

Johnston, Cole EMBC:EX

From: PSSG Correspondence PSSG:EX
Sent: July 29, 2021 16:09
To: 'Bill.Blair@parl.gc.ca'
Subject: File no. 622192
Attachments: 622192 response.pdf

Dear Minister Blair:

Please find the attached letter from the Honourable Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General.



VIA EMAIL

Ref. 622192

July 29, 2021

The Honourable Bill Blair, PC, COM, MP
Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6
Email: Bill.Blair@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister Blair:

Re: Request for federal assistance under Public Safety Canada's Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA)

Beginning June 30, 2021, the Province of British Columbia began experiencing a significant increase in wildfire activity which resulted in an evacuation order for the Lytton area.

A provincial state of emergency was declared July 21, 2021 and remains in effect.

Since April 1, 2021, there have been 1,251 wildfires in the province, which have burned over 452,958 hectares. There are currently 247 wildfires burning, 37 of which are in the interface between rural and urban areas and placing communities at risk. There are currently 62 evacuation orders impacting over 3,443 properties and 87 evacuation alerts covering over 17,679 properties. The extended weather forecast calls for continued hot and dry conditions into the foreseeable future.

The cost of responding to and recovering from this disaster has placed an unexpected and significant burden on the provincial economy. Preliminary damage estimates indicate that direct costs to the Province to respond to and recover from this disaster will exceed \$1.7 billion, with at least \$1.7 billion of this being eligible for DFAA as follows:

s.17

- fighting wildfires that placed communities at risk
- to-date community support for evacuees and re-entry
- to-date costs of staffing and operating local, regional, and provincial Emergency Operations Centres

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It is still far too early for our staff to estimate the eligible recovery costs for this event for provincial infrastructure including range fencing, culverts, cattle guards, campground facilities, bridges, and road surfaces, but these will also likely be in the \$s.¹⁷

To facilitate British Columbia's recovery from this disaster, I request that the Government of Canada provide financial assistance as enabled under the Disaster Financial Assistance Agreement.

BC will be formally requesting DFAA when the disaster end date is known. In the meantime, to facilitate British Columbia's recovery from this disaster, I respectfully request that the Government of Canada provide an advance of \$s.¹⁷ as enabled under Section 2.8 of Public Safety Canada's Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements.

BC appreciates the ongoing support federal officials have provided in response this devastating wildfire season.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Mike Farnworth", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mike Farnworth
Minister of Public Safety
and Solicitor General

Johnston, Cole EMBC:EX

From: PSSG Correspondence PSSG:EX
Sent: July 29, 2021 15:50
To: 'Bill.Blair@parl.gc.ca'
Subject: 622086 Response
Attachments: 622086 Response.pdf; 622086 - Attachment - Enclosed Map.pdf

Dear Minister Blair:

Sending on behalf of The Honourable Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General



VIA EMAIL

Ref. 622086

July 29, 2021

The Honourable Bill Blair, PC, COM, MP
Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6
Email: Bill.Blair@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister Blair:

Re: Request for federal assistance under Public Safety Canada's Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA)

Beginning in March 2020, the Cariboo Region of British Columbia began experiencing an extended period of high-water table landslide disasters that have resulted in 428 damaged sites to date, primarily as a result of landslide. The extended nature of this event is a result of a combination of high precipitation and rapid snow melt in areas that are predominantly deforested from past wildfires including the devastating 2017 wildfires which caused widespread damage.

Some of the hardest-hit communities within the Cariboo Regional District include the cities of Quesnel and Williams Lake. Despite very few homes being directly affected, this event has done extensive damage to public infrastructure and impacted access to communities.

The unusual coalescing of conditions that have resulted in these catastrophic damages have compounded to the point where the initial damages started occurring in the spring of 2020 primarily in the Soda Creek and Quesnel Hydraulic areas and then, because the normal drawdown of the water table did not occur during the summer period, a second impact of significant landslides occurred in fall of 2020 especially in the Kersey-Dale and Cottonwood areas. As the conditions remained through the winter months, when 2021 spring run-off occurred, a third set of landslides and damages occurred during the spring (please see enclosed map).

The cost of responding to and recovering from this disaster has placed an unexpected and significant burden on the provincial economy. Preliminary damage estimates indicate that direct costs to the Province from this event is approximately^{s.17}

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The initial cost breakdown is as follows:

- s.17 local government and provincial response costs
- local government recovery costs
- s.17 provincial government infrastructure recovery costs

To facilitate British Columbia's recovery from this disaster, I respectfully request that the Government of Canada provide assistance as enabled under the Disaster Financial Assistance Agreement (DFAA).

The unusual circumstances resulting in this request, as well as a request regarding what potentially could be the most devastating wildfire season on record, demonstrates further the significant increase in the frequency and magnitude of natural disasters and our ability to build resilience for our future. To this end, you may be aware British Columbia is working towards an update to its emergency management legislation and associated programming to incorporate the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and reflect the changing response and recovery needs of British Columbians.

In closing, provincial staff have passed along to me the excellent support federal officials have provided on the applicability of DFAA to this landslide event in the Cariboo Region.

I too want to express my sincere appreciation for your attention to the wildfire situation in British Columbia.

Sincerely,



Mike Farnworth
Minister of Public Safety
and Solicitor General

Attachment: Map of Landslide and damaged areas

Appendix 1 – Map of Landslide and damaged areas

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