



Cariboo Regional District
File No. 1855-20-18-04

JUN 18 2018

Referred To CAO/Chair /
CSM

Reference: 238745

June 15, 2018

VIA EMAIL: dcampbell@cariboord.bc.ca

Chair Margo Wagner
Cariboo Regional District
Suite D - 180 N 3rd Avenue
Williams Lake, British Columbia
V2G 2A4

Dear Chair Wagner:

Thank you for your letter of April 23, 2018, and submission of your request for Special Circumstances consideration for the construction of an Animal Hosting Facility in Quesnel, British Columbia. I am encouraged to see that the Cariboo Regional District is pursuing projects to support recovery efforts in the region.

The Special Circumstances allowance under the Rural Dividend Program is a means by which government can support wildfire-impacted communities in undertaking economic development projects supporting recovery. As a region that was impacted by the 2017 wildfires, the Cariboo Regional District is eligible for Special Circumstances consideration.

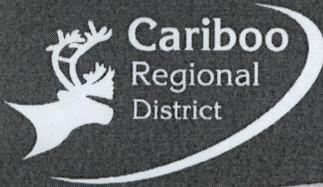
I have forwarded your request to the Rural Dividend Program, and have requested that the program follow up with you to discuss your project and the next steps in the assessment process.

I appreciate you taking the time to share your request with me. If you have any questions regarding the Special Circumstances funding process, please contact Sarah Fraser, Executive Director of Rural Development, by phone at 778 698-7253 or email at Sarah.Fraser@gov.bc.ca.

Sincerely,

Doug Donaldson
Minister

pc: Sarah Fraser, Executive Director, Rural Development



OFFICE OF THE CHAIR

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File: 1855-20-18-04

April 23, 2018

Minister Doug Donaldson
Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development
Room 248 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Donaldson:

Re: Rural Dividend Special Circumstances – Time Sensitive Request

The wildfires of 2017 were truly devastating for the people and animals of the Cariboo. Last summer, in addition to the human evacuees, over 1000 animals were evacuated and housed in Alex Fraser Park in Quesnel. It is with the urgency of another wildfire season upon us that we make a request of \$500,000 for Special Circumstances Rural Dividend funding to make key improvements to the park in case these facilities are put to use for this purpose again. These improvements will also support the growth of the agriculture sector as a part of our local economy.

Alex Fraser Park is co-owned by the City of Quesnel and the Cariboo Regional District under the joint sub-regional recreation function. In normal circumstances, the park includes an indoor arena, rows of stables, stock pens, open green space, a fur and feather building, and outdoor arena. The park is centrally located and is used by a number of local groups including: Quesnel Rodeo Club, Quesnel Barrel Racers, Quesnel Team Roping, North Cariboo Gymkhana Society, Back Country Horsemen, BC Cutting Horse Association, Quesnel and District 4H Council, Quesnel Fur and Feather Association, Quesnel High School Rodeo Club, Quesnel Agriculture and Exhibition Association (Fall Fair), Quesnel and District Pony Club, Quesnel and District Riding Club, and the North Cariboo Draft and Mule Association. Alex Fraser Park Society, made up of representatives from many of these user groups, manages the park with operational funding supplied through sub-regional taxation.

Because Quesnel has an organized and trained volunteer base that are relied upon during emergencies throughout the region, Alex Fraser Park was used as an animal evacuation centre between July 7 and September 21, 2017. This situation was not ideal. All normal use of the park was suspended. Horses, chickens, goats, rabbits, llamas, alpacas, pigs, sheep, house birds, reptiles, dogs and cats were brought into the park as they were evacuated. The animals came from 100 Mile, Williams Lake, Horsefly, Nazko, Kluskus, Stone Reserve, and other remote areas throughout the Cariboo. It quickly became clear that improved facilities are needed in order to deal with any future large-scale animal evacuation.

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building communities together

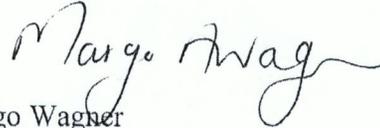
The Fur and Feather building in Alex Fraser Park was used to house animals indoors. It also served as an office and headquarters for the Pet Safe Coalition who coordinated the evacuated animals throughout the summer. This building has dirt floors that could not be thoroughly cleaned or sanitized. Panels and tarps were used to pen animals outdoors, which would blow over during high wind events. Shaded areas were limited for larger animals, so some horses were kept in full sun, and had to be hosed down to keep them from getting heat stroke on the summer's warm days. With best possible use of the park in the current configuration, overcrowding and safety were an issue. There was no quarantine or sanitary first aid area.

The replacement of the Fur and Feather buildings with a new multi-use structure would address these issues, improving preparedness for future evacuations. The Alex Fraser Park Society has researched and identified a pre-fabricated building that will meet the needs of the Pet Safe Coalition, while also providing new opportunities for existing users of the park.

The new building would increase the ability to host cattle auctions, courses, clinics, and training related to animal care. The College of New Caledonia's interest in developing an Agribusiness program in Quesnel at the adjacent campus would be supported with improved infrastructure. The Agriculture Centre Feasibility Study completed by the City of Quesnel in 2016 identified the need for an artificial insemination lab in the region. This could also be housed in the new building. Building the capacity of the agriculture sector through improved efficiency and training supports the growth of this sector as we work to diversify the forestry-dependent economy of our region.

Site preparation and building installation of a new 70' x 150' x 18' pre-fabricated building can be completed in three weeks. With an expedited decision from you, we could have this new building in place and ready by June, 2018. Please treat this request with the urgency it requires, or provide us with a timely response as to whether our response is appropriate to be considered at this time.

Yours truly,



Margo Wagner
Chair

Enclosures (7)

Letter of Support – Alex Fraser Park Society

Letter of Support – Pet Safe Coalition of Canada

Letter of Support – Quesnel Agriculture Exhibition Association

Letter of Support – Quesnel Rodeo Club

Letter of Support – BC Rodeo Association

Letter of Support – Back Country Horsemen

Letter of Support – North Cariboo Draft Horse and Mule Association

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- c: The Honourable John Horgan, Premier of British Columbia
The Honourable Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General
The Honourable Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture
MLA Donna Barnett, Cariboo Chilcotin
MLA Coralee Oakes, Cariboo-North