

Urban Systems.ca
Re: Alberni-Bamfield Road Review

November 6, 2018

Dear Emily,

I am writing to offer my perspective as Director of the Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre (BMSC) on the Alberni-Road and its impact on our operations. The BMSC was established in 1972 as a consortium of five western Canadian universities (University of Victoria, University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, University of Calgary and University of Alberta) and is owned and operated by the not-for-profit Western Canadian Universities Marine Sciences Society. The BMSC supports education and research on diverse coastal and marine environments and is internationally recognized for its research and training facilities. We support an average of 100 national and international researchers. Our education programs include 18 field courses for up to 200 university students annually, and many of these students go on to careers in universities and colleges, environmental monitoring and restoration, and conservation. Our award-winning field trips program engages youth in hands-on field trips for over 3000 K-12 students annually between Sept and April. All of these programs are run on a not-for-profit basis to keep costs low for visitors. We have a longstanding partnership with the Huu-ay-aht First Nations in association with our education and research programs and are currently working together to build a wastewater treatment plant at the BMSC. Generally, improvements to the road would improve:

1) Safety: The road can be dangerous on several levels, namely in association with the remote region and rapid, weather-induced deterioration of road conditions (dust, ice, washouts, and low visibility – especially on the single lane bridges). Vehicles are more likely to break down on this road.

2) Financial stability: Our programs bring in the revenue that allow us to be open year round. We are a significant employer in the region. Improvements to the road would decrease risks of clients not being able to travel to BMSC. In addition, the road tends to negatively influence staff recruitment and retention. Staff routinely express frustrations about the impact that the road has on vehicles. We also incur significant costs to shuttle students for our education programs.



bmsc BAMFIELD MARINE
SCIENCES CENTRE



3) Opportunities: A maintained road would open the door for economic opportunities and infrastructure developments on BMSC campus. Improvements would increase the value of our resources and potentially increase the number of researchers and students. While we do not have a recent detailed assessment of the economic impact of BMSC, we currently create a significant percentage of jobs in the local community, and the thousands of participants and visitors that we attract also contribute to the local economy through purchase of goods and services.

Overall, it is my assessment that improvements to the road would positively impact BSMC operations, would likely have long-term consequences on our ability to operate and offer our programs, and would probably have a positive impact on the local economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sean M. Rogers', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Sean M. Rogers, PhD
Associate Professor, Biological Sciences, University of Calgary
Director, Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre