

April 29, 2022

Michael Colborne, Chair and CEO, Pacific Western Group
Tom Jezersek, President and COO, Pacific Western Group
Greg Nichols, Vice President Transit, Pacific Western Group

Chris MacDonald, Assistant to the President, UNIFOR
Gavin Davies, National Representative, UNIFOR
Gavin McGarrigle, Western Regional Director, UNIFOR

Re: Sea to Sky Transit Strike

Dear Messrs. McGarrigle, MacDonald, Davies, Colborne, Jezersek and Nichols:

Pursuant to Mayor Elliott's letter of March 18, 2022, and six weeks further into a labour impasse that is now reaching the three-month mark, we are writing again to express our deep frustration and disappointment at your inability to reach a settlement. The sacrificing of our communities to negotiating agendas that do not involve us is unforgivable, and we **implore you once again to get back to the bargaining table**. Please assign the individuals who facilitated progress on this back in March, to a negotiating table in British Columbia to bring this to a conclusion.

Below is yet another small sample of how this strike is affecting our communities:

Local business owner: "I am greatly concerned about the safety and welfare of my staff who no longer have secure routes home. We are a 24/7 operation and require employees to safely come and go from the hotel for various shifts at various hours, many cannot afford their own car and rely on public transit. When there is no public transit and not enough taxis in town, it forces employees into unsafe situations. This is the result of the strike, endangering lives of locals and visitors!"

This strike is hurting business, but worse, it's hurting local people, the people who need you the most and you are letting them down...the fact that this strike has lasted this long is a disgrace on ALL sides! We are supposed to be improving lives and making greener choices and doing better, this strike is doing the exact opposite. How long will it last? There is a clear need to work harder to find solutions! Please find solutions to the issues at hand, as local people are suffering and the responsibility is yours!"

Community Futures Howe Sound: "Businesses are still recovering from the pandemic and this added complication is making currently tough situations even harder. Workers already struggling with the high

cost of living in Squamish are now faced with the choice of a daily taxi charge, walking along roadways without sidewalks or finding potentially hazardous methods to get where they need to be.

The last two years have brought unprecedented challenges to small businesses. At a time when we should be focusing on recovery, we are instead facing increased social and economic strain because of no public transit. Crucially, the lack of public transit is disproportionately affecting the same businesses and employees who faced significant pressures during the pandemic."

Local residents: "I would like to spend my money and support some businesses in town but the lack of public transit makes that difficult. Not to mention the spike in gas prices... we are constantly told by the provincial government to just take transit instead... well I'd love to but there's no transit in town. On top of that a lack of transit is completely counter-intuitive to Squamish's commitment to sustainability."

"I am a mom of a 13 and an 11 year-old and I haven't been able to drive since November, due to a seizure. Getting my kids and myself around the first couple of months wasn't bad, because we were able to rely on transit. The last 3 months have been incredibly stressful, having to rely on the kindness of friends, since the taxis here in town are unpredictable in their wait times, making them difficult (and expensive!) to use regularly."

"We need to give the drivers what they want, or bring in an alternative transit system somehow, even if it involves scabs. Clearly these negotiations are going nowhere. I'm not interested in hearing the usual talking points or the blame game. Just take some action, please."

These comments reflect the people and business who are relying on you to get buses back on the road. When you are not at the negotiating table and bargaining in good faith, you are **failing our community members – their safety, their livelihoods, their independence and their mobility.**

Please, get back to the table and reach an agreement, as has been shown possible in Kamloops, Campbell River and the Comox Valley. We repeat, the longer this goes on, the more suffering is caused, and you are all responsible.

Sincerely,



Mayor Karen Elliott,
District of Squamish



Mayor Jack Crompton,
Resort Municipality of
Whistler



Mayor Mike Richman,
Village of Pemberton

Copies to:

The Honourable Harry Bains, Minister of Labour

The Honourable Rob Fleming, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure

Erinn Pinkerton, CEO BC Transit

MLA Jordan Sturdy, West Vancouver Sea-to-Sky