



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

July 28, 2021

Honourable Mike Farnworth  
Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General  
Room 128, Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC  
V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Farnworth

Further to our telephone conversation on Monday, July 26<sup>th</sup>. You had mentioned that the province was in litigation with Safeguard and were restricted on what you could speak about, other than to confirm that Safeguard, although invited, had not submitted any bid to contract services for BC Wildfire.

In discussion with MLA Davies and Safeguard after our conversation, they state that they are not in litigation with BCWFS or the Province of BC. Safeguard had sent what they termed, a “friendly letter” 2 months ago asking government to pay 2.2 million dollars outstanding for the Burns Lake deployment of 2018 as they had only been paid for the original Fort St. James deployment. Safeguard states they have so far chosen not to pursue it in lieu of trying to work with BCWFS and the conflict it would create.

Safeguard advises that BCWFS have re-label “Mass Water” as a 4-inch feedline with 500 GPM. This is very close to what is already being done with fire trucks through the OFC tenders (3-inch hoses and 500-850 GPM pumps on the fire trucks. Although contracting 4-inch pumps may reduce the exorbitant cost of fire trucks it will not give more water than the current system. BCWFS has apparently stated that Safeguard's Mass Water systems (12-inch pumps) are too big for the province's lakes and rivers, but Safeguard claims this is incorrect. Their system will work on many of the current wildfires, will provide more water, and will cost much less. For smaller water sources, extensive research and development over the past 2 years has shown the system cycle and frequency can be modified to suit the terrain and environment. The other argument presented to Safeguard by BCWFS was that their equipment is too big and bulky and takes too long to roll out. Safeguard has worked extremely hard to remove all industrial-type fittings with hand portable options other than hoses and pumps. Creative welding has removed 50% of the normal fittings to also speed up deployment. Safeguard states that the only limitations for their systems are good road access to deployment areas for faster delivery, and a small lake or river within 3 kilometres to pump from, and to speed up the deployment of feed hoses.

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Safeguard has provided the province with deployment maps for Ashcroft, Spences Bridge, Green Lake, Salmon Arm, Osoyoos, Oliver, Seymour Arm and Enderby, where they could deliver a fast roll out with plenty of water and good access and feel there are at least another dozen other locations that would be beneficial for the BCWFS.

Safeguard patiently waited for BCWFS to book their services in 2017 (Following their "Process"). They sent deployment maps for Pressy Lake and Loon lake to BCWFS; both locations burned before BCWFS chose to contract their services and equipment. Safeguard again patiently waited for BCWFS to book their services in 2018 (following their "Process"). They provided deployment maps for a Telegraph creek deployment and again watched Telegraph creek burn down.

During yesterday's call with BCWFS, I was somewhat surprised when I heard the spokesperson for BCWFS state that Safeguard is not needed by BCWFS. I am at a bit of a loss here as I see provincial resources stretched to the limit, thousands of properties evacuated, infrastructure destroyed while an asset with these capabilities remains sidelined. I, several of my colleagues, firefighters and dozens of other people attended a demonstration of Safeguard's equipment and capabilities last summer in Mackenzie. I could literally feel the temperature drop significantly within moments after the water started being delivered, and a noticeable increase in humidity. Safeguard confidently states that they can deliver water to a fire at less than 1 cent per gallon. It is my understanding that the average cost of water delivery consumes over a third of the cost of firefighting and comes in around \$3.00 per gallon.

I am hoping that you can take another look at this issue, and in the event, BCWFS does not change their position on this if they could provide the technical or other rationale as to why this water delivery system cannot be used here in BC.

Best regards,

Mike Morris, MLA, Prince George/Mackenzie  
Official Opposition Critic for Public Safety and Solicitor General