



18 March 2020

The Honourable Scott Fraser
Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
MLA for Mid Island-Pacific Rim
Room 323 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Fraser,

The University of Victoria is a long-standing member of the Western Canadian Universities Marine Sciences Society that owns and operates the Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre (BMSC). BMSC provides life changing and award winning education and research in the remarkable community of Bamfield. For more than 40 years, UVic faculty and students have travelled to the community of Bamfield and participated in research, undergraduate and graduate-level credit courses, workshops and field trips. As you know, the tragic bus this past September resulted in the deaths of two of our undergraduate students, Emma Machado and John Geerdes, and significant injuries to many of the other students on the bus. Since the accident, the UVic community, with our colleagues at BMSC, have been working together to support one another through extremely difficult times.

We appreciate the advocacy for critically required road improvements of the Bamfield community through the Bamfield Road Reconciliation Working Group, and in particular the leadership of local First Nations, including Chief Councillor Robert Dennis from the Huu-ay-aht First Nations, as well as local municipal government (Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District) and the BMSC.

As you know, the University of Victoria is dedicated to doing what we can to respond to the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation's Commission Report and we congratulate your government for its foresight and leadership on Bill 41 – Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. It is with this commitment in mind that I am writing to you today on behalf of the University of Victoria to ask for your support in making a vital investment in reconciliation.


Recommendations from the Bamfield Road Reconciliation Working Group (struck on the recommendation of Premier Horgan) have been made and the University of Victoria would like to add its strong support for these vital improvements. As others have publicly stated, an immediate investment in infrastructure improvement to this essential transportation corridor is required. Such a crucial investment is required to address the risks, promote safety and community cohesion, support academic and research excellence and honour relationships and reconciliation with our First Nations communities. The recommendations put forward have addressed all issues, including jurisdiction, and there is a plan ready to implement. All that is required from the Government of BC is the funding to act now.



We appreciate there are pressing matters that require the Government of BC's care and consideration and we are counting on you as Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation to champion this important work.

We would be very willing to meet to discuss this matter further.

With respect,


Jamie Cassels, QC
President and Vice-Chancellor

cc: Minister Melanie Mark, Minister for Advanced Education, Skills and Training
Minister Claire Trevena, Minister for Transportation and Infrastructure

