



Box 219, 1350 Aster Street
Pemberton, BC V0N 2L0
P. 604-894-6371 TF. 800-298-7753
F. 604-894-6526
info@slrd.bc.ca www.slrd.bc.ca

February 26, 2026

BY EMAIL ONLY (FIN.Minister@gov.bc.ca)

The Honourable Brenda Bailey, M.L.A.
Minister of Finance

Dear Minister:

RE: Establishing a Sustainable Provincial Funding Model for Search and Rescue

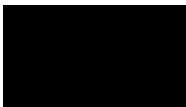
On behalf of the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District Board of Directors, I am writing to request that the Province work in partnership with the BC Search and Rescue Association (SAR) and local governments to establish a stable, long-term funding model for search and rescue services.

Search and rescue is a provincially mandated and essential public safety service. Across British Columbia, 78 groups and approximately 3,200 volunteers provide 24/7 emergency response, often in high-risk environments and frequently at personal cost. Despite this critical role, SAR does not receive secure provincial operating funding. For more than two decades, local governments have called through the Union of BC Municipalities for a sustainable funding solution. Continued reliance on property taxation is inequitable and unsustainable as service demands grow.

We support a transparent, metrics-based provincial funding model tied to operational needs such as call volume, training standards, equipment lifecycle, and volunteer readiness. We also request that the Province increase the BC Volunteer First Responder Tax Credit to match the federal exemption to strengthen recruitment, retention, and recognition of volunteers.

We urge the Province to take action to ensure search and rescue services remain strong, equitable, and sustainable across British Columbia.

Regards,



Jen Ford
Chair, Squamish-Lillooet Regional District

CC: SLRD Board
Heather Paul, CAO, SLRD
Kelly Greene, Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness,
EMCR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

John Jack, Chair, Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, jjack@acrd.bc.ca
Mark Parker, Chair, Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, mark.parker@rdbn.bc.ca
Cliff McNeil-Smith, Chair, Capital Regional District, cmcneilsmith@crd.bc.ca
Margo Wagner, Chair, Cariboo Regional District, mailbox@cariboord.ca
Jayme Kennedy, Chair, Central Coast Regional District, jkennedy@ccrd.ca
Aimee Watson, Chair, Regional District of Central Kootenay, awatson@rdck.bc.ca
Loyal Wooldridge, Chair, Regional District of Central Okanagan, lwooldridge@kelowna.ca
Natalya Melnychuk, Chair, Columbia Shuswap Regional District, nmelnychuk@csrd.bc.ca
Will Cole-Hamilton, Chair, Comox Valley Regional District, wcole-hamilton@courtenay.ca
Kate Segall, Chair, Cowichan Valley Regional District, kate.segall@cvrd.bc.ca
Rob Gay, Chair, Regional District of East Kootenay, director.gay@rdek.bc.ca
Patricia Ross, Chair, Fraser Valley Regional District, pross@abbotsford.ca
Lara Beckett, Chair, Regional District of Fraser-Fort George, lbeckett@rdffg.bc.ca
Cyra Yunkws, Chair, Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine, info@rdks.bc.ca
Grace McGregor, Chair, Regional District of Kootenay Boundary, gmcgregor@rdkb.com
Mike Hurley, Chair, Metro Vancouver Regional District, elaine.wong@burnaby.ca
Andrew Hory, Chair, Regional District of Mount Waddington, ahory@rdmw.bc.ca
Barry Pages, Chair, North Coast Regional District, ma-director@ncrdbc.com
Shirley Fowler, Chair, Regional District of North Okanagan, sfowler@cityofarmstrong.bc.ca
Rob Fraser, Mayor, Northern Rockies Regional Municipality, JustAsk@NorthernRockies.ca
Mark Pendergraft, Chair, Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, info@rdos.bc.ca
Brad Sperling, Chair, Peace River Regional District, brad.sperling@prrd.bc.ca
Clay Brander, Chair, qathet Regional District, cbrander@gathet.ca
Jen Ford, Chair, Squamish-Lillooet Regional District, jford@slrd.bc.ca
Mark Baker, Chair, Strathcona Regional District, mbaker@srd.ca
Alton Toth, Chair, Sunshine Coast Regional District, alton.toth@scrd.ca
Barbara Roden, Chair, Thompson-Nicola Regional District, broden@ashcroftbc.ca