



October 15, 2021

The Honourable Adrian Dix
Minister of Health
PO Box 9050 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister,

Re: Unacceptable 9-1-1 Wait Times

As Mayor of Delta, I write to you with increasing concern about unacceptable E-Comm 9-1-1 wait times. On September 28, 2021, Oliver Grüter-Andrew, E-Comm President & CEO, released a statement linking 9-1-1 wait times to staffing levels at BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS). Mr. Grüter-Andrew noted that the risk to public safety from BCEHS delays is of serious and growing concern to his organization.

The risk to public safety as a result of delays in BCEHS call-taking and dispatch is also of serious and growing concern to Delta Council. People call 9-1-1 in their time of greatest need, when they believe that immediate action is required, most often when someone's health, safety or property is in jeopardy or a crime is in progress.

I understand that on August 22, 2021, there was for a period of time only one call taker for all of Vancouver because 25 of 26 BCEHS dispatcher seats were empty. This is clearly unacceptable and demonstrates a serious issue in the BCEHS workforce – one that unfortunately has a significant impact on public safety.

I am also advised that on September 24, 2021, only one ambulance was operating for all of Richmond and Delta due to staffing shortages after 11:00 pm.

I recognize and appreciate the workload of BCEHS paramedics, particularly during the pandemic, opioid crisis, wildfires and extreme heat events of 2021. 9-1-1 response times must, however, consistently and reliably meet applicable standards and resident needs.

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You recently stated that, "When we call 911 for help, British Columbians need to feel confident that help is on the way and that it will arrive quickly". The Provincial government must make this public safety crisis a top priority to avoid loss of life to BC residents and restore confidence in our emergency dispatch system.

Yours truly,



George V. Harvie
Mayor

cc: Delta Council
Sean McGill, City Manager
Guy McKintuck, Fire Chief