

February 23, 2022

Greg J. Nichols
Vice President, Transit, PW Transit

Erinn Pinkerton
President & CEO, BC Transit Ltd

Jerry Dias
National President, UNIFOR

Re: Unifor Union Strick – BC Transit / PW Transit

Dear Mr Nichols, Ms Pinkerton and Mr Dias,

The Squamish Chamber of Commerce (SCC) is the oldest and largest business organization in the Squamish community, representing nearly 600 members. We are dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in Squamish by actively supporting business, economic growth and economic diversification.

The recently released Canada Census 2021 data indicated that Squamish's population increased by 22% between 2016 and 2021. With this has come a development boom that includes a high number of location-locked service industry jobs. One in four (25%) of the Squamish workforce is employed in sales and service occupations, with a further 5% employed in art, culture, recreation and sport (National Occupational Classification, 2016). Many of these workers rely on public transit to get to their place of employment and in their day-to-day lives. Over the past 20+ days of the transit strike the essential nature of the service that Squamish/BC Transit provides has come into stark focus.

The Squamish Chamber works closely with the business community. In the last 12 months, over two thirds of our members have faced challenges recruiting and retaining staff. The local transit strike represents yet another strain for businesses already enduring labour challenges and the restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Service sector workers struggling with the high cost of living in Squamish are now faced with the option of up to a daily \$50 taxi charge or walking along roadways and finding hazardous methods to get where they need to be. Businesses already short staffed by COVID-19 and affordability challenges, now cannot be sure that those workers will be able to make it into work. The social and economic strain on our community cannot be understated.

We are pleased to hear that contract negotiations will resume this week and encourage a resolution that is satisfactory to all. We look forward to a positive outcome and an expeditious return of local transit service to the District of Squamish.

Thank you for your consideration.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Sincerely,

Annabel (Abby) Abby Majendie
President, Squamish Chamber of Commerce

CC:

Honorable Harry Bains, Minister of Labour
Honorable Rob Fleming, Minister of Transportation & Infrastructure
Her Worship, Mayor Karen Elliot, District of Squamish
Hon. Jordan Sturdy, MLA West Vancouver - Sea to Sky
Rob Ringma, Senior Manager, Government Relations, BC Transit
Tom Jezersek, President & COO, Pacific Western Transportation
Michael Colborne, Chairman & CEO, Pacific Western Transportation
Gavin McGarrigle, Western Regional Director, UNIFOR