

**For immediate release
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REGIONAL DISTRICT URGES PROVINCE TO DECLARE PROVINCIAL STATE OF EMERGENCY IN RESPONSE TO CURRENT WILDFIRE RISK

SLRD Board pushes the Province for more backcountry access restrictions of unregulated activities and asks CN Rail for increased rail line maintenance

Pemberton, BC – The Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) Board of Directors held a special meeting, on an emergency basis, on Wednesday, July 7, 2021 in regard to advocating to the Province of British Columbia for increased measures to help address the significant wildfire risk in the province.

The SLRD Board is asking the Province to declare a provincial State of Emergency in regard to the wildfire risk and to restrict backcountry access of unregulated activities in extreme risk areas. The SLRD Board is also asking CN Rail to perform rail line maintenance and remediate vegetation specifically along its Squamish to Lillooet route, and throughout the SLRD.

Additionally, West Vancouver-Sea to Sky MLA Jordan Sturdy and Fraser-Nicola MLA Jackie Tegart are being asked to share in these advocacy efforts.

“We are all aware of the dire situation in our province, with regard to the wildfire risk,” said SLRD Board Chair, Jen Ford. “And we have seen the devastation that wildfire can cause. Our sympathies go out to the people of Lytton and the surrounding area, and to everyone who has been affected by wildfires,” she said.

“The conditions are tinder dry, and most of the province is on high alert. We can’t do anything about the record-breaking temperatures, or lightning strikes, but there are actions that the Province can take to help reduce the risk, including restrictions and resourcing, and that’s what we’re asking.”

The SLRD currently has a State of Local Emergency (SoLE) in place for all four electoral areas of the regional district.

Within the SLRD, there are two Evacuation Orders in place in Electoral Area B, in relation to the McKay Creek wildfire, while the Texas Creek Road area is on Evacuation Alert due to the risk from the Lytton Complex fires.

“There are wildfires burning in three of our four electoral areas,” said Ford. “There have been record-breaking high temperatures and extreme fire risk and it’s only the beginning of the summer so now is the time for the Province to act.”

About the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District

Located in southwestern BC, the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) is a local government federation consisting of four member municipalities (the District of Lillooet, the District of Squamish, the Village of Pemberton and the Resort Municipality of Whistler) and four unincorporated, rural electoral areas (A, B, C, and D). Headquartered in Pemberton, which is the approximate geographic centre of the region, the SLRD delivers a wide range of local, regional and sub-regional services to approximately 42,665 residents (2016 Census).

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