

Subject: 300923 – Transportation and climate change

From: "Transportation, Minister TRAN:EX" <Minister.Transportation@gov.bc.ca>

Date: 2021-04-19, 12:00 p.m.

To: "eric@ecoplanning.ca" <eric@ecoplanning.ca>

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300923 – Transportation and climate change

Dear Eric Doherty:

Thank you for your email regarding transportation and climate change. I also appreciate you congratulating me on my appointment as Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure. It is an honour to represent British Columbians in this role.

As you know, one of the provincial government's key priorities is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector as part of our CleanBC strategy. As my predecessor noted in her email to you, although the McKenzie Interchange project improved traffic flow and safety, it did not add more capacity for private vehicles. Instead, it added dedicated transit lanes and improved connectivity along the Galloping Goose Trail, making it easier for people to choose sustainable modes of transportation. Overall, the project has reduced idling and fuel consumption, leading to lower greenhouse gas emissions, as expected.

While I recognize that highway improvements are not always a long-term solution for reducing emissions, they play a vital role in helping to keep our roads safe and reliable while we make the switch to cleaner forms of transportation.

Like you, I am encouraged by the changes BC Ferries has taken towards cleaner ferry travel, including electric propulsion, hybrid electric power and battery storage. Our government remains committed to fighting climate change, and part of this commitment includes requiring vehicles to use cleaner fuel sources and making hybrid or electric vehicles more affordable and convenient. By 2040, every new car sold in B.C. will produce zero air pollution.

You may also be aware that in late 2019, the provincial government made several changes to the Motor Vehicle Act to allow us to work on pilot projects to research, test and evaluate emerging modes of personal transportation, such as electric kick scooters. Recently, we announced that we will be collaborating with six municipalities on Phase 1 of the pilot project program, which is focused on use of electric kick scooters. Researching emerging modes of personal transportation is part of the provincial government's active transportation strategy—Move. Commute. Connect. Our goal is to make active transportation safer and more convenient for everyone and to double the percentage of trips taken with this type of transportation by 2030.

Meanwhile, we remain focused on working with local governments to improve transit service to ensure it provides an affordable and reliable travel alternative for British Columbians. In the Victoria region, the provincial government, in partnership with the federal and local governments, is investing in new buses, improved operating facilities, additional bus lanes on Highway 1, and transit facility upgrades on Highway 14. A total of 118 new buses will go into service this year, with most of them deployed in Victoria to replace older buses and expand service. These investments, in addition to planned service increases in 2020/21, will help support delivery of improved and more reliable transit.

In addition, BC Transit, as well as TransLink, Metro Vancouver's independent transit authority, have both adopted low carbon fleet strategies to phase out the use of diesel buses in the coming decades. BC Transit plans to start buying only electric heavy-duty buses in 2023 with a target of creating a fully electric fleet by 2040, and it will be putting its first 10 battery-electric buses into service this year.

These are just some of the ways our government is working to keeping communities connected while taking advantage of clean and efficient transportation solutions.

Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,

Rob Fleming
Minister

-----Original Message-----

From: Eric Doherty <eric@ecoplanning.ca>

Sent: February 3, 2021 11:35 AM

To: Transportation, Minister TRAN:EX <Minister.Transportation@gov.bc.ca>; Fleming.MLA, Rob

LASS:EX <Rob.Fleming.MLA@leg.bc.ca>

Cc: Minister, ENV ENV:EX <ENV.Minister@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: 300923 - Please correct misleading climate claim re McKenzie Interchange Project

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Dear Minister Rob Fleming,

Congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure. I hope you are feeling good about being back in a position to advance sustainable transportation options in an even bigger way than in your days campaigning for U-pass at UVic. It must be exciting to be in this position as the Biden administration shakes up the transportation world in a good way.

I would also like to thank you for the very good news regarding BC Ferries electrification. I will be doing what I can to support this initiative, including writing to federal politicians to encourage them to fund this.

However, someone in your new ministry has fallen back into the bad habits from past administrations, and has posted a misleading statement about the McKenzie Interchange project and roadway expansion in general.

The project website presently claims that "Project benefits include. . . significantly lower greenhouse gas emissions."

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/transportation/transportation-infrastructure/projects/highway-1-mckenzie-interchange>

As you well know, this is misleading at best. (e.g.

<https://www.wired.com/2014/06/wuwt-traffic-induced-demand/>)

Please let me know what you plan to do about this, and what steps you are taking to ensure accurate assessment and communications of climate impacts ministry wide.

This is an important moment, and it is crucially important that you show consistent climate leadership in your new role.

Thank you,

Eric

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