

Chair report up to & including December 8/21

As always, this report is designed to give Directors a brief overview of my activities over the past few weeks. Should there be any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

The long-awaited trip to Victoria with CAO MacLean, CEO McKay (NDIT) and myself, finally happened the last week of November. After an initial blip with our scheduled flight Sunday evening from Williams Lake, which did not affect any of the CRD meetings, we arrived on Monday November 22/21.

Our first meeting was with EMBC Executive Director – Heather Brazier. Heather is also involved with the Flood and Wildfire review committee and is the Govt. lead on the EPA rewrite. Our 80-minute meeting revolved around concerns about some of the inequities coming to the forefront with regard to feed supply of animals during an emergency just to name one instance. The other major issue we raised was the lack of equity on the information First Nations receive from BCWFS during an emergency, compared to Regional Districts. First Nations receive daily in-depth info on issues like aircraft in the area that are deployed for firefighting, in-depth weather forecasts, flight paths, detailed fire fighting tactics on fires for that day, and lists of BCWFS crews and the area they are deployed in fighting a particular fire. This info is also given to First Nations that are miles away from any active fire. Much of the info provided has been asked for by the EOC Director of the day, but it has not been easily accessed or provided. Heather was surprised by this

discussion, so we are hopeful we may see some change in future fire emergencies, with all of us having access to the same info. I continue to stress that we must all be on a level playing field in Emergency Management when it comes to help and info provided – a farmer accessing feed for 500 head is no different than a farmer needing feed for 50 head – each of them rely on those animals for an income off a farm. I did share my concerns that the proposed new EPA legislation may not be exactly what it needs to be, realizing, that it is impossible to draft the ‘perfect’ document. We did raise similar concerns during our meeting with Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Development – Roly Russell, as prior to his MLA position, he was also one of the initial members of the Flood and Wildfire review committee due to the Grand Forks floods. Although we currently do not have any further meetings scheduled for that committee due to the flooding event in the lower mainland, the Fraser Valley RD is a member, and I am anticipating some comments from their Emergency Management coordinator when we do meet.

We also had a successful meeting with Municipal Affairs Minister Osbourne. One of the issues we continue to hear, is that new legislation has a strong tendency to apply to Municipalities and is not always logistically applicable to Regional Districts with the legislation that we work within. With Minister Osbourne’s strong background in local govt. both as Mayor of Tofino and sitting on the Alberni Clayquot RD, she understands this issue only too well. We asked her to respectfully remind her colleagues of the difference when

sitting in caucus discussing new legislation from various Ministries. CAO MacLean also had some meetings at staff levels, and although we were not able to secure all of the meetings we had hoped for (CRD), I was able to sneak in some comments during my NDIT meetings with those Ministries.

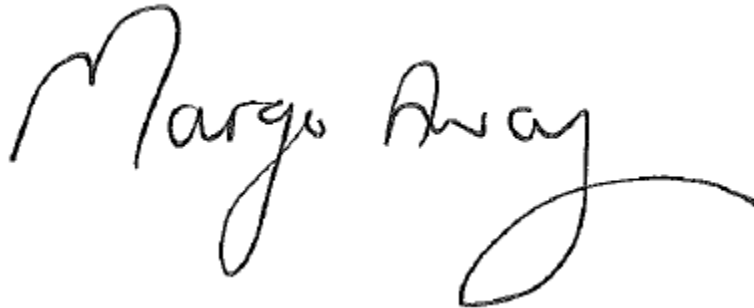
We also had lunch with MLA's Doerkson & Oakes, where several issues of mutual interest to the CRD and NDIT were discussed. MLA's Doerkson & Oakes have agreed to have at the minimum, quarterly meetings with CAO MacLean and I to discuss issues that not only impact their ridings, but the whole Cariboo. After lunch we were invited to sit in the Gallery during Question period, where it was an honour to be recognized by both Minister Ravi Kahlon and MLA Doerkson for our work with NDIT, and during this past year's wildfires. We were then given a guided tour of the Legislative building, which fascinated me, as the British influence in the architecture and finishings was very apparent.

On December 7th, Vice Chair Massier and I were on a Teams meeting with representatives from Artemis gold (formerly Nugold) with an update regarding the Blackwater project. This mine is moving ahead, and the new owner continues to strongly focus on training and hiring First Nations and women as an essential component of its workforce. As this project continues to develop, it should provide stable, well-paying jobs for many local residents, plus the automatic benefits to the

region with increased spending in all areas – supply chain issues notwithstanding!

Finally, I would like to wish you all the happiest and safest of holiday seasons. I know travel challenges will be an issue, but if you can't join your family as you had hoped, I'm sure many will take advantage of social media to have 'live' conversations, or even just pick up the landline for those not yet connected. Over this past 22 months, I think we have all come to realize the importance of family and communication, and my hope is for a safer 2022 for us all.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margo Aray". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the letter "y".