



## NEWS RELEASE

---

**For immediate release**

**April 7, 2020**

### **COMMUNITIES IN SQUAMISH-LILLOOET REGIONAL DISTRICT ASK VISITORS NOT TO COME DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

**Squamish-Lillooet Regional District** – As the Easter long weekend approaches, communities from Squamish to Lillooet are asking visitors to follow the advice of the provincial health officer and avoid non-essential travel which means not visiting Squamish, Whistler, Pemberton, Lillooet and the recreation areas in the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District.

In spite of Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry and Minister of Health Adrian Dix stressing the importance of avoiding all unnecessary travel and practicing physical distancing the Sea-to-Sky region continues to be a draw for a large number of visitors, many of whom are arriving to the area's parks, trails and small communities from the Lower Mainland.

"Never would we ever have imagined, as mayors and as the chair of the regional district, that we would be telling visitors to avoid the Sea-to-Sky region," said Squamish-Lillooet Regional District Board Chair, Tony Rainbow.

"From Furry Creek in the south, to the communities north of Lillooet, we know this area is a highly visited destination in the province. Normally at this time of year, we'd be welcoming visitors to golf, mountain bike, hike, camp and climb," he said. "But currently, it is imperative that residents stay home, and visitors stay away to reduce the spread of this highly contagious virus."

Rainbow noted that while some measures have been taken to reduce access, there are areas that continue to draw crowds of people.

"We are seeing mid-summer levels of visitation with cars lined up in long stretches along roads near trails, increasing numbers of campers at beach areas and overall a lack of social distancing in these heavily trafficked areas. People congregating in these areas are putting themselves, their community and our communities, at greater risk of increased disease transmission. Please stay home, stay safe and we will succeed together in reducing the terrible toll of this pandemic."

"This collective plea is unprecedented in Sea-to-Sky country as we join together to ask people to stay home and not visit us right now," said Squamish Mayor, Karen Elliott.

“Please do your part – for the healthcare workers on the front lines, and for all those who have been laid off or had to close businesses. The sooner we can flatten the curve, the sooner we can get back on track and welcome everyone back to our communities. This is bigger than any one of us, and only works if 100% of us act today and in the weeks ahead.”

The Resort Municipality of Whistler, which would normally be a busy Easter long weekend, echoed the sentiments that visitors must not come to the area at this time.

“Whistler exists to welcome visitors. During these challenging times however, we are asking visitors to not come to Whistler,” said Resort Municipality of Whistler Mayor, Jack Crompton.

“Our focus right now is on the health and safety of our community, especially our healthcare workers and other essential workers including those in our grocery stores, food services and pharmacies, and we’ve asked our community to take social distancing recommendations from public health officials very seriously,” he said. “Now is not the time to come to Whistler. Now is not the time to travel outside your own community. Please stay home and take care of yourself and your family. When we are able, we look forward to welcoming visitors back again with wide-open arms.”

Smaller communities within the region face a particular challenge, without the resources necessary to deal with a large outbreak.

“The simple action of staying home will undoubtedly save the lives of our family, friends and fellow community members,” said Village of Pemberton Mayor, Mike Richman.

“To disregard the Province’s direction to remain in place is reckless and irresponsible,” he said. “Non-essential travelers put themselves at risk, our community at risk and our rural clinics and ERs at risk. If you truly enjoy our area and all it has to offer, you will respect our simple plea so that we can welcome you back in the near future.”

North of Pemberton, the small community of Lillooet attracts visitors interested in exploring not only that community, but some of the most northern parts of the regional district.

“While traditionally the Easter long weekend has been a travel weekend and a weekend to get away with family and friends from work; in keeping with Dr. Henry’s requirements and recommendations, we ask and urge you to keep your travel limited to essential only,” said District of Lillooet Mayor, Peter Busse. “Exercise and outdoors must be enjoyed in one’s own area and very near one’s own homes. We must not see out of town travel to our area and in our communities. Non-compliance will put you and our residents at risk. Stay home.”

- 30 -

### **Media Contacts:**

Squamish-Lillooet Regional District  
Patricia Westerholm

Communications Coordinator/ EOC Information Officer

Telephone: (604) 894-6371 ext. 244

Email: [pwesterholm@slrd.bc.ca](mailto:pwesterholm@slrd.bc.ca)

District of Squamish

Telephone: 604-892-5217

Email: [communications@squamish.ca](mailto:communications@squamish.ca)

Resort Municipality of Whistler

Telephone: 604-932-5535

Email: [media@whistler.ca](mailto:media@whistler.ca)

Village of Pemberton

Jill Brooksbank

Senior Communications and Grants Coordinator

Telephone: 604-894-6135 ext. 230

Email: [jbrooksbank@pemberton.ca](mailto:jbrooksbank@pemberton.ca)

District of Lillooet

Bain Gair

EOC Information Officer

Telephone: 250-256-3183

Email: [eocinfo@lillooet.ca](mailto:eocinfo@lillooet.ca)