

Honourable George Heyman
Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
Parliament Buildings
Victoria B.C. V8V 1X4

July 13, 2020

Re: Reopening Garibaldi Provincial Park

Dear Minister Heyman,

I am writing this letter to express our concern over the continued closure of Garibaldi Provincial Park.

The Squamish Chamber of Commerce (SCC) is the oldest and largest business organization in the Squamish community. We are dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in Squamish by actively supporting business, economic growth and economic diversification.

With British Columbia's restart plan well into Phase 3 and many businesses/operators back in business, including movie theatres, retail stores, restaurants/pubs and other places people gather, it should go without saying that a park as large as Garibaldi Provincial Park, at 1,950 square kilometers, including 90 kilometers of formal trails as well as countless places to wander, could and should be open for use.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism and recreation businesses utilized Garibaldi Provincial Park, bringing valuable tourism spending to our community. A recent tourism impact study (a partnership between the Squamish Chamber, Tourism Squamish and the District of Squamish) estimated that in 2018, the Squamish tourism sector supported nearly 800 jobs and generated \$95.2 million in visitor spending.

The businesses operating in Garibaldi Provincial Park offer a range of services, including guiding, tours, shuttles and various adventure activities. Guests previously included international visitors, adventure seekers, weddings, corporate events and festival attendees. While many of these customers will not return this summer due to travel and group size restrictions, there remains an opportunity to serve some outdoor adventure and recreation guests. However, the continued closure of Garibaldi Provincial Park is unnecessarily limiting the opportunity to operate.

The wide-open space of Garibaldi Park naturally, easily and obviously supports any recommended physical distancing measures. British Columbians are being encouraged by the Provincial Health Officer to safely enjoy outdoor spaces and naturally the entire Sea to Sky Corridor is seeing increased visitation, particularly on weekends. As a result, the wide-open spaces of Garibaldi Provincial Park are needed as it will help disperse visitors and locals out into large spaces, thus reducing any risk of overcrowding.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Summer 2020 presents our local businesses with a very short window to try and help their businesses stay afloat until 2021. Reopening Garibaldi Provincial Park would create increased opportunities for fewer faces and wide-open spaces, while allowing struggling businesses to operate, albeit in very different circumstances. Now is not the time to create unnecessary barriers for businesses.

I look forward to an update from you as to when the public can expect the reopening of Garibaldi Provincial Park.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Louise Walker".

Louise Walker
Executive Director
Squamish Chamber of Commerce

- c.c. Honourable John Horgan, Premier
- c.c. Honorable Lisa Beare, Minister Tourism, Arts & Culture
- c.c. Jordan Sturdy, MLA, West Vancouver – Sea to Sky
- c.c. Deanna Lewis, Squamish Nation
- c.c. Mayor Karen Elliott, District of Squamish