

**For immediate release
December 17, 2021**

**GEOTECHNICAL REPORT FINDS IMMINENT THREAT TO LIFE SAFETY FOR
EIGHT PROPERTIES ON REID ROAD IN SQUAMISH-LILLOOET REGIONAL
DISTRICT (SLRD)**

Evacuation Order to remain in place until further notice

Pemberton, B.C. – The Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) will maintain the Evacuation Order for eight properties at Jason Creek on Reid Road until further notice, upon receiving the results of a geotechnical survey and initial risk assessment by Cordilleran Geoscience.

Following a series of extreme weather events that moved through the area in November and early December, the SLRD Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) commissioned an assessment of the Jason Creek watershed area near the Reid Road community.

The Cordilleran Geoscience report has concluded that eight properties at 1781, 1791, 1793, 1815, 1782, 1788, 1794 and 1802 Reid Road must remain on Evacuation Order. Accordingly, the SLRD will maintain the existing Evacuation Order until further notice. Affected property owners were offered a copy of the report ahead of the public release, and are currently evacuated.

The next step is to undertake a peer review of this report to confirm the Cordilleran Geoscience report findings, further refine the assessment of hazards and risks, and then determine the scope and feasibility of risk mitigation measures. The SLRD is working with the Canadian Red Cross (CRC) to meet the medium-term support needs of the evacuated residents, as emergency support services (ESS) has now transitioned to the CRC.

“The life safety of our residents is our top priority,” said SLRD Chair, Jen Ford. “Our hearts go out to the residents impacted by this disaster. Being evacuated from your home for any length of time is awful. These residents are facing a longer period out of their homes, especially difficult during the holidays. We can only imagine how hard this is on the families affected. Returning is just too dangerous. A debris flow event, with not just water, but boulders and trees, is assessed as being imminent, and of a volume that could result in loss of life, and that is a risk we cannot take.”

The Jason Creek watershed is prone to landslide activity, debris flow and erosion, and in particular the upper fan of Jason Creek is now vulnerable to a further, and highly destructive landslide event that could result in severe property damage and the potential for injury and loss of life. The report noted that instability at higher elevations was increasing in size and there is an imminent hazard of a landslide, affecting the identified properties on Reid Road. These homes are now evacuated.

“We have had ongoing communications with the affected Reid Road community since the first Evacuation Alert was issued on December 1,” said Ford. “We advised them that we had commissioned the report, which we have now shared with them, and will work with them in the coming weeks and months to support what will be a complex recovery process and longer-term needs.”

The SLRD will seek to appoint a dedicated Recovery Manager for this purpose, including liaison and advocacy with all applicable agencies. The SLRD has requested a peer review of the Cordilleran Geoscience report, which is best practice, and in light of the very serious nature of the report findings. This is anticipated to be complete by the end of January. The SLRD has also asked for mitigation options, if these are possible, to be scoped, and a basic estimate of the costs for such mitigation measures. This will inform next steps in consultation with the community.

“As we’ve seen in other parts of the province, this has been an unprecedented year of natural disasters, in part the result of climate change,” said Ford. “Climate change is moving fast, and we have to adapt to it, but we need the help of the Provincial Government. These residents are at risk of falling through a gap in the disaster financial assistance provisions, because their houses are not damaged but cannot be occupied, and this is an uninsurable risk. The SLRD has no way to directly fund this kind of assistance and we hope to find solutions with the Provincial Government to support citizens impacted by dynamic changes in risk levels from natural hazards, influenced by climate change.”

The SLRD will be putting security and signage in place for the security of the evacuated properties, and to warn the public of the hazard.

Residents with questions can contact the SLRD office:

Telephone: 604-894-6371

Email: info@slrd.bc.ca

The report is available on the SLRD website: www.slrd.bc.ca/JasonCreek_ReidRoad

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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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