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Subject: Bill 15 info

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Good afternoon,

I hope that this email finds you well. I was excited to tune into last week's school board meeting via zoom. It was great to see and hear the PAC member expressing gratitude for the current board's spirit of transparency, openness, and collaboration.

One thing that I noted was that one of the trustees had mentioned enthusiasm for new Legislation that Minister Ma had explained would build schools faster. While that would be amazing, and I would certainly embrace building schools faster, I felt compelled to follow up on this matter and to present the point of view of the Official Opposition and one of your own MLAs. Please note that many other bodies and organizations also have serious concerns over Bill 15.

Please read the Press release attached. Please note the endorsements at the end as well as the quotes from the Green Party, Indigenous leaders, and UBCM.

Thank you so much for your time and I hope this helps to clarify some important and concerning points on this bill.

Kristina Loewen
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For Immediate Release

May 15, 2025

Lack of First Nations Engagement, Environmental Oversight, Bypassing Local Government on Bill 15

I won't mince words. This Provincial NDP Government is out of control.

Here we are again, looking at a piece of legislation before the house in Victoria which gives this government too much power. They absolutely despise the official opposition, even though we've brought forward several logical pieces of legislation, and have asked the difficult questions required in a parliamentary system. Their preference is to sideline the debate and push forward legislation which they see as the only sensible path forward. This, my friends is not what a healthy democracy looks like.

My role as MLA is to be a representative for all constituents, and to advocate for what's right in rural communities here in CR-R. I have to say with urgency, that Bill 15 which the government has recently brought forward is another attempt at bypassing governmental due process, enables government favoritism, lacks consultation with Indigenous leadership, lacks clarity around rural vs urban infrastructure priorities, and eliminates environmental oversight.

Here's a snapshot of what Bill 15 would allow:

- **Cabinet can rewrite zoning bylaws, override regulators, and sideline local councils—without a single public meeting.**
- **Indigenous consultation is 'protected' in theory—but compressed timelines and cut-corners make consent impossible in practice.**
- **Every major NDP-led project is already over budget and behind schedule. This bill gives the same group more power and fewer rules.**
- **Allows Premier and Cabinet to hand-pick projects of provincial significance. Do you think this will play in favor of our local communities who need major housing and infrastructure (such as wastewater treatment) upgrades? Or do you think this will prioritize projects west of Hope?**

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This government has attempted to essentially seize ultimate power in the legislature previously with Bill 7. They now have 3 pieces of legislation before the house which are confidence votes-meaning if they don't pass-we're off to another provincial election. I certainly don't want to appear as though I'm the only one voicing concern about this legislation. Below are several public comments made by prominent individuals which are important to highlight:

"Bill 15 is not about streamlining. It's about centralizing power in the Premier's office...Premier Eby is acting like he has the overwhelming majority he inherited. Tsartlip First Nation reminds Mr. Eby that he currently only has a one-seat majority, and he as a leader was barely able to get his team across the line in the provincial election last fall...This bill sidelines constitutionally protected Aboriginal rights and title, and the Crown's duty to consult with First Nations". -Chief Dom Tom Tsartlip First Nation. Vice President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs.

"Bill 15, in its current form, grants the NDP cabinet sweeping powers to bypass environmental assessment, municipal authorities, and the jurisdiction of First Nations under the guise of fast-tracking major infrastructure projects," -Jermei Valeriot, Interim Leader BC Green Party.

"Over the past couple of years, we have seen the province changing the priorities in how they approach legislation, and in some cases, ideas that are developed at a political level have been rushed into law without appropriate and meaningful consultation with stakeholders," - Union of BC Municipalities President, Trish Mandewo.

As you can clearly see, opposition at an attempted power grab by this government is far-reaching and significant. Sadly, the Premier's response has been: "The bill is going ahead". The government forced closure last week in the Legislature. Simply, that means in two weeks when the spring session concludes, debate is over, and these bills will pass. An autocratic move if you ask me.

I want to work with the government on collaborative, sensible solutions to get this province moving in the right direction. We are in the midst of several crises simultaneously which require all parties, at all levels of government, to band together to find solutions. I am in favor of moving forward quickly on projects that will help build critical infrastructure and those which will pay for the services we all want and need. I am vehemently opposed however to a one-voice-for-all approach that this government is seeking. Where has this urgency been the past 8 years they have been in government?

We need a process that works for everyone. What Bill 15 seeks is to give the NDP government free rein in picking the projects it sees as important. It allows them to build what it deems to be critical infrastructure without question. It sidelines debate and conversation around who is involved and at what cost. This my friends is not democracy, it is overreach.

Thank you,



Scott McInnis

MLA-Columbia River-Revelstoke.

Endorsed By:

Cheryl Casimer – Chief-Aq'am Band

Barb Cote – Chief-Shuswap Band

Mike Gray – Mayor-Radium Hot Springs

Al Miller – Mayor-District of Invermere

Don McCormick – Mayor- City of Kimberley

Mark Doherty – Mayor-Canal Flats

Gary Sulz – Mayor-Revelstoke

Matt Cherry – Councilor-Revelstoke

Tim Stapenhurst – Councilor-Revelstoke

Rob Gay – Director-Regional District of East Kootenay Area C

Susan Clovechok – Director- Regional District of East Kootenay Area F