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BY EMAIL ONLY (FIN.Minister@gov.bc.ca)

The Honourable Brenda Bailey, M.L.A.
Minister of Finance

Dear Minister:

RE: Establishing a Sustainable Provincial Funding Model for Search and Rescue

On behalf of the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District Board of Directors, I am writing to request that the Province work in partnership with the BC Search and Rescue Association (SAR) and local governments to establish a stable, long-term funding model for search and rescue services.

Search and rescue is a provincially mandated and essential public safety service. Across British Columbia, 78 groups and approximately 3,200 volunteers provide 24/7 emergency response, often in high-risk environments and frequently at personal cost. Despite this critical role, SAR does not receive secure provincial operating funding. For more than two decades, local governments have called through the Union of BC Municipalities for a sustainable funding solution. Continued reliance on property taxation is inequitable and unsustainable as service demands grow.

We support a transparent, metrics-based provincial funding model tied to operational needs such as call volume, training standards, equipment lifecycle, and volunteer readiness. We also request that the Province increase the BC Volunteer First Responder Tax Credit to match the federal exemption to strengthen recruitment, retention, and recognition of volunteers.

We urge the Province to take action to ensure search and rescue services remain strong, equitable, and sustainable across British Columbia.

Regards,

Jen Ford
Chair, Squamish-Lillooet Regional District

CC: SLRD Board
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