



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

of BRITISH COLUMBIA

Hon. Rob Fleming
Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
Room 124, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C.

January 25, 2021

Re: BC Motor Coach Coalition COVID-19 Relief

Dear Minister Fleming,

We know that the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have been felt in every sector of our economy. From tourism to resource industries, to hospitality and small businesses, the pandemic has changed our usual routines and the way we do business. Connecting and serving these industries are our transportation networks, many of which have been similarly affected by the pandemic, with no clearer example of this than the motor coach industry.

Since March of last year, the motor coach industry in B.C. has seen a 95 per cent drop in gross revenues, with 67 per cent of companies reporting temporary layoffs and concerns about the survival of their business. Not only would losing this industry have a dramatic impact on the future of tourism in B.C., but it would have far-reaching implications for the integrity of our transportation corridors across the province.

Beyond significant contributions to tourism, motor coaches are also integral to connecting communities — particularly remote communities — and facilitating the movement of people around the province. Large public infrastructure projects like the LNG pipeline in northern B.C. depend on motor coach services to shuttle thousands of skilled workers to and from worksites. Motor coaches also provide some of the vital intercity bus service routes throughout the province, previously served by Greyhound prior to their withdrawal from Western Canada in 2018. Other integral services of motor coaches include providing transportation for BCY Canadian Blood Services during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly on Vancouver Island and in the Okanagan.

Recently, the BC Motor Coach Coalition has sought support from the government for their industry and I would like to support their calls for specific and targeted relief to enable the sector to survive the COVID-19 pandemic.

Among other requests, the Coalition has called on the government to allow ICBC to provide flexible insurance options for motor coach companies. Specifically, they ask for the ability to pay varying insurance fees based on when a motor coach is in use versus on standby. This flexibility should also be applied to the prorated payment required for motor coaches under the provisions of the International Registration Plan by allowing for periodic payments rather than payment in advance.

BC Liberal Official Opposition
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4
T: 250-356-6171



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

of BRITISH COLUMBIA

Additionally, the Coalition has requested targeted relief in the form of government financial support of \$50,000 per bus to support companies through this period to recovery. Right now, motor coach companies still face significant costs, even as demand for their services, and in turn, their revenue, has decreased. If these businesses are to survive the pandemic and be able to support the recovery of other industries, such as tourism, they will require financial relief. I urge you to work with your federal counterparts to develop a financial aid package that will help these businesses cover costs and make it through this challenging time.

In a province as large as British Columbia, it is vital that we maintain the health and viability of our transportation networks. This is why I encourage you to heed the BC Motor Coach Coalition's requests and immediately provide them with much-needed relief. It is essential that we implement measures to maintain the viability of this industry and ensure the services they provide to so many sectors are available going forward.

Sincerely,

Michael Lee
MLA, Vancouver-Langara
Official Opposition Critic for Transportation, Infrastructure and TransLink

CC: C. Underwood, Bluestar Coachlines
J. Wilson, Wilson's Transportation Ltd.