

August 12, 2020

Honorable John Horgan, Premier
Province of British Columbia
West Annex, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2
By email to: premier@gov.bc.ca

Re: Bamfield Road Improvements

Dear Premier Horgan:

It is difficult to write a letter which concerns the death of one's own son but under the circumstances we feel that our voice needs to be heard.

We are the parents of John Geerdes, who was one of the two University of Victoria students killed on September 13, 2019 when the chartered bus they were riding in crashed while on the Bamfield Road enroute to the Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre.

It is obvious that for many years the British Columbia government has failed to provide travelers with a safe road between Port Alberni and Bamfield. John's death, and the death of his seatmate Emma Machado, prove what the consequences of this neglect can be. We do not know the historical reasons for the condition of the road and in our view the same matter little. Instead, what is essential is that the British Columbia government now correct its past failure by funding the Bamfield Road improvements.

When people journey to the unique and special place which is British Columbia they expect that reasonably safe travel will be possible. This is especially true when parents send their children to renowned facilities such as the Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre. Likewise, safe travel is vitally important to the many residents of Bamfield and the Huu-ay-aht First Nations who must utilize the Bamfield Road for medical, employment and other essential purposes.

It is unfortunate that it has taken the deaths of our son and Emma to bring the condition of the Bamfield Road to the attention of the government. We urge you to complete the funding for this project, and the project itself, as soon as possible. Otherwise it will simply be a matter of time before other families lose loved ones on the Bamfield Road.

We are sending a copy of this letter to the Ministers involved in this project and request that they also recognize the importance of this project and the need to take prompt action. We also welcome a chance to communicate further with any of you. Thank you for your attention and assistance.

Sincerely,



Gregg Geerdes and Mary Murphy