

5/18/2016

The Hon. Christy Clark
Premier of British Columbia
Office of the Premier

Metro Vancouver Mayors' Council

Cc: Hon. Todd Stone; Hon. Peter Fassbender

Re: A call for leadership to invest in transit and transportation in Metro Vancouver

Dear Premier Clark and Members of the Mayors' Council,

We the undersigned are a diverse group of organizations from business, labour, health, environment and student associations working together to advocate for investment in Metro Vancouver's transportation system.

We are writing to urge you to act quickly and take advantage of the opportunity afforded by the recent federal budget to improve transit and transportation in our region. As you know, in its budget, the federal government made a commitment to a \$370 million "down payment" toward the 10-year Metro Vancouver Transit and Transportation Plan. The federal government has also shown tremendous leadership by agreeing to pay 50 per cent of all capital transit costs provided agreements can be struck with the province and local mayors.

These commitments have changed the landscape for transit funding in our region, but with this opportunity comes a challenge: we need to be ready with regional and provincial funding, or else these federal dollars, collected from local taxpayers, will go to other cities and provinces that are ready. For the good of our economy and the health and livelihood of citizens, this cannot happen. We are calling on the province and the Mayors' Council to work together to ensure that we are ready to get Metro Vancouver moving again.

Expansion of transit services — especially when they're electrified — is crucial for Metro Vancouver to improve air quality and health, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote economic development and job growth.

A growing number of studies confirm that congestion costs our region more than \$1 billion each year due to lost productivity, increased operating costs and lost business revenue and regional GDP. It has been estimated that investment in transit could save the health care system at least \$115 million annually, and likely considerably more if the benefits of increased physical activity were also included as part of the cost-savings analysis.

We ask you show leadership by putting history and political differences aside to work together and ensure we are ready to take full advantage of federal support and start improving transit and transportation. Adding new federal dollars is an essential prerequisite for moving ahead with stalled transit improvements so badly needed for the Metro Vancouver region, and for B.C. as a whole.

Lastly, we wanted to take this opportunity to highlight the importance of using newly available federal funds to implement the full set of regional transportation improvements outlined in the Mayors' Council Transportation and Transit Plan rather than a few projects here and there. A regional approach to transportation investments will ensure that Metro Vancouver residents and businesses throughout the region will benefit. Local and provincial governments have the power to help us make history in B.C. and Metro Vancouver through implementation of a world-class provincial and regional transportation plan.

Should you require more information, we would be happy to meet with you or your staff.

Thank you for considering this request.

BC Federation of Labour

BC Healthy Living Alliance

BC Teachers' Federation

British Columbia Golf

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

Clean Energy Canada

Connecting Environmental Professionals - Vancouver Chapter

The David Suzuki Foundation

Dialog Design

Disability Alliance BC

Downtown Surrey Business Improvement Association

Downtown Vancouver Association

Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association

Dr. Lisa J. Jing Mu, Medical Health Officer, Fraser Region

ForestEthics

Gordon Price, Director of the SFU City Program

Graduate Student Society at SFU

Greenpeace Canada

HandyDART Riders Alliance

HASTe BC

Heart and Stroke Foundation

HUB Cycling

Offsetters

Perkins+Will Architects

Peter Ladner, Columnist, Business in Vancouver Media Group

Public Health Association of BC

Renewal Funds Company

Transport Action - British Columbia

Vanterre Projects Corp

Victoria Lee MD MPH MBA CCFP FRCPC, Chief Medical Health Officer, Fraser Health Authority

Voters Taking Action on Climate Change
The Wilderness Committee