

Re: Economic & Industry Impacts of Proposed Kettle Valley Rail Trail Deactivation

Date: February 19, 2026

Daniel Scott
A/ Director, Trails and Trail Infrastructure
Ministry of Environment & Parks

Via email: KVR.Trail@gov.bc.ca

Dear Mr. Scott,

On behalf of the **BC Powersports Dealers Association (BCPDA)**, representing powersports dealers and service providers across British Columbia, we are writing to express serious concern regarding the proposed permanent deactivation of a 67-kilometre section of the Kettle Valley Rail Trail between Princeton and the Coldwater River.

While the KVR is widely recognized as a recreational asset, it is equally important economic infrastructure supporting tourism, rural commerce, and the powersports industry that serves British Columbians and visitors alike.

Economic Role of Recreation Access

Outdoor recreation and powersports activity are significant economic drivers in British Columbia, particularly in rural and resource-based communities.

Recent provincial research indicates that ATV and side-by-side recreation generates approximately:

- **\$808 million in annual economic output**
- **\$430 million in GDP contribution**
- **thousands of jobs across rural communities**

Snowmobiling provides additional winter economic impact, contributing approximately:

- **\$299 million annually to the provincial economy**
- **over 4,000 jobs across BC**
- significant winter tourism revenue supporting rural businesses

These recreation activities sustain year-round economic activity through spending on:

- accommodations and cabin rentals
- fuel and transportation
- restaurants and groceries
- retail and repair services

- equipment sales and servicing
- guiding, tours, and safety training

Communities such as Tulameen, Coalmont, and Princeton rely on this four-season recreation economy. The KVR corridor is a central access route that enables both motorized and non-motorized recreation, supporting tourism visitation and local business sustainability.

When access corridors are removed, recreation travel declines — and with it, the economic activity that sustains rural communities and small businesses.

Impact on Rural Communities & Tourism

The KVR corridor serves as a gateway to the Similkameen region and surrounding backcountry recreation areas. Communities such as Tulameen, Coalmont, and Princeton rely on visitor traffic generated by recreation access.

Trail users contribute to local economies through:

- accommodations and cabin rentals
- restaurants and grocery stores
- fuel and transportation services
- repair services and retail purchases

Loss of accessible recreation infrastructure risks reducing visitation and undermining efforts to diversify rural economies through tourism and outdoor recreation.

Accessibility & Safety Considerations

The KVRT provides one of the few safe, low-grade corridors suitable for:

- families and new riders
- seniors and mobility-limited users
- guided tours and training programs
- safe travel between staging areas

Removing this corridor may force users onto steeper, more hazardous routes or eliminate access entirely for some demographics.

Industry Stability & Workforce Impacts

Powersports dealers employ technicians, service staff, and retail workers in communities across British Columbia. Recreation access supports the sustainability of these jobs and the small businesses that provide them.

Uncertainty and reduction in trail access can influence consumer confidence, reduce equipment purchases, and impact the long-term stability of businesses serving recreation users.

Consultation & Transparency

We understand the decision was based on technical assessments and stakeholder engagement. However, we are concerned that the dealer business community and broader recreation industry were not included in consultation despite the direct economic impacts.

We respectfully request:

- access to technical and economic analyses supporting the decision,
- clarity on consultation undertaken with industry and tourism stakeholders, and
- evaluation of alternatives that preserve connectivity and access where feasible.

Funding & Restoration Considerations

We also request transparency regarding the funding sources for the proposed deactivation and whether restoration or partial restoration options were evaluated in the context of disaster recovery funding.

If federal disaster recovery funding is available, stakeholders deserve clarity on whether repair options were fully considered.

Alignment with Community & Regional Stakeholders

BCPDA's concerns are aligned with those expressed by the Quad Riders ATV Association of BC (ATVBC), local recreation clubs, tourism stakeholders, local governments, and MLA Donegal Wilson.

