliveries to our business community. For our community, the loss of profits and reduced access of goods and consumers to our businesses on a regular occurrence during highway closures is detrimental. This is particularly impactful to tourism-based businesses during the high-volume winter and summer tourism seasons whose annual revenues heavily rely on sales made during these shorter windows of time.

Safety Concerns

- Numerous accidents and deaths per year. In winter 2018 (January to early March) our Visitor Centre posted highway closures in our region affecting travel a minimum of once per week for a 10-week straight stretch.
- Poor and inconsistent quality of maintenance on highway, particularly in the winter months, causing poor driving conditions and directly attributing to accidents
- 3 Valley Gap rock slides made international headlines and visitors are very nervous travelling that stretch of highway

Economic impact



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- Losses in goods for businesses and consumers being shipped out of, and into, Revelstoke per regular schedule due to accidents or road closures
- Accommodators and Tourism based businesses regularly have clients missing booking dates or cancelling travel plans last minute due to travel concerns or being stopped on the highway
- Fearful travellers; loss in tourism dollars to community because international and national visitors are nervous to travel the stretch of Highway 1 between Golden to Salmon Arm. Our Visitor Centre team regularly chats with travellers during, and in planning stages, of their trips who express their concerns and negative feedback regarding their travel experiences on the Highway 1 corridor in our region. As an international destination, our country should not be offering this type of visitor experience on our nation's major highway.
- Visitor and traveller frustration when highway closures cause them to be stranded in Revelstoke for hours, or overnight. Affects our tourism rating with this negative feedback.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Highway 1 needs to be twinned so that extended closures no longer occur
- Reduced highway speeds for transport trucks
- Improvement in quality and upgrades of highway maintenance
- Reduced time for first responders to get to accidents and clear highway of debris for travel

We recognize that a true solution will be costly and hard sought but also recognize that it is the right thing to do. Visitation to Revelstoke, and our region, continues to rise year-over-year and we see this growth continuing into the foreseeable future. With that increase, we are seeing higher volumes of traffic on the Highway 1 corridor and time is of the essence. We strongly urge you to act now.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "J. Thompson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of the last name being a large, stylized 'T'.

Jana Thompson
Executive Director – Revelstoke Chamber of Commerce
Revelstoke, BC
CC: Doug Clovechok, MLA Columbia River-Revelstoke