

July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**To:**

The Honourable Ravi Parmar  
Minister of Forests  
PO Box 9049, Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

The Honourable Randene Neill  
Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship  
PO Box 9060, Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

**CC:**

MOF Deputy Ministry, Makenzie Leine  
WLRS Deputy Minister, Lori Halls  
District Manager, Selkirk Resource District  
Director, Authorizations – Kootenay Boundary Region

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**RE: Urgent Need for Stewardship and Restoration of the Columbia Western Rail Trail**

Dear Ministers Parmar & Neill,

On behalf of **Motorcycle Powersports BC**, representing the powersport dealers of BC, I am writing to raise serious concerns regarding the recent developments affecting the **Columbia Western Rail Trail (CWRT)**—specifically the 67-kilometre section between Castlegar and Christina Lake that was disestablished in 2019 and has since been downgraded to “wilderness status.”

The trail, once managed under the Recreation Sites and Trails BC (RSTBC) network, is now without maintenance funding, oversight, or a clear management plan. Signage currently being installed along the corridor warns of trestle instability, rockfall hazards, and structural degradation—while public use continues with minimal communication or transparency.

We view this not as passive risk management, but as active **disinvestment in rural infrastructure**. In 2019, provincial authorities assured stakeholders that recreational access to this corridor would not be affected by the administrative change. These commitments have not been upheld.

The CWRT is a vital part of BC’s outdoor recreation economy. It supports motorized and non-motorized use, tourism, and heritage values across multiple regions. Our dealers, members, and partner organizations rely on interconnected trail systems to sustain local business, enhance community well-being, and attract visitors to rural British Columbia. The current status of this trail undermines all of these goals.

We are calling on your ministries to:

1. **Reaffirm provincial commitment to recreational access on the CWRT**, particularly the section between Castlegar and Christina Lake;
2. **Undertake detailed engineering and geotechnical assessments** of critical structures such as trestles and tunnels;
3. **Engage in formal consultation with local governments, tourism organizations, and recreation stakeholders** to develop a collaborative management and funding strategy;
4. **Provide interim safety and trail infrastructure support**, including funding for signage, maintenance, and user education while long-term planning is underway.

As demonstrated with the Othello Tunnels in Coquihalla Canyon Provincial Park, the Province has the capacity to respond decisively and transparently when critical recreational infrastructure is at risk. We urge you to extend the same level of stewardship to the Columbia Western Rail Trail.

Rural communities should not bear the burden of defending and maintaining provincial assets on their own. The BC Powersports Dealers Association stands ready to assist in convening stakeholders, supporting responsible trail use, and contributing to the long-term vision for multi-use access across British Columbia.

We respectfully request a response outlining the next steps your ministries intend to take. Please do not hesitate to contact us directly to discuss opportunities for collaboration.

Sincerely,



**Kristin Parsons**

Executive Director

**Motorcycle Powersports BC**

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