

Office of the Chair

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File: 1310-01

October 23, 2013

Directors
Comox Valley Regional District board

Dear Directors;

At recent meetings, the Comox Valley Regional District board of directors adopted the following resolutions relating to high speed internet access in rural areas:

February 26, 2013:

THAT a letter be sent to the minister of citizens' services and open government identifying the current challenges that lack of high speed internet access presents for Dove Creek and Forbidden Plateau residents;

AND FURTHER THAT the letter identify the opportunity that exists for Telus to service these areas as they extend their fibre optic line toward Mt. Washington;

AND FINALLY THAT a copy of the letter be sent to Telus and representatives from the Dove Creek and Forbidden Plateau residents associations.

February 26, 2013:

THAT the CVRD provide a letter of support to Telus on behalf of the residents of Dove Creek in support of their campaign to have high speed internet access in the Dove Creek neighbourhood.

October 30, 2012:

THAT a letter be sent to TELUS Inc. requesting that fibre optic cable service be provided to the residents and businesses along Forbidden Plateau Road.

During the UBCM convention in September 2013, vice-chair Ambler and I had the opportunity to meet with Network BC to discuss high-speed internet access in rural areas. Network BC is under the Ministry of Technology, Innovation and Citizens' Services and provides leadership and support for the strategic use of telecommunications in British Columbia.

Attached is a summary of that meeting and background information on an upcoming auction of the 700 MHz spectrum, which Network BC indicates could make funds available to improve connectivity for rural and remote communities. In a parallel effort, these funds could also be used to improve cell phone coverage along highways in remote areas to improve emergency response capabilities. Given this, I therefore ask the board to consider the following.

Requested action:

THAT the Comox Valley Regional District request the federal Minister of Industry reinvest some or all of the funds derived from the upcoming [700 MHz spectrum auction](#) to improve connectivity and coverage for rural and remote communities.

AND FURTHER THAT that the resolution be forwarded to the Regional District of Mount Waddington and Regional District of Alberni-Clayoquot requesting they support a similar resolution from their boards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edwin Grieve". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Edwin" and the last name "Grieve" clearly distinguishable.

Edwin Grieve
Chair

Enclosure: Appendix A - UBCM Follow Up: CVRD / Network BC Dialogue

From: Hauff, Chris R CITZ:EX [<mailto:Chris.Hauff@gov.bc.ca>]
Sent: Tuesday, October 15, 2013 12:45 PM
To: 'edwingrieve@shaw.ca'; 'jambler@courtenay.ca'; Kevin Lorette
Cc: Debra Oakman; administration; Fuccenecco, Maria CITZ:EX; McGrath, James CITZ:EX; Network BC CITZ:EX
Subject: UBCM Follow Up: Comox Valley Regional District / Network BC Confidential Dialogue - September 17, 2013

Good afternoon Chair Grieve, Vice Chair Ambler, and Mr. Lorette:

Thank you again for meeting with the Network BC team at UBCM and for providing an update on the connectivity requirements in the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD). It was a pleasure to have met you and the delegation from your region, including the North Island 911 Corporation (NI 911 Corp). By the end of the week, Network BC had many meetings with delegations from regional districts and communities all over the province concerned about the lack of connectivity in their areas or the quality of service that is available. It is clear that local government officials take seriously the economic development role of high-speed Internet and cellular telephone access and are very interested in working with the Province to address the need for improved telecommunications services.

Cellular Service

Under the [Connecting BC Agreement](#) (CBCA) between the Province and TELUS, 1716 Km of additional cellular coverage is being added along unconnected segments of highway to enhance public safety as well as provide additional connectivity options to nearby residents. At our meeting, NI 911 Corp indicated there are additional stretches of highway that require connectivity. It would be very helpful for Network BC to receive feedback from the CVRD and NI 911 Corp on unconnected highway stretches where demand for cellular service is greatest from a public safety perspective. The CVRD and NI 911 Corp agreed to provide Network BC with a list of Highway sites that are currently without coverage, specifying the Hwy # and the approximate location (highway markers). In addition, mapping the coverage gaps would be a very useful reference tool. Network BC agreed to forward this input on to TELUS (and other carriers) as soon as it is received from the CVRD and the NI 911 Corp.

Broadband (High-Speed) Internet Service

In 2012, the CVRD forwarded a petition and letter to TELUS from the Dove Creek Residents Association. Together with the CVRD's letter of support for the residents of Forbidden Plateau, the petition provides impressive evidence of the scale of demand in the area and the value placed on acquiring access to high-speed Internet. Network BC made TELUS aware of this demand for service. At the end of 2012, TELUS held a town hall meeting to discuss a cost sharing proposal for the Forbidden Plateau / Dove Creek Road areas. We understand from TELUS that the proposal was turned down by the Residents Association in favour of going with Xplornet. To discuss the TELUS Community Partnership proposal, please contact Aurora Sekela, TELUS Ambassador at Aurora.Sekela@telus.com or by phone at 604-836-8788.

Industry Canada's 700 MHz Spectrum Auction

Right now, we are encouraging local governments to write letters to the federal Minister of Industry requesting that some (or all!) of the funds derived from the upcoming [700 MHz spectrum auction](#) be reinvested in connectivity for rural and remote communities. This is an auction coming up early in the new year of radio frequency spectrum that will be used by the major Canadian telecommunications companies to deliver advanced cellular services. It is expected, based on past experience, to generate several billion dollars for the federal government (the 2008 auction generated \$4B and analysts predict an even higher return this time around). The Minister may be reached as follows:

The Honourable James Moore
Minister of Industry
C.D. Howe Building
235 Queen Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0H5

Telephone: 613-995-9001
Fax : 613-992-0302
Email: minister.industry@ic.gc.ca

The Province provided input to Industry Canada in 2011 as public consultation was conducted in advance of the auction – most of this is pretty technical, but the last paragraph makes the point that funds should be used to bridge the digital divide: [http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/smt-gst.nsf/vwapj/smse-018-10-emergency-mgmt-bc-sub1.pdf/\\$FILE/smse-018-10-emergency-mgmt-bc-sub1.pdf](http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/smt-gst.nsf/vwapj/smse-018-10-emergency-mgmt-bc-sub1.pdf/$FILE/smse-018-10-emergency-mgmt-bc-sub1.pdf) .

Should you decide to have a letter sent, please copy the Premier and the Honourable Andrew Wilkinson, Minister of Technology, Innovation and Citizens' Services, as this confirms that the digital divide remains a priority for your community.

Once again, thank you for meeting with Network BC and we look forward to continuing our dialogue.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Take care

Chris

Chris Hauff

Director

Network BC

<http://www.networkbc.gov.bc.ca>

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