

August 4, 2020

Honorable John Horgan  
Office of the Premier  
PO Box 9041 STN PROV GOVT  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E1

Email: premier@gov.bc.ca

Dear Premier Horgan;

**Re: Strengthening COVID-19 Measures**

The First Nations of Gitga'at, Gitxaala, Kitselas, Kitsumkalum, Lax Kw'alaams, and Metlakatla urge your government to consider stronger measures to protect the people of the north coast region. We urge you to restrict travel between provinces to prevent the spread of Covid-19 through non-essential activities such as recreational fishing and other tourism related activities.

Similar to other small coastal communities, our Nations have taken numerous measures to protect our citizens. Strict travel bans, social distancing measures, closure of public buildings, and the suspension of non-essential services are all measures that our Nations have implemented to protect our citizens. North coast First Nations understand the motivation to reopen the economy, as our people have been impacted just as much as other British Columbians. However, now is not the time to rush back towards the 'normalcy' we enjoyed pre-COVID-19. The north coast region has extremely limited health care resources and infrastructure. Communities like Prince Rupert and our remote villages will experience devastating impacts if COVID-19 is spread by unnecessary recreational travel.

Sports fishing on the north coast is very popular amongst visitors from BC urban centres and from many parts of Alberta. Every year thousands of visitors come to Prince Rupert and the north coast region. While the height of tourism season for our region is upon us, we continue with the rest of British Columbia and Canada to stop the spread of COVID-19. Tourism, and more specifically sport fishing, should not be considered an essential activity. The messaging from the BC Provincial Health Officer should discourage people from outside of our region, especially those from other provinces and the United States from visiting our area.

The villages of Hartley Bay, Kitkatla, Lax Kw'alaams, and Metlakatla plus the communities of Kitselas and Kitsumkalum have just recently come out of months of lockdown. Our people rely on the hub city of Prince Rupert for the majority of our services, including activities that contribute to our mental health. Our safety and well being should not be jeopardized by people who reside outside of BC who are just visiting for non-essential reasons. The BC Government must make it clear that travelling from other provinces to participate in recreational fishing and other forms of nature tourism is not acceptable at this time.

Our governments support the majority of the hard decisions you and your team have made and we ask you to strengthen measures to further prevent the risk to remote and rural communities in the north coast region. A response to our request is expected before August 10, 2020. The situation is worsening daily and the possibility of direct actions from our respective First Nation governments is being seriously contemplated. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

UNAVAILABLE  
FOR SIGNING

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Arnold Clifton  
Chief Councillor, Gitga'at Nation  
([wii.hai.waas@gmail.com](mailto:wii.hai.waas@gmail.com))



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Don Roberts  
Chief Councillor, Kitsumkalum Nation  
([drobertstreaty@kitsumkalum.com](mailto:drobertstreaty@kitsumkalum.com))



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Judy Gerow  
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Mayor Gary Reece  
Lax Kw'alaams Band  
([garry\\_reece@laxband.com](mailto:garry_reece@laxband.com))



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Harold Leighton  
Chief Councillor, Metlakatla Nation  
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CC: Jennifer Rice, MLA - North Coast ([jennifer.rice.MLA@leg.bc.ca](mailto:jennifer.rice.MLA@leg.bc.ca))

Sincerely,

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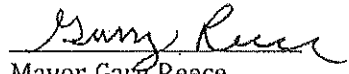
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