



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

of BRITISH COLUMBIA

June 1, 2023

Hon. George Heyman
Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Heyman,

I am writing to you today to bring your attention to an urgent matter regarding the Clague/Bowbese Trail in Kitimat and to seek your assistance in resolving the issues faced between the local Kitimat Snowmobile and Hiking Club and the Province.

Recently, club president, Rick Thompson, had a lengthy discussion with Bryan Last, the District Recreation Officer for the North Coast, who had just returned to this position after some time away. During this call, they delved into the concerns surrounding the unkempt trail, and Mr. Thompson highlighted that while Mr. Last was absent, the Interim Officer, Jon Coutts, had given the club permission to undertake necessary repairs and maintenance on the trail.

The club invested numerous hours of volunteer labour, undertook culvert installations, cleared nearly 10 kilometres of roadway, and conducted two environmental/geotechnical studies. These efforts were all aimed at enhancing the safety and accessibility of the trail.

However, upon Mr. Last's return to his position, there appeared to be a sudden change of heart. He claims the Province has zero responsibility and can provide no assistance, insisting that the snowmobile club should shoulder the long-term responsibility through a special use permit. While the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy could retain ownership of the public trail, Mr. Last cited budget constraints as a reason for the lack of support.

This situation is incredibly frustrating for the hundreds of trail users, as well as the club's executive team, which has dedicated significant time and effort to this project for the past seven years. They believe that the partnership should be based on cooperation and support, yet it currently feels heavily one-sided and very challenging.

The increasing popularity of Kitimat as a recreational destination has led to a tripling of traffic on the trail, as it has attracted numerous new visitors. The Clague/Bowbese Trail serves as a vital beginner-level route, but it requires the type of ongoing work and improvements that the club has been diligently pursuing.

The relationship and collaboration between the snowmobile club and the Province needs immediate attention and resolution. Our community needs assistance to ensure the sustainability and proper maintenance of this trail, which is crucial for the enjoyment and safety of both residents and visitors.

I kindly request that you investigate this matter with utmost urgency and explore potential solutions to address the concerns raised by the snowmobile club. Your intervention and support would go a long way in fostering a true partnership between the club and the Province, and in creating a great recreational experience for all.

BC United Official Opposition
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4



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Thank you for your attention to this pressing issue. I eagerly await your prompt response and remain available for any further information or discussions required.

Sincerely,

Ellis Ross,
MLA for Skeena

Cc: Renee Merrifield, MLA Kelowna-Mission, Shadow Minister for Environment & Climate Change