

CARD #15 WORKING WITH BC PROV GOV'T

- 2014 thru 2016 liaison Gordie Hogg BC-MLA
- 2017 letter BC Min Transp. to Fed Gov't
- 2017 new Coalition Gov't; contacts weakened
- 2018 Comm Mt i/c local BC MLA Tracy Redies

DETAIL SCRIPT FOR #15 WORKING WITH BC PROV GOV'T

After initial contacts with BNSF in early 2013, many meetings with ourselves as advocates and the BC Provincial Government, ensured during 2014, 2015, and 2016. Our prime contact during that time frame was local MLA Gordie Hogg, whom always took the time to listen, engage, and discuss the rail safety and rail relocation issues being presented. Another BC-MLA whom was very helpful over this period was Peter Fassbender. Each contributed as they were able in setting up the initial liaison contacts with other members of the BC Government, and in furthering our advocacy efforts. Please note that our advocacy contacts with BNSF were discontinued once the City of White Rock commissioned their initial report in October 2014.

A February 2017 letter from then BC Transportation & Infrastructure Minister, Todd Stone, to the Federal Minister of Transport Marc Garneau has 'thrown provincial support behind a study of relocating the BNSF railway's current route along the Semiahmoo Peninsula shoreline'; see PA News link here

July 2017 brought a change in government to BC, resulting in a coalition headed by the NDP. Unfortunately, this caused the momentum to slow and network contacts to weaken. The new local Liberal MLA Tracy Redies, strongly in support of the Rail Relocation, worked diligently to create meaningful liaison with the BC Min. of Transportation. Those efforts were met with indifference. All stakeholders will continue to encourage the BC Ministry of Transportation to fully engage with the considerations of the Highway 99 corridor while also securing appropriate financial contribution to what the earlier BC Liberal Government were promising.

In June 2018, a communication meeting was arranged by our new Federal MP Gordie Hogg with many relevant stakeholders. Included were Federal Pacific Regional deputy Transportation Minister, Robert Dick, our local BC-MLA Tracy Redies, City of WR Mayor Wayne Baldwin, City of Surrey Mayor Linda Hepner plus Councillor Judy Villeneuve, First Nation Councillor Joanne Charles, BNSF and others. The discussion focus for this communication meeting was centered on rail safety, rail relocation, process/engagement, as well as coordination with hi-speed rail.

In October 2018, BC-MLA Tracy Redies followed up with a presentation to the BC Transportation Ministry; see Ref #8.

In September 2019, the White Rock Mayor and one Councillor met with Claire Trevena, the BC Minister of Transportation & Infrastructure, at the UBCM convention; they report that the minister was adamant in saying "unfortunately said she would not support a study as it's not provincial".

In mid 2020, we as advocates would ask the following questions if given the chance ... :

Why did the Province contribute \$30M to the recent 5 overpasses initiative, almost strictly municipal? ... see back of card #8

Why did many BC-MLA's and the Min. of Transp. under the previous Liberal Government participate? ... see back of card #15

Why is the Min of Transp. not interested in the fact the preferred alignment route will be down Highway 99, a provincial highway? ... see back of card #11

Why is the Min. of Transp. ignoring our initiative when they so vigorously support Hi-Speed Rail? ... see back of card #8 for integration of both.

It is imperative that the BC Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure appoint a single key person to monitor and contribute to this ongoing initiative, as highway 99 is a provincial government right of way, and further to provide their share of funding for the feasibility study, as already done by the previous BC Liberal Government.