



# AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY



**Date:** 29/09/2021

**To:** Chair and Directors, Cariboo Regional District Board

**And To:** John MacLean, Chief Administrative Officer

**From:** Lore Schick, Deputy Corporate Officer/Executive Assistant

**Date of Meeting:** Cariboo Regional District Board\_Oct01\_2021

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## **Short Summary:**

Request from Director Massier – Letter of Support to Minister to Move Forward the Issue of Re-establishing the Bowron Lake to Purden Lake (Hwy 16) Connector Road

## **Voting:**

Corporate Vote - Unweighted

## **Memorandum:**

Director Massier has submitted the following request to Chair Wagner and subsequently the Board for its consideration:

*I would ask that you consider my request to approve a late item agenda item for this week's CRD Board meeting. The urgency is that initiatives such as this can take significant time to move forward and although the 2021 fire season is just wrapping up, the 2022 one is not all that far away.*

*I have been approached by a Bowron Lake area resident to ask the CRD Board for support to move forward the issue of re-establishing the Bowron Lake to Purden Lake (Highway 16) connector road to greatly enhance the community safety of both the over fifty land owners and thousands of visitors that visit Bowron Lake Provincial Park every year. The devastating fire seasons of 2017, 2018 & 2021 including a fire this past summer near the heart of the community has led to a renewed understanding of the vulnerability of living on a "no thru route road" within forested areas on the edge of a large provincial park with a modified fire response plan. To date the large areas to the north and east of Quesnel have been spared the worst of the blazes that have ravaged other parts of BC and the Cariboo Regional District but everyone knows it's not a matter of "if" but "when".*

## **Background:**

*Over forty years ago a connector road from the Bowron Lake area to Highway 16 was built primarily to harvest spruce bark beetle damaged trees along the Bowron River valley. Some*

*years after the road fell into disrepair and is currently only passable to all terrain vehicles and some four wheel drive vehicles in a dry summer.*

*Local residents and others have been lobbying to have this route re-opened for at least the past fifteen years that I am aware of. Their efforts have included at least three separate consultant reports dating back to 2007 including preliminary First Nations consultation, community consultations and possible route options as well as many smaller contributions to the project. The ask is for a basic forestry standard two wheel drive seasonal route that would facilitate evacuation by road for the community and seasonal visitors to the park. Unfortunately the existing portion that needs upgrading falls not only in two separate forest districts but also in two different forest regions. They are hoping that a timely request by the CRD Board to the Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and the various regional and district managers on their behalf will bring the issue of the community safety for rural and remote communities to the forefront and allow for continued discussion, consultation and eventual construction of this vital road link to be approved before the next devastating fire season of 2022 or beyond.*

Thanks

#### **Attachments:**

n/a

#### **Financial Implications:**

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#### **Policy Implications:**

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#### **Alignment with Strategic Plan:**

- Communication:** Facilitate communication strategies throughout the entire Cariboo Regional District that meet the needs of residents, community stakeholders, and other levels of government.
- Planning:** Intentionally plan services and activities of the CRD to prepare for future needs of residents and community stakeholders.
- Economic Sustainability:** Foster an environment to ensure the economic sustainability of CRD communities and the region.
- Governance:** Ensure that CRD governance policy and practices are intentional, transparent, and respectful.

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#### **CAO Comments:**

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**Options:**

- 1) Receipt
- 2) Receipt and further action
- 3) Defer

**Recommendation:**

That the agenda item summary from Lore Schick, Deputy Corporate Officer/Executive Assistant, dated September 29, 2021, regarding a request from Director Massier to forward a letter to the Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, on behalf of residents and visitors to Bowron Lake, supporting the re-establishment of the Bowron Lake to Purden Lake (Highway 16) connector road, be received. *Further action at the discretion of the Board.*