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Date: April 9, 2020 at 5:00:18 PM PDT
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Cc: "gvrdeu@telus.net" <gvrdeu@telus.net>, Karlene Bateman
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Subject: COVID-19 Weekly Update – April 9th

Dear Staff,

Today marks exactly four weeks since the pandemic response really started to escalate in our region, and country.

I know that for many of you, including me, it feels like at least a hundred weeks have passed. I continue to be so appreciative of your collective response – those of you in the field and on the frontlines, and all of you working to support those efforts at the plants and housing sites and labs and various work locations and offices.

Also, for those of you working from home, I understand things are far from ‘typical’ for ideal remote work, and you’re having to balance many demands currently. I personally tried working from home for the first time last Friday. I was on my laptop and phone surrounded by a full house – my son, my daughter, her boyfriend, (who seems to have moved in), my wife (a teacher librarian), my mother, who lives with us, our ‘mature’ dog, a new puppy, two gerbils (courtesy of the school library), two squealing guinea pigs, (again, the school), and... Needless to say, on Monday, I was back at 4730 Kingsway - for me, it’s definitely easier to be in the office!!!!

Here are a few updates for this week, regarding our ongoing COVID-19 response.

COVID-19 Task Force As mentioned last week, our Chair has launched the start of a COVID-19 Task Force, consisting of all mayors and leaders of our 23 member jurisdictions. The first meeting was held yesterday. In that meeting, I provided an overview of our work at MV and associated impacts related to COVID-19, as well as our response, and all the work you are doing to ensure continuity. I also advised as to how we are both similar and yet also different from our member municipalities, as referenced in my email last week. The Task Force spoke quite a bit about the need for understanding each other's unique circumstances, and also having regional coordination for conversations with provincial and federal governments about next steps and how we are going to support the rebuilding of our economy subsequent to this event. Overall, it was a very positive meeting, and while there are many more conversations ahead, I am appreciative of the commitment our mayors are showing regarding the well-being of our region.

Metro Vancouver Parks and LSCR Many of you will have heard that BC Parks closed the vast network of provincial parks, effective yesterday. We continue to work proactively to keep the majority of our parks, and the LSCR, open. We have more than doubled our efforts around increased signage, added traffic control and our staff are also working tirelessly to promote physical distancing with visitors. We recognize that spending time in nature is an effective way to reduce stress and to support physical and mental well-being. For some parks, our municipalities are grappling with increased traffic, neighbourhood parking issues and perceived safety concerns as visitation to our parks continues to increase. We are monitoring this closely and will look at individual parks as required. As of today, we have temporarily closed 4 of our 20+ parks, including Barnston Island Regional Park, Brae Island Regional Park, Boundary Bay Regional Park, and Deas Island Regional Park. Parking lots have been closed at the LSCR and Lynn Headwaters Regional Park. We are supporting communication for people to walk and cycle to their local parks, and avoid travelling to destination parks. Our goal is to continue to provide the regional parks service that is so important to so many in our region.

Hand Sanitizer and Safety Products I want to assure you that having an adequate and sustained supply of hand sanitizer, and other products and equipment to keep staff safe, is my utmost priority. We currently have several months supply of hand sanitizer, and we continue to source more product to remain well stocked. We are also ensuring adequate supply of personal protective equipment and supplies. We continue to follow the direction of the Provincial Health Officer and should we receive new direction relating to additional measures or recommendations, we will adapt accordingly.

Job Security and Workforce Agreements We have been in discussions with representatives from the GVRDEU and Teamsters Local 31 this week regarding the type of flexibility that will be required to keep as many of our staff working as possible; our goal is to reach an agreement to this effect as soon as possible. We will share more about what this involves as soon as we are able. Both the GVRDEU and Teamsters Local 31 have advised they are committed to working collaboratively with us to find flexible solutions to address the difficult and unprecedented issues presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. We are appreciative of both unions and staff in sharing this common goal – to keep our staff working as much as possible. I want us working throughout and ready to provide our critical services for the health of our region.

Staff Health Staff absences remain only slightly higher than the same time period last year. We continue to have no confirmed cases of COVID-19 reported amongst Metro Vancouver staff; we do, however, have at least one unconfirmed but probable case. As an organization, our approach to date on requiring staff to self-isolate is exceptionally cautious; this has been to ensure the health and safety of our teams. Our Human Resources team has been working diligently to follow up and check in with staff that are off work for reasons relating to the current pandemic, whether that be for illness or self-isolation due to contact or travel; we want to ensure everyone is okay under the circumstances. I commend all of you for your ongoing commitment to ensuring physical distancing measures and other safety protocols are

strictly adhered to; our diligence in this regard will go a long way to ensuring the safety of one another and our families.

This Coming Weekend For staff that are working this weekend, at a park, a plant, in the field, at a housing site or other, thank you for your service over the long weekend. We know it will be a busy one for those of you interacting with the public in our Parks and the LSCR; you are ambassadors for MV and I know you will do us all proud.

To those of you not working, please take time to rest. We have more to do, and your resiliency will be critical. Please also take some time to reflect on our collective efforts, and how our organization, region and world is coming together to navigate as best we can during this crisis. And I'll listen out for you at the daily 7pm show of appreciation - I'll be cheering alongside.

Together we make our region strong.

*Thank you,
Jerry*

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Commissioner/Chief Administrative Officer

