

CHAIR REPORT UP TO & INCLUDING WEDNESDAY JUNE 17/20

Below are some of the activities I have been involved in since my last report. More meetings are starting to become in person, whilst following the Covid-19 guidelines, but many continue to be in the virtual world.

- As the tree planting season has progressed, the concerns that many elected officials throughout the Province expressed, have been addressed with weekly conference calls with FLNRORD staff, and the season has progressed with minimal issues continuing. As this was the largest number of trees ever planted during the season, the adherence to the Covid-19 guidelines were important, and many communities had concerns over the large influx of out of Province workers.
- I have had several calls with the CCCTA regarding the challenges the tourism industry is facing with the pandemic, both in regard to the lack of oversea vacationers, and the reluctance by some BC residents to travel within the Province. All of these concerns, I have passed along to the Province and the Federal representatives, as both levels of Government try to introduce programs that will provide the economic tourism kickstart this industry needs post Covid-19.
- The bi-weekly calls with Minister Robinson, her staff & EMBC Parliamentary Secretary Jenn Rice have continued, with the opportunity for every RD and Municipality north of 100 Mile House to ask a question or make a comment. On June 4/20, Premier Horgan joined Minister Robinson on the call, and was able to hear some of the good news as well as some of the issues we were still experiencing. I feel that Minister Robinson has found these calls to be insightful in her role as the Minister responsible for local Govt., as she has indicated that these calls may continue even after Covid-19. Personally, I think it is helpful for her to hear multiple RD's expressing the same challenges, concerns and successes in a 45 minute call, and I feel we are having more impact than the standard 'speed dating' scenario we have been used to, at the UBCM convention with our 15 minute timeslot.

- MP Todd Doherty has also continued his conference calls with leaders from within his Constituency, and has been receptive to passing along concerns that have been expressed to the appropriate office in Ottawa.
- The Flood & Wildfire review Committee has continued its work, and the Emergency Program Act, that was supposed to be enacted by Government in the 2020 fall sitting, has now been delayed due to the pandemic. This has worked to our favour, as it has given us the opportunity to bring back to the discussion, the issue of the Province taking a more firm position on subdivision approval, especially in the light of slides and washouts that not only the CRD experienced during freshet, but many other areas of the Province. As the discussion on these calls is delving more and more into operations, CAO MacLean is now joining me on these calls to offer his expertise.
- Vice Chair Massier and I were on a conference call with New Gold on June 17/20 following the announcement of the purchase of the Blackwater mine by Artemis. Although there were no new announcements that weren't covered in the media release, it was comforting to hear that no change in staff is expected, and Artemis has committed to continue to hire local residents to fulfil the workforce needed.

As always if there are any questions or concerns arising from this report, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully submitted

Margo A. Wagner