



Reference: 41458

July 17, 2024

VIA EMAIL: MayorHarvie@delta.ca

Mayor George V. Harvie
City of Delta
4500 Clarence Taylor Crescent
Delta, British Columbia
V4K 3E2

Dear Mayor Harvie:

Thank you for your letter of April 8, 2024, to Honourable Bruce Ralson, Minister of Forests, regarding the administration of water lot leases in the Lower Fraser River Estuary. The Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) is now responsible for the administration of Crown land. I am pleased to respond and apologize for the delay.

The Lower Fraser River Estuary is a complex ecosystem to manage economically, socially, and environmentally. There is a significant amount of broader planning work required to address ongoing sustainable management of the estuary; dredging and associated activities are a key consideration within that context. In addition, this area is of high importance to First Nations groups, specifically regarding First Nation title and rights, climate change, archaeological values and cumulative effect impacts from historic use.

I appreciate your concerns regarding the impacts of delays in processing of applications. WLRS receives a high volume of applications and general requests regarding the use of Crown land. All applications are prioritized based on the provincial priorities of housing, drought management and the Agriculture Water Infrastructure Program, BC Hydro's call for power, Connecting Communities BC, public safety, adventure tourism, environmental risk, and support of reconciliation with First Nations. Unfortunately, float homes are not presently a component of the suite of solutions being pursued to address housing needs, due to the social and environmental sustainability issues that remain outstanding, and the unique additional challenges associated with float homes such as channel maintenance and dredging.

I recognize the challenges in obtaining financing with the length of tenure offered; however, leases with terms beyond 30 years start to share similarities with fee simple land ownership, which lead to further considerations. One example is that property transfer tax is required to be paid on the transfer of leases over 30 years. In addition, the Province has heard concerns

Page 1 of 2

Mayor Harvie, City of Delta

from First Nations regarding the impacts of long-term leases and the sale of Crown land on First Nations rights and title, in particular in areas of importance to a First Nation's ability to exercise its rights. Finally, relinquishing long-term control of submerged lands limits the tools available for managing the area for navigation, economic development, environmental management, and climate change.

Given the value that the Lower Fraser River estuary holds, WLRS works to ensure decisions regarding the use of this are considered in a manner that support economic activity, environmental sustainability, and reconciliation with First Nations.

Again, thank you for your patience on this issue and for writing and sharing your concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nathan Cullen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nathan" and last name "Cullen" clearly distinguishable.

Nathan Cullen
Minister

pc: Honourable Bruce Ralson, Minister of Forests