

A LETTER TO INDUSTRY FROM THE HONOURABLE CLAIRE TREVENA
MINISTER OF TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

April 9, 2020

Hello,

As we all do our best to cope with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, I want to extend my support and gratitude to the hardworking individuals and companies across our transportation industry. I know many of you are working under difficult conditions to ensure British Columbians can access food, medicine and other vital goods and services. I would like to update you on our government's ongoing response to support people during this challenging time.

We remain committed to moving forward with critical highway and transportation construction projects, not only for the provincial transportation network, but for the social and economic health of our province. With the safety of workers and the public as our overarching priority, we continue to tender projects and are keen to see construction work proceed.

By now, you will have likely heard that Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General Mike Farnworth and Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry have identified construction work as an essential service. As Associate Deputy Minister Kevin Richter noted in his March 26 email to you, the Provincial Health Officer order prohibiting mass gatherings of 50 people or more continues to not apply to highway construction projects. It is vital we continue highway and transportation projects that are planned or underway, so that we can ensure the safe, reliable flow of people and goods.

I know that many construction sites have protocols and policies in place which are consistent with requirements by the Provincial Health Officer to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, such as reducing in-person meetings or gatherings, holding meetings outdoors, and ensuring physical distancing of workers throughout the work day. These measures, along with other common-sense work protocols, such as daily cleaning and sanitizing of common areas and surfaces, will help ensure worker and public safety. As this situation evolves, I fully expect that all contractors will continue to follow closely Dr. Henry's recommendations and implement the best COVID-19 hygiene and health practices.

I have discussed the importance of our construction industry with Deputy Minister Grant Main and Associate Deputy Minister Kevin Richter, and we agree that it is critical that we keep working together, building for our future, while keeping the lines of communication open. Ministry staff are engaging with the industry at different levels to ensure that any concerns about work environments can be heard, and I encourage you to bring forward any concerns so we can work together to address them.

Ensuring our supply chains can remain open is a critical priority for myself as Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure and for our entire government. I have spoken with federal Minister of Transport Marc Garneau and with my fellow transportation ministers in the western provinces about our supply chain and our government's focus on keeping essential goods and services flowing in and out of British Columbia. Right now, goods are moving well across the supply chain. We all agree that it is critical that this important work continues.

Our government has also created a new Provincial Supply Chain Coordination Unit, supported by our ministry staff, to coordinate and prioritize the distribution of goods and services, including medical supplies and protective equipment for front-line health workers through the [COVID-19 Supply Hub](#). We will also continue to make safety a priority, not only for the movement of goods and services, but for the people who work in those industries.

Minister of Health Adrian Dix and Dr. Henry are committed to keeping British Columbians safe and informed throughout this crisis. Regular updates are available at gov.bc.ca/covid-19. Most recently, our government has introduced measures to give British Columbians returning home from other countries the [immediate and ongoing support they need to self-isolate for 14 days](#), as required by law, while allowing essential workers without symptoms to self-monitor as they continue their vital work. We urge all British Columbians to follow the advice and orders of our provincial health officer and the federal government to keep people as safe as possible.

COVID-19 touches all aspects of our lives and our economy. In this stressful time, I want people and businesses in this industry to know we will do everything we can to support them, while working together for our economic recovery.

Yours sincerely,

Claire Trevena
Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure