



Outdoor Recreation Council of BC

July 19, 2023

Honourable George Heyman, MLA
Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

Honourable Bruce Ralston, MLA
Minister of Forests

RE: Concerns about the East Twin Forest Service Road [East Twin]

Dear Ministers Heyman and Ralson,

It has recently come to the attention of the Outdoor Recreation Council of BC [ORCBC] that the East Twin will be deactivated in the coming months. This deactivation will be accomplished by removing a bridge that is currently in use by vehicles that are less than 5 tons of gross vehicle weight. This bridge removal will prevent access to several increasingly popular hiking trails, including the Avalanche and Chalco trails. These trails are maintained by the volunteer work of the Fraser Headwaters Alliance [FHWA], authorized under Section 57 of the *Forest and Range Practices Act*. The FWHA has been advised that the relevant Section 57 will expire with the road deactivation. As reported to ORCBC, FWHA was unaware that this Section 57 authorization had an expiry date.

ORCBC's concerns lie primarily with the apparent lack of consultation and engagement with the local community of McBride, relevant user groups, and those volunteer groups who maintain this backcountry recreation infrastructure.

ORCBC, with all due respect, asks that the decision to deactivate the East Twin, as outlined above, be revisited and that a more comprehensive public consultation process be pursued. Furthermore, ORCBC asks that the interests of the local community get serious consideration of its interests as it looks for opportunities to diversify its economy by developing the tourism sector, particularly that market that highlights the attractions of backcountry recreation. As the work to deactivate East Twin is scheduled to begin in August 2023, ORCBC asks that this start date be deferred as needed.

We see this decision regarding the East Twin and the negative impacts on the local community in the Robson Valley as an example of a much broader problem in B.C., where smaller rural communities increasingly have their efforts to diversify their economies by moving in more sustainable and long-lasting directions thwarted by decisions taken by well-intentioned Ministry staff, who may not appreciate the negative impacts their decisions are having on rural communities.

ORCBC recognizes that many First Nations are rural communities and believes that a more comprehensive consultation process with those First Nations can only help their efforts to become economically more sustainable and help in the important work of Reconciliation in British Columbia.

The Outdoor Recreation Council of BC (ORCBC) is a charitable society with more than 70 organizational members spanning the entire spectrum of outdoor recreation user groups, including paddlers, hikers, climbers, mountain bikers, off-road motorcyclists, equestrians, snowmobilers, anglers and other outdoor interests. We speak up for the broad interests and concerns of the organized recreation sector to government and industry, advocate for access and funding, and build capacity within the sector. We indirectly represent more than 100,000 British Columbians.

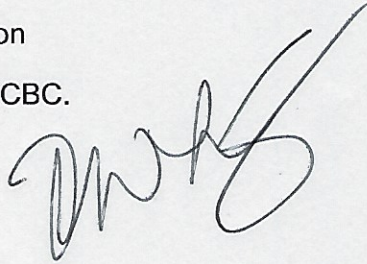
This letter has the unanimous support of the ORCBC Board of Directors.

We appreciate your taking the time to read and consider the content of this letter!

Sincerely,

Dave Wharton

Director, ORCBC.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dave Wharton', is written over the typed name and title.