

July 6th, 2025

**To: Christina Lake Tourism Society,
Christina Lake Trail Alliance,
Christina Gateway Community Development Association,
Regional District of Kootenay Boundary – Area C**

RE: Support for Restoration and Continued Access to the Columbia Western Rail Trail

Dear Partners and Community Leaders,

On behalf of the BC Powersports Dealers Association (BCPDA), we are writing to express our strong support for your efforts to restore and protect access to the Columbia Western Rail Trail (CWRT). We commend your leadership in raising public awareness and calling for coordinated provincial stewardship of this critical recreational and tourism asset.

The 67-kilometre section of the CWRT between Castlegar and Christina Lake, previously designated as a recreation trail, has long served as an important route for outdoor recreation, active transportation, and tourism-based economic development. The decision to disestablish this section in 2020, and the Province's recent move to downgrade it to "wilderness status" without proper consultation or planning, is concerning.

We share your view that **this is not stewardship—it is abandonment**. Trail infrastructure of this scale and significance should not be left without funding, maintenance, or oversight. It is unacceptable that rural communities are asked to promote regional tourism while the foundational infrastructure that supports it is neglected or quietly removed.

While we recognize the CWRT's complexity as a multi-use corridor shared by recreational users and industrial stakeholders, this diversity only strengthens the case for strategic investment and collaborative management—not deactivation. The CWRT, like the Othello Tunnels, deserves transparent planning, engineering assessments, and a coordinated restoration approach that reflects its historic and economic value.

As an organization that represents BC's powersports dealers and champions responsible off-road recreation, we believe continued public access to the CWRT is essential. Our members, many of whom operate in the Kootenay region, depend on a reliable trail network that supports local tourism, safe recreation, and economic sustainability.

We respectfully urge the Province of British Columbia to:

- Reaffirm its commitment to maintaining public access on the Columbia Western Rail Trail;
- Provide the necessary investment to assess and remediate high-risk structures;

- Engage with local governments, trail organizations, tourism operators, and recreational users to develop a coordinated long-term management plan;
- Ensure transparent communication and public involvement in future decisions.

The Columbia Western Rail Trail is a legacy asset that belongs to all British Columbians. It must not be lost to neglect or unilateral decisions that ignore the promises made to communities in 2019. The BC Powersports Dealers Association stands with Christina Lake and its partners in calling for immediate action.

Sincerely,



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