

October 31, 2017

The Honourable Minister Robinson
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Re: Greater Victoria Study on Amalgamation

Dear Minister Robinson,

It recently came to our attention that the Government has elected not to study amalgamation in Greater Victoria. This is very disconcerting especially when your Party indicated they would conduct a study prior to the May election.

As you know, 75% of Greater Victoria indicated both in the 2014 Angus Reid Poll and in the 2014 Municipal elections that they wanted a study. This would convince me to proceed regardless of the current political climate. I have to think Victoria residents, Premier Horgan, Minister James, and Minister Fleming can relate to some or all of the frustrations of living and doing business in a region of 350,000 people with 13 municipalities, 91 politicians, and six police jurisdictions.

The Hotel Association members all agree the current governance is dysfunctional. Our Capital Regional District is powerless and over-worked, policing is insufficient and unsafe, administration and capital costs are wasted, and urban planning occurs in silos. Our arts, leisure, and sporting facilities are inadequate. Arts funding is supported by only a few municipalities and destination marketing of the MRDT is fragmented thereby reducing its effectiveness. Endless red tape exists when groups want to bring events to the city and find themselves coordinating with multiple jurisdictions. The sewage treatment plant, mandated by the previous Provincial government, is nothing short of a debacle. The over budget Blue Bridge in Victoria has many users from other municipalities but the costs are owned by Victoria tax payers.

The HAGV, an arm of the British Columbia Hotel Association, represents nearly 6000 accommodation rooms that include Greater Victoria, Sidney, and Sooke generating millions of tax dollars and employing an estimated 4,000 taxpayers.

Our Hotel community and Greater Victoria need efficiency, good governance, and a unified vision to reach its potential.

Thank you for your attention

Yours truly,

Reid James
Chairperson
Hotel Association of Greater Victoria

Cc Premier J. Horgan, Minister C. James, Minister R. Fleming, C. Holt – Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce, P. Nursey, Tourism Victoria, S. Gudgeon, Amalgamation Yes, J. Chase - BCHA, HAGV