



THOMPSON-NICOLA

REGIONAL DISTRICT

The Region of BC's Best

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Department: Administration

June 17, 2022

Honourable Mike Farnworth
Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General
PO Box 9010, STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Via e-mail: PSSG.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Subject: Provincial Support from Province for Post-Wildfire Geohazard Assessments

Dear Minister Farnworth,

At the June 16, 2022 meeting of the Board, the Thompson-Nicola Regional District (TNRD) Board of Directors unanimously passed the following resolution:

THAT, a letter be written to the Minister of Public Safety to request support to residents impacted by Post-Wildfire Geohazard Assessments.

Recently, the Province commissioned engineering firms to prepare Post-Wildfire Geohazard Reports for the last 2 significant wildfire seasons. These reports are high-level assessments that identify potential risks to infrastructure and private property and have been forwarded directly to the TNRD, not individual property owners. The Province states it is the Regional District's responsibility to advise impacted property owners of potential risks outlined in these reports. To date, the TNRD has received 9 reports emanating from the 2021 fire season. Similar reports were received following the 2017 fire season impacting hundreds of properties in the TNRD.

Upon receipt of the geohazard assessments, TNRD staff write to impacted owners directly, provide copies of the reports and post the information on the TNRD website for public access. Impacted property owners applying for a building permit on lands identified at risk are required to submit more detailed geotechnical reports to certify that the proposed works are "safe for the use intended" as outlined in the *Community Charter*. This can add significant costs and time delay to residents looking to build on or rebuild their properties.

We recently learned that a property owner wishing to construct an addition to their home in a risk-affected area was quoted upwards of \$40,000 to complete a geohazard safety report. In some cases, owners have to install deflection berms and ditches at their own cost to protect property in addition to reporting costs.

Hazards identified by Provincial assessment reports are often located on Crown land upslope of private property. Impacted property owners are frustrated that there is no funding support or coordinated effort to assist with community-wide reporting/safety mitigation. Residents are asking why each individual owner has to hire a professional when it should be looked at holistically.

Additionally, numerous impacted owners have made us aware it is very difficult to find qualified professionals. They are struggling to find qualified geoscientists to carry out work in a timely manner as most firms are busy working for Provincial agencies on larger projects.

MUNICIPALITIES: Ashcroft | Barriere | Cache Creek | Chase | Clearwater | Clinton
Kamloops | Logan Lake | Lytton | Merritt | Sun Peaks

ELECTORAL AREAS: "A" "B" "E" "I" "J" "L" "M" "N" "O" "P"

The issues outlined are resulting in building delays and causing frustration for impacted owners already managing a challenging time post-wildfire season with the loss of their home or, if their home was spared, they now have hazards above their land due to fire. We currently have residents in the Whitecroft area, Deadman-Vidette corridor, and Monte Lake facing these similar challenges.

Given what we are hearing from our impacted residents, we are very concerned about the consequences of these Provincially commissioned reports. Currently, there is no Provincial funding or supports to assist impacted owners having to prepare geohazard safety reports or to protect their individual properties.

The TNRD is left as “the messenger” in this process imposing requirements for building permits, but can offer no financial support. Other regional districts in the Province are facing similar challenges. Regional districts do not have the resources or jurisdictional authority to address the problems identified in the geohazard reports, especially as risks are mainly emanating from Crown land.

The current situation for our impacted residents is very concerning and there is a likelihood of future similar fire seasons. On behalf of the TNRD Board of Directors, I respectfully request the Province address the issues outlined in this letter and provide assistance to the owners impacted by Provincial geohazard assessments in post-wildfire areas.

Yours Truly,



Kenneth Gillis, Chair
Thompson-Nicola Regional District

Cc. Scott Hildebrand, Chief Administrative Officer, Thompson-Nicola Regional Districts
Peter Milobar, MLA Kamloops-North Thompson
Todd Stone, MLA Kamloops-South Thompson
Jackie Tegart, MLA Fraser-Nicola
Cariboo Regional District
Columbia-Shuswap Regional District
Squamish-Lillooet Regional District
North Okanagan Regional District
Central Okanagan Regional District
Okanagan-Similkameen Regional District
Fraser Valley Regional District