



Honourable Rob Fleming, MLA
Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure
Room 124, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C.
V8V 1X4

May 6, 2021

Dear Minister Fleming,

Re: Urgent need for action to repair and rebuild roads in rural B.C.

We are writing to you regarding the continued deterioration of our province's transportation system, including roads in rural B.C., especially those in the Cariboo and Fraser-Nicola regions.

The impacts of the spring freshet have had a devastating impact in many areas of rural B.C., specifically on roadways. Many vital roads have collapsed and crumbled, blocking the movement of people and goods and significantly impacting public safety. When detour routes are set up, they often add hours to commutes, require repair themselves, and are sometimes impassable to anyone without a 4x4 vehicle.

For example, landslide areas on three sides of Williams Lake have had significant impacts on a regular basis to Dog Creek Road, Frizzi Road and White Road, and Highway 20 is almost impassable in spots. Highway 97 north of Quesnel has continued to be damaged by landslides and is now down to single lane traffic.

These situations put significant strains on the communities that depend on these roadways, with limited movement and the stress of wondering which road will give way next weighing heavily on the minds of residents, including ranchers, nurses, doctors, and business owners, who live on these roads, many of which have been closed.

This also impacts the food security for the entire province when ranchers cannot get feed in for their livestock, or their livestock out to market. Market gardens have closed because they cannot get their produce to market, and many areas cannot get fuel into ranches.

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There is an urgent need for additional resources to be deployed by your government to repair and rebuild these roads and ensure that residents impacted by collapses are can about their daily businesses safely and without anxiety. In addition to the urgent repairs to washed-out roads, this government also needs to expedite the repair and maintenance of roads in rural areas that are at risk of future damage.

Roads like the ones outlined in this letter throughout rural B.C. are all desperately needed infrastructure projects that have been delayed, cancelled, or seen little progress under your government. This is the time of year when your government should be expediting these road projects to capitalize on the window of opportunity to get work done.

While this is an ongoing problem, with changing weather, climate, and the effects of deforestation from mountain pine beetle infestation and wildfires leaving the ground more vulnerable to the elements, this year we are experiencing destruction and road collapse on a much larger scale.

We need to ensure that as we cope with these growing challenges, all our transportation networks in B.C. are being maintained and rebuilt, not just those in densely populated areas. We are calling on your government to immediately address the pressing impacts that B.C.'s deteriorating rural road infrastructure has on public safety, food security, the economy and the ecosystem.

We ask that you and your Ministry urgently intervene and make the repair and rebuild of these roads a priority, and ensure that B.C. is receiving much-needed funding from the federal government through the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA), as is the case with the reconstruction of the West Fraser Road.

We also ask that share with us your comprehensive plan to maintain the integrity of our transportation system, including the rebuilding and maintaining of roads in rural B.C. both now and into the future.

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Sincerely,

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

Coralee Oakes
MLA, Cariboo North

Lorne Doerkson
MLA, Cariboo-Chilcotin

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CC: Shirley Bond, Interim Leader of the Official Opposition

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