



July 28, 2025

Ben Geselbracht, President
Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities
PO Box 28058
Victoria BC V9B 6K8

Reference: 334644

Dear Ben Geselbracht:

Re: Island Rail Corridor

Thank you for your letter of June 20, 2025, sharing with me the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities' resolution requesting that the provincial government fund the restoration of the Island Rail Corridor between Parksville and Port Alberni to allow for its use during highway closures or emergencies.

Our government recognizes the impact that highway closures can have on families, businesses and communities. We know that the closure of Highway 4 due to a wildfire in 2023 was difficult, and we have been working on an Emergency Detour Planning Study to look more closely at potential alternate access options for the West Coast. Ministry staff provided an update to the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District's Transportation Committee about the study this past April. We look forward to sharing more information once the study is completed, which we expect will occur later this summer.

You may know that in 2023, our government committed [\\$18 million to allow for future corridor planning](#) involving affected First Nations and regional districts. These groups and the Island Corridor Foundation have worked over the past year to engage with the public on developing a shared vision for the corridor. To support this public engagement and ensure everyone has an opportunity to share their thoughts on the future use of the corridor, the provincial government has extended the time available to access the \$18 million funding to March 31, 2026.

The ministry continues to meet with First Nations, all levels of government and communities to explore the corridor's future potential, including the portion between Parksville and Port Alberni. I have shared your letter with the ministry staff involved in this work so your comments can be considered as part of these discussions.

.../2

Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Farnworth". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "M".

Mike Farnworth
Minister

Copy to: Honourable Brenda Bailey
 Minister of Finance
 MLA, Vancouver-South Granville

Honourable Brittny Anderson
Minister of State for Local Governments and Rural Communities
MLA, Kootenay Central