



June 17, 2021

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

The Honourable John Horgan
Premier of British Columbia
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E1

Dear Prime Minister and Premier,

Re: Local Channel Dredging in the Lower Fraser River

As elected leaders of our respective communities, we are writing collectively to both levels of senior government to request, as a matter of some urgency, collaborative action to resolve a long-standing problem that impacts all of our communities – Fraser River sediment - and the need for a sustainable dredging program to mitigate the economic, social and environmental impacts that occur when it is allowed to accumulate and block important local waterways.

There is a long and complex backdrop to this issue, involving Vancouver Fraser Port Authority, the Province of BC, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Transport Canada, and the various local harbour authorities and community groups that have formed to advocate for action on dredging. A collaborative effort is required to resolve this issue since jurisdictional responsibility for local channel dredging is unclear; there is no comprehensive plan for maintaining the local channels of the lower Fraser River; and there is no dedicated funding.

In 2013, the cities of Delta and Richmond, the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority (VFPA) and the Province of BC came together in an unprecedented \$10 million collaboration to dredge the secondary channels around Ladner and Steveston. These channels provide access to businesses, marinas, and float home communities, and it is critically important that the channels are maintained in a safe and navigable condition.

The initial dredging effort undertaken in 2014-15 was successful in restoring the local channels to pre-1990 levels. Since then, VFPA has been using residual funding to undertake 'spot' dredging in some of the channels; however, funding is now exhausted and the program is complete.

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In the meantime, the natural sedimentation processes of the Fraser River are continuing and, after this year's freshet, the local channels will have received another significant deposit of sediment. Without further action, we will soon be back to square one and emergency dredging will be needed to address critical situations as they arise.

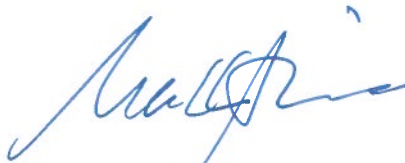
Preliminary estimates of the costs to dredge the priority channels in the lower Fraser River are under \$2 million annually. We recognize the environmental sensitivity around dredging these channels, which are critical habitat for many species of fish, including salmon and sturgeon, and steps must be taken to ensure fish and their habitat are protected to the greatest extent possible.

This issue will not go away and, year over year, it will only get worse. It is time to come together and address this matter once and for all.

Yours truly,



Mayor George V. Harvie
City of Delta



Mayor Malcolm Brodie
City of Richmond



Chief Ken Baird
Tsawwassen First Nation



Chief Wayne Sparrow
Musqueam Indian Band

cc: The Hon. Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion
The Hon. Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation
Ian Paton, MLA Delta South
Robin Silvester, President and Chief Executive Officer, VFPA
Delta Council
Sean McGill, City Manager