



July 14, 2009

Mr. Kevin Van Tighem, Superintendent
Banff National Park
Box 900
Banff, Alberta
T1L 1K2

Subject: Bow Valley Parkway

Dear Kevin:

As you are aware, the Banff Lake Louise Hotel Motel Association regularly meets with its accommodation sector membership to discuss issues of importance to the residents, visitors and businesses within Banff National Park. A significant point of discussion at our July 8th meeting was the proposed closure of the Bow Valley Parkway to private vehicles.

In recent weeks, some of our members have been informed that Parks Canada will consider a mandatory closure of the Bow Valley Parkway as the voluntary restriction is not working. For some of those in attendance at the June 12th Superintendent's Breakfast meeting, however, the message was the move to restrict access to the Bow Valley Parkway – on a voluntary basis or otherwise – was not under consideration.

From a BLLHMA perspective, the voluntary closure has been a source of much confusion for visitors and the commercial sector for over a decade. With the current state of the economy and consumer reticence to spend on discretionary items like tourism, it is imperative that visitors understand that Banff National Park is a welcome place where they can create their own experiences, free of unnecessary restrictions. Alan Latourelle said it best: "Relevance is significantly stronger when Canadians are presented with opportunities to use and enjoy our parks and sites in ways that engage them and allow them to create their own unique connections with these national treasures."

The Parks Canada website indicates - *"Realistically, we need several years of information to determine outcomes or changes – socially and ecologically."* From the BLLHMA perspective, 12-years of voluntary restriction along the Bow Valley Parkway should have determined if there was a problem that required the extraction of private vehicles from the Bow Valley Parkway. We have not seen any evidence to support this.

If 'enjoyment' and 'use' are core Parks objectives, then it would follow that enhanced education efforts, not restrictions, should be introduced to highlight the potential human impact on the habitat and wildlife along the Bow Valley Parkway.

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The BLLHMA truly desires to work collaboratively with Parks Canada on issues such as this, ensuring the science and economics have been well considered as part of our shared commitment to preserving the ecological integrity of the whole of Banff National Park.

Thanking you in advance for bringing clarity to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darren Reeder', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Darren Reeder
Executive Director

CC: Hon Jim Prentice, Minister of Environment
Hon Diane Ablonczy, Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism)
Alan Latourelle, CEO, Parks Canada
Blake Richards, MP, Alberta Wildrose
Hon. Janis Tarchuk, Minister of Children and Youth Services, MLA Banff-Cochrane
John Stutz, Mayor, Town of Banff
Julie Canning, President & CEO, Banff Lake Louise Tourism
Richard Leavens, Executive Director, AMPPE
Rob Seely, President, Small Business Association of Banff