

THE CITY OF VICTORIA



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

March 10, 2021

The Honourable Bill Blair  
Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

The Honourable Patty Hajdu  
Minister of Health  
Address Locator 0900C2  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0K9

The Honourable Omar Alghabra  
Minister of Transport  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Blair, Minister Hajdu and Minister Alghabra,

I'm writing to you because the Clipper and Blackball (Coho) operations are important businesses in Victoria's economy and are critical to our city and region's recovery. Both companies have been hit very hard by the pandemic as their routes between Victoria and Washington State have not been running for close to a year. They have had to lay off workers and are in very difficult cash flow positions. Both operations will survive, but it is going to be a long road to recovery.

Myself and both operators understand the need for the current travel restrictions and border closures to be in place in order to keep our population safe. I am not writing to make any requests for an earlier than safe re-opening of the border. However, I'm writing to inquire as to what criteria will be used to determine the re-opening of the border – will it be a certain percentage of the population on both sides of the border being vaccinated? A substantial drop in case counts? Other criteria?

It is important for the operators to know what criteria will be assessed for border re-opening so that they can plan accordingly. For example, Clipper will need four to six weeks in order to staff up and prepare for operations. The Coho is able to be ready to re-open a little bit more quickly than that. But both operators need as much predictability as possible in what is arguably a very unpredictable situation for many.

I look forward to hearing from you to learn more about the border re-opening criteria and would be pleased to have a quick meeting or phone call if that would be helpful or of interest.

With thanks,

Lisa Helps  
Victoria Mayor

cc: Sangeeta Lalli, Regional Advisor (British Columbia), Office of the Prime Minister

*The City of Victoria recognizes the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations in whose traditional territories we live and work "Hay swx qa"*