These groups have raised similar concerns regarding:

- lack of stakeholder consultation and transparency,
- potential economic impacts to rural communities,
- loss of safe and accessible recreation routes, and
- long-term consequences for tourism and regional sustainability.

The breadth of concern across recreation organizations, elected officials, local governments, and the business community underscores the importance of ensuring decisions of this magnitude are made transparently, collaboratively, and with full consideration of long-term regional impacts.

BCPDA supports a coordinated, solutions-focused approach that includes all affected stakeholders.

Request for Pause & Industry Engagement

Given the long-term economic implications, BCPDA respectfully supports a pause on implementation until stakeholders — including the recreation and tourism business community — are meaningfully engaged.

We remain committed to working collaboratively with government and partners to identify solutions that balance safety, environmental responsibility, and sustainable economic development.

We are requesting a meeting with all appropriate stakeholders and government to be held at your earliest opportunity to address our concerns and a path forward.

Sincerely,



Mike Skiba

Chair

BC Powersports Dealers Association

cc:

BC Powersports Dealers – Board of Directors

MP Helana Konanz, Similkameen-South Okanagan-West Kootenay helena.konanz@parl.gc.ca

Honourable Anne Kang, Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport TACS.minister@gov.bc.ca

Honourable Tamara Davidson, Minister of Parks and Environment ENV.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Honourable Brittny Anderson, Minister of State for Local Government & Rural Communities

mnp.minister@gov.bc.ca

Honourable Rechie Valdez, Minister of Women and Gender Equity and Secretary of State for Small

Business and Tourism (Canada) Minister-Ministre@wage-fegc.gc.ca

MLA Donegal Wilson, MLA Boundary-Similkameen, Opposition Critic for Water, Lands, Natural Resource Stewardship, and Wildlife donegal.wilson.mla@leg.bc.ca

Mayor Spencer Coyne, Town of Princeton, scoyne@princeton.ca

Chair Mark Pendergraft, Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen mpendergraft@rdos.bc.ca

Director Bob Coyne, Area H Representative, Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen

bcoyne@rdos.bc.ca

Mark Koch, Managing Director – Community and Environmental Services, Regional District

Okanagan-Similkameen mkoch@rdos.bc.ca

Chair Tim Roberts, Similkameen Valley Planning Society svplanningsociety@gmail.com

Mathieu Roy, CEO Trans Canada Trail mroy@tctrail.ca

Ellen Walker-Mathews, CEO Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association ceo@totabc.ca

Joyce Edwards, President, Princeton & District Chamber of Commerce

princetonchamber@gmail.com

Kevin Pearce, Executive Director Visit Penticton kevin@visitpenticton.com

Destination Summerland visitors@summerlandchamber.com

Sarah Sinclair, Executive Director BC Rural Centre sarah@bcruralcentre.org

Tim Bennett, District Recreation Officer, Cascades Recreation District, tim.bennett@gov.bc.ca

Rachelle Chartrand, Centre BC, rachellechartrand@gmail.com

Louise Pedersen, Executive Director, Outdoor Recreation Council of BC, louisepedersen@orc.bc.ca

Chris D'Silva, President, ATVBC Quad Riders Association of BC chris.dsilva@atvbc.ca

Mardi Hassell, President, Tulameen Community Club mhassell@tulameenbc.com

Amber Lane, Executive Director, BC Snowmobile Federation, alane@bcspf.org

Peter Sprague, Executive Director, BC Off-Road Motorcycle Association, peter.sprague@bcorma.ca

Tanner Sulentich, President, Timberline Cruisers Snowmobile Club

timberlinecruisers96@gmail.com

Kelly Reichert, President, Timberline Cruisers ATV Club, otterrock@icloud.com

Mat Selzler, President, Merritt Snowmobile Club, merrittsnowmobileclub@hotmail.ca

Warren Mirko, Public Land Use Society, warren.mirko@publiclanduse.ca

Kristen Gabora, Trans-Canada Trail, kgabora@tctrail.ca