

August 4, 2020

Honorable Claire Trevena
Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure
P.O. Box 9055
Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Sent via email to:
Minister.Transportation@gov.bc.ca

Re: Beryl Prairie Road

Dear Minister Trevena;

On behalf of the North Peace Rural Roads initiative, I am writing to share my disappointment at the absolute deterioration of the Beryl Prairie road.

We met with you at the Union of BC Municipalities meeting in Whistler on September 10, 2018 and specifically expressed our concern about the condition and impacts on the Beryl Prairie road near Hudson's Hope.

At that time, the \$1.4B North Montney mainline to support natural gas distribution to Kitimat was ramping up and the Farrell Creek hill had slid, forcing all industry traffic onto the inadequately constructed Beryl Prairie road. At that time, you acknowledged the importance of the economic investment and committed that there would be additional maintenance on the Beryl Prairie road to offset the additional traffic.

Attached is a pictorial timeline of the deterioration of the road. As of this spring, the 12 km road is completely devoid of gravel and impassible to any vehicle other than a four-wheel drive when it rains. This is a public road that rural residents, backcountry enthusiasts, and our primary industries of agriculture, forestry and natural gas all rely on.

When we enquired recently on the plans for this road, we were advised by the district office that they would be investing \$100,000 and 100m³ of gravel. Sadly, there are many zeros missing on both those number to have any impact.

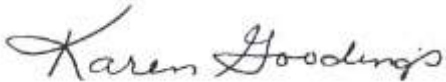
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PLEASE REPLY TO:

☒ Box 810, 1981 Alaska Ave, Dawson Creek, BC V1G 4H8 Tel: (250) 784-3200 or (800) 670-7773 Fax: (250) 784-3201 Email: prrd.dc@prrd.bc.ca
☐ 9505 100 St, Fort St. John, BC V1J 4N4 Tel: (250) 785-8084 Fax: (250) 785-1125 Email: prrd.fsj@prrd.bc.ca

We feel that you have not lived up to your commitment to the Beryl Prairie road users and are requesting your personal assurance that appropriate funds will be allocated to this road to ensure it is safe and reliable for the residents and industries that rely on it. For further information or discussion, please contact me at (250) 262-1558 or our consultant Jackie Kjos at (250) 262-5510.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen Goodings". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid.

Karen Goodings
Chair, North Peace Rural Roads Committee

ATTACHMENT: Deterioration of the Beryl Prairie Road 2017-2020

c. Kevin Richter, Associate Deputy Minister, Kevin.Richter@gov.bc.ca



Deterioration of the Beryl Prairie Road 2017-2020

Prepared by: North Peace Rural Road Committee
July 2020

The Beryl Prairie road was not constructed to support either the type or volume of traffic that has been using it since around 2008 when oil and gas development in the area exploded. While the primary road used to support the development of the massive natural gas play was the Farrell Creek road and a network of petroleum development roads (PDRs), the Beryl Prairie road also was subjected to heavy industrial traffic.

When the North Peace Rural Roads initiative was revived in late 2017, the Beryl Prairie road was one that jumped quickly to the top of the priority list. The photos below show trouble in the spring of 2017 when heavy rutting occurred during and after seasonal load restrictions. The maintenance contractor dumped pit run into the ruts, some of which can be seen in the ruts and graded off to the side of the road. No effort was made to repair the soft spots in the road base responsible for the rutting. This rutting occurred not at the back end of the road, but right in the centre part of the road where families with light vehicles have to travel daily.

May 2017



In the spring of 2018, there was still some gravel on the road, although in places it was getting scarce.

In August, the North Montney mainline (pipeline) kicked off with one of the prime contractors setting up their work staging areas at the entrance of the Beryl Prairie Road. This \$1.4 billion investment by TC Energy was to collect gas and tie into the Coastal Gas Link pipeline currently being constructed to Kitimat to feed LNG Canada.

May 2018



September 2018



September 2019



By September 2018, when we met with Minister Trevena and key provincial and regional staff, the road had begun to deteriorate rapidly as a result of:

- the failure of the Farrell Creek hill and re-routing traffic to Beryl Prairie;
- construction of the North Montney mainline;
- expansion of Cambrian Energy's gas plant; and
- normal operations of agriculture, forestry and oil and gas.

By July of 2019, a year into pipeline construction, the road had become a goat trail of weaving through soft spots and avoiding pit run.



The following three photos show the speed at which this road went from bad to worse in 2019. All photos were taken within a few hundred metres of each other. The top two pictures show how futile it is to dump a bit of gravel on a problem without repairing the road base. In the June 2019 photo, there are signs of gravel on the road, but just a month later, all of the gravel has been either graded off to the edge or pounded into the soft roadbed. The bottom picture shows the current condition of this road with no gravel on the road and impassible for all but the most robust four-wheel drive vehicles.

June 2019



July 2019



May 2020



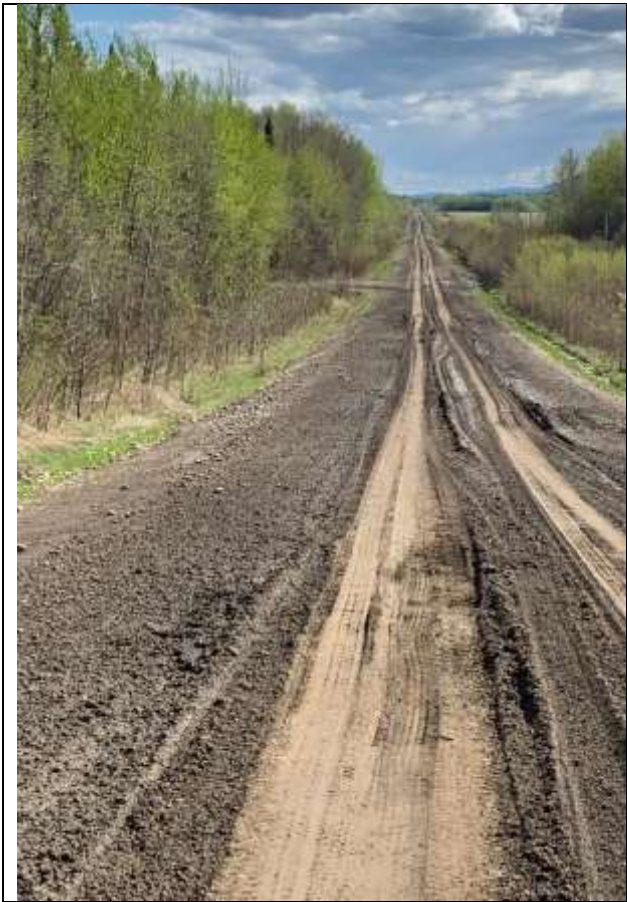
The photo below shows the last couple of kilometres of this PUBLIC road. The issues above that caused the collapse are not going away. This is an important gateway to the backcountry for residents and visitors to the area. It supports agriculture, as evidenced by the fields on both sides of the road, and is an important collector road for multiple forest and petroleum development roads. It also provides access to Petronas's Farrell Creek gas plant, visible in the upper left side of the photo. This road will NOT become less important in the next forty years!



The following photos show the condition of the Beryl Prairie road this spring (2020).







And finally, this picture shows the real safety hazard of this road. The tracks in the mud tell the story of someone who came dangerously close to going over the bank when they were either pulled over there by the gumbo clay or had to pull over to meet an oncoming vehicle.

This is totally unacceptable for a road that has supported the contribution of millions of dollars in Provincial revenue.

