



Reference: 412342

October 7, 2024

Their Worship Mayor Surinderpal Rathor
and Councillors
City of Williams Lake
450 Mart Street
Williams Lake BC V2G 1N3

Margo Wagner, Chair
and Directors
Cariboo Regional District
180 North 3rd Avenue, Suite D
Williams Lake BC V2G 2A4

Sent via email: mayor@williamslake.ca; mwagner@cariboord.ca

Dear Mayor Rathor and Chair Wagner:

Thank you for your letter of September 6, 2024, addressed to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, regarding the Williams Lake Air Quality Roundtable. As a provincial election has been called, I am responding on behalf of the Minister.

Airshed plans and strategies to manage priority air contaminants are under development or being implemented in numerous communities in B.C. The collaboration between local citizens, local governments, First Nations and industry to determine community air quality priorities is an essential part of the planning process.

The airshed management planning process also includes comprehensive technical assessments of air quality, which the Ministry is pleased to support. Specifically, Ministry staff provide technical advice on ambient air quality monitoring and air quality modelling, present information related to ambient air quality levels and trends and support public engagement. The Ministry also provides funding to communities to assist with the ongoing administration of air quality roundtables (or airshed groups).

...2

As you note in your letter, the Williams Lake Air Quality Roundtable was initiated in the early 2000s. Significantly, this work resulted in one of the first voluntary community airshed management plans in the province. While the Ministry initially led the roundtable, since 2010, with community leadership and sponsorship, the Ministry has taken the role of a technical and regulatory advisor. In addition to technical advice, since 2016, the Ministry has provided \$59,000 to support the Williams Lake Air Quality Roundtable. In 2022, the Williams Lake Air Quality Roundtable became a Select Committee of the City with city and regional district representatives acting as co-chairs.

The Ministry's current technical and regulatory advisor role in community airshed planning allows us to continue to provide support in nine communities across B.C. In addition, air quality roundtables tend to be most successful when they are championed by community members such as local and regional leaders and/or citizens who live in and have a deep connection to the community.

It is encouraging to hear that both the City of Williams Lake and the Cariboo Regional District are considering options to enable development of an updated airshed management plan. I recognize the value of the Ministry's continued partnership with the City of Williams Lake and the Cariboo Regional District to build on past successes of the Williams Lake Air Quality Roundtable towards supporting an updated airshed management plan.

Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,



Jim Standen
Acting Deputy Minister

cc: Office of the Minister of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
Lore Schick, Deputy Corporate Officer / Executive Assistant FOI Coordinator,
Cariboo Regional District



File: 0400-20-MOECCS

September 6, 2024

VIA EMAIL: ENV.Minister@gov.bc.ca

The Honourable George Heyman
Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

Dear Minister Heyman:

Re: Williams Lake Air Quality Roundtable

We are writing on behalf of the Cariboo Regional District Board and City of Williams Lake Council to request that your ministry take a lead role in reviving the Williams Lake Air Quality Roundtable.

In the early 2000's, the BC Ministry of Environment administered the Williams Lake Air Quality Roundtable as a community stakeholder group that met approximately two to four times per year at City Hall. In 2006, the roundtable, chaired by a representative of the Williams Lake Environmental Society, produced an Air Quality Management Plan that expired in 2016. We are unclear on the specific timeframe but, at some point, the Ministry of Environment stopped administering the group.

Currently, the roundtable exists as a City of Williams Lake select committee that includes a broad range of local sectors, including First Nations, industry, government, health, and environment, to share information about air quality issues. While a good forum for information sharing, we do not believe this committee structure is an effective vehicle to develop future action plans; it has met infrequently over the past few years. As neither the Cariboo Regional District nor the City has internal expertise to provide technical guidance for this group, we believe it would be more effective if it were a Ministry-led function.

The development of an updated Air Quality Management Plan would be of great value to Williams Lake and surrounding area. Given that air quality management is a provincial responsibility, we believe that the most effective way to develop the desired plan would be a group (with the broad input available under the current or similar membership) administered by the Ministry of Environment, as occurred in the past.



Thank you for considering our request. The Cariboo Regional District and the City of Williams Lake remain committed to this important initiative and look forward to seeing it proceed in most effective and efficient way possible.

Yours truly,

[Redacted signature area]

Chair Margo Wagner

[Redacted signature area]

Mayor Surinderpal Rathor

Cariboo Regional District

City of Williams Lake

Attch: Williams Lake Air Quality Roundtable Terms of Reference as of May 11, 2021

cc: MLA Lorne Doerkson, Cariboo-Chilcotin
MLA Coralee Oakes, Cariboo North
Williams Lake Air Quality Roundtable Members