

CITY OF REVELTOKE CONCERNS RE-TRANS CANADA HIGHWAY #1

1. HIGHWAY CLOSURES

The Trans-Canada Highway in our region (Field to Salmon Arm) is closed regularly throughout the year for three main reasons:

- Avalanches and avalanche control
- mud/rock slides
- highway accidents

These closures have a major impact on tourism, on the transportation of goods, on the travelling public and on communities along the highway such as Revelstoke that have to deal with tens if not hundreds of travelers stranded in our community when the highway closes

Fatal accidents currently close the highway for a minimum of 7 hours, closures of 8-10 are not uncommon, and 12-14 hour closures also happen. The highway is usually closed in both directions with traffic backing up 20-30km.

We have little or no control over avalanches or mud slides without major investment in highway improvements (e.g. tunnel at 3-Valley Gap).

We believe the frequency and the length of closures due to accidents, especially fatalities, are not acceptable and something we can take action to improve.

2. ACTIONS TO IMPROVE ROAD SAFETY TO PREVENT ACCIDENTS

The following actions are proposed to help prevent accidents on the Trans-Canada:

2.1 Road conditions

Ministry of Highway staff has indicated the contractors are meeting the criteria for the highway maintenance contracts, but these criteria do not seem to be adequate to ensure safe road conditions, particularly during winter storms. Also, we are not sure that Ministry staff has adequate resources to inspect the conditions of the highway during severe winter weather. We do not believe the road is being maintained to an acceptable standard by the road contractors.

We would like to see an improved level of maintenance on the stretch of the Trans-Canada between Field and Salmon Arm with improved inspections by Ministry staff particularly when conditions are deteriorating.

We would like to see a detailed review of accident sites along the highway and coordination with ICBC on developing recommended safety enhancements to minimize the risk of accidents and fatalities at these sites.

We understand that 4 laning the highway is a long-term project. In the short term, we would like Ministry staff to look at road design elements such as central wire barriers, no post barriers, extended shoulders, more overtaking lanes and more rest areas to improve driving conditions and make the road safer.

Create more pull-outs to allow RCMP officers to stop vehicles safely during the busy summer season and the during dangerous winter conditions.

Install centre rumble strips along the highway to alert drivers when they cross the centre line.

2.2 Speed limits

Speed is a major contributing factor to highway accidents. Speed limits were recently increased on the Trans-Canada to 100km/h regardless of weather conditions and type of vehicle.

We would like to see the following steps taken to help reduce speed along the highway:

- **Reduced speed limits for trucks along sections of the highway**
- **More signs posted to indicate high incident accident areas**
- **Variable speed limit electronic signs that can be changed as highway conditions change**
- **Increase enforcement to ensure speed limits are being adhered to**

2.3 Increased truck inspections

- **Increased inspections by CVSE, particularly in winter months to ensure trucks are adequately equipped for winter driving**

2.4 Improved training for truck drivers

- **Improve certification levels for commercial operators who are driving this stretch of the Trans-Canada Highway. Conditions here are much different from Vancouver or the Prairie Provinces. There should be specific training modules for drivers who are driving this route.**

2.5 Better regulations for rental vehicles

- **Legislation to enforce the use of winter tires on rental vehicles for winter months**

3. ACCIDENT MANAGEMENT

When accidents do occur, we think there are a number of actions that can be taken to improve the way in which they are managed, to ensure better communication among the various agencies involved in dealing with the accidents, and to ensure the highway is re-opened as quickly as possible. The faster that the highway is re-opened, the better for everyone. We would like to propose the following to address this issue:

- **A traffic analyst (3) be stationed in Revelstoke**
- **A coroner be stationed in Revelstoke**
- **Better communication between all agencies involved in managing major accidents. This includes Ministry staff, highway contractors, RCMP, flagging companies, local government, and highway rescue agencies. When the road is going to be closed for a lengthy period of time (4 hours +), some form of joint emergency command structure be established to ensure planning, decisions, logistics and communication be managed effectively by all agencies**
- **Better communication with the public. We can make better use of the overhead highway signs, have quicker postings on Drive BC and make better use of local radio stations, including the Ministry of Highways radio station**
- **Faster approvals to remove debris from the highway**
- **Extend the time traffic management personnel remain on the scene to help move traffic. When traffic is backed up for 20-30 miles, it takes a long time for the traffic to clear through the traffic lights on the Trans-Canada in Revelstoke and contributes to unsafe driving conditions**

4. HIGHWAY RESCUE SERVICES

The Province at some point is going to have to look at Highway Rescue Services. Volunteers are attending horrific accident scenes, and we are concerned that we will not be able to replace these people when they have been to one too many scenes.

It is also a concern that frequent accident sites are often in high risk avalanche paths, which is a safety concern for rescue services, placing them in a dangerous situation.