



**March 27, 2020**

The SLRD is nearing the second week of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic and there is no indication that we will return to anything remotely considered to be “business as usual” any time soon. These times are difficult, uncertain and create terrible anxiety for many. Every day the SLRD is looking at what we can do better. There is much work going on behind the scenes, and we continue to monitor the various services we deliver and the potential impacts that might result from an extended pandemic situation.

In the past week the SLRD joined our municipalities in the region, from Squamish to Lillooet, to collectively amplify the urgent message that we all needed to make physical distancing a priority. Contrary to all of our inclinations, we asked our residents to stay home and our visitors to stay away. To those of you who helped, and continue to help, share this message and to everyone who is heeding this advice, I say “thank you”. This is, unfortunately, our new normal for the time being. As our Provincial Health Officer has said, the actions we take now will help reduce the spread of COVID-19, and reduce the impact on our healthcare system and resources.

We continue to see reports of an increasing number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in our province, and indeed within the SLRD-related health regions (Interior Health in the northern part of the SLRD and Vancouver Coastal Health in the central and southern SLRD). Today, we heard, also, that the actions we have all been taking to reduce disease transmission are having some effect. There is a slight bend to the COVID-19 curve in BC. The key message here is not to relax at all in staying apart and practicing good hand hygiene, but to take heart that these measures which are disrupting our lives in so many ways, are making a positive difference in protecting the health and lives of those around us. While there continue to be new cases recorded each day, the trajectory is promising and the modelling shows that we are far better off for having taken these measures.

Over the past several days, there have been major new announcements from the federal and provincial governments, including new laws to help protect our health while also providing programs to support individuals, families and businesses. Through it all, the most basic message remains key to getting us through. Physical distancing is a must:

- Stay home.
- Avoid all unnecessary travel.
- Only leave your home for essentials.
- If you are ill, stay home.
- If you are required to self-isolate, self-isolate.

We're calling on each and every one of you to do all that you can to live this message. It is already making a difference.

Tony