



September 05, 2023
Honourable Bowinn Ma
Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness
PO Box 9010 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC, V8W 9E2

Honourable Bruce Ralston
Minister of Forests
PO Box 9049 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC, V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Ma and Minister Ralston,

This year, combined with unprecedented drought, we have seen more extreme fire behaviour while non-typical weather patterns have set the stage to make severe wildfires more frequent. Looking ahead, the time is now to start using the information gleaned from this fire season to start planning for wildfire response in the future.

As part of the provincial response this year, many resources have been called upon including the Canadian Military, who deployed troops to Prince George, Burns Lake and Kelowna, along with helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft to assist with firefighting mobility and logistics as well as emergency evacuations.

As part of future wildfire support, the Royal Canadian Air Force, with its fleet of more than 100 proven helicopters, should be equipped properly with firefighting water buckets and fire suppression capabilities to help aid quickly when wildfires strike. Military helicopter pilots are already trained in long-lining, so it's just their equipment that needs to be ready to heed the call, like most other countries whose air forces are actively used to fly firefighting missions directly. We have companies in British Columbia who manufacture the required equipment, we are in a good position to support our local economy while being prepared for future wildfires.

This year, with more than 3200 external firefighters from 11 countries deployed to Canada, I am calling on the Provincial Government to work with the Federal Government to integrate the RCAF fleet into wildfire planning as "surge capacity" and ensure the aircraft are properly fitted to actively fly firefighting missions.

Thank you for your consideration,

Ian Paton
MLA Delta South

Lorne Doerkson
MLA Cariboo Chilcotin

Elenore Sturko
MLA Surrey South

cc: MLA Bruce Banman, Shadow Minister for Emergency Management, Climate Readiness & Citizen Services
MLA Mike Bernier, Shadow Minister for Forests