



April 28, 2008

Nathan Pachal
20454 53 Avenue, Suite 215
Langley BC V3A 7S1

Reference: 164009

Dear Nathan:

Re: Gateway Program

Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding my ministry's Gateway Program. Please accept my apologies for the lateness of my reply. I understand you believe the Gateway Program will not create a more environmentally responsible transportation system in the Lower Mainland, but on that point I must respectfully disagree.

As you're probably aware, our government recently unveiled a plan to invest \$14 billion to improve transit services throughout British Columbia. The plan is designed to double transit ridership by introducing more transit routes and services and promoting green technology. This plan will see the introduction of rapid bus services, the extension of existing SkyTrain lines and the completion of the Canada and Evergreen lines. For more about the Provincial Transit Plan, I would encourage you to visit my ministry's web site at www.th.gov.bc.ca/Transit_Plan/index.html.

The Gateway Program integrates well with the transit plan, as it will extend the high occupancy vehicle lanes on Highway 1 in part to accommodate the rapid bus service for that corridor. Through the Gateway Program, we will also be providing park-and-ride sites as well as queue-jumper or priority access lanes for buses in this corridor.

In addition, the bridges over the Fraser and Pitt rivers are also being designed to accommodate light rail transit in the future. And we're committing \$50 million through the program to new cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, the biggest such investment in our province's history.

Tolls will also be used on the Port Mann Bridge. Tolls will moderate traffic growth and greatly extend the useful life of the bridge. Tolls will also encourage the use of public transit, high occupancy vehicles and cycling over the crossing.

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The provincial government is also working to protect the environment, and we're regularly reviewing our plans to see if they can be improved upon. After extensive consultations with the Greater Vancouver Regional District, the Ministry of Environment and the Canadian Wildlife Service, a portion of the South Fraser Perimeter Road's (SFPR) alignment has been shifted farther to the west of Burns Bog in order to further minimize any potential effects of this project. In addition, we've developed more detailed design concepts for the portion of the SFPR that will be located near Burns Bog, and these concepts include proposals for avoiding environmental impacts.

To ensure we have as little impact on the environment as possible, all Gateway projects will undergo a thorough environmental review, and issues like pollution, noise and the effects on vegetation and wildlife will be addressed rigorously. Environmental applications, accompanying studies and reports are available on the BC Environmental Assessment Office web site at www.eao.gov.bc.ca.

I'm also pleased to tell you that our Gateway team has been meeting with representatives from the Delta Farmers' Institute and local farming community. They're working together to mitigate any negative effects the SFPR may have on agricultural land and enhance the area's agricultural productivity.

Finally, I'd like to address the alternate alignment proposed by Mr. Hoover and Mr. Naas. The Hoover/Naas plans have been analyzed thoroughly, as have other proposals, to determine whether they're appropriate for the SFPR.

Based on the results of extensive and in-depth internal and independent studies, we've found the Hoover/Naas proposal simply does not meet the transportation and safety needs of the region nor our goals for this important project.

On the other hand, the SFPR will decrease travel times and reduce congestion on other routes such as Highway 91 and River Road. It will ease traffic concerns by moving more trucks and ferry traffic away from the existing Highway 17 and Ladner Trunk Road, better separating this regional traffic from local traffic in the community.

The SFPR provides a significantly faster and more efficient route to Delta's key industrial areas along River Road as well as increased safety for all traffic in the area. The Hoover/Naas proposal to limit truck access to the George Massey Tunnel would significantly impact the transportation services necessary for a strong economy.

If you'd like to learn more about the Gateway Program, you may wish to contact program staff. You can write to them at 4710 Kingsway, Suite 2400, Burnaby, British Columbia, V5H 4M2, or phone 604 775-0471. You can also visit my ministry's web site at www.gatewayprogram.bc.ca.

Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Falcon', written in a cursive style.

Kevin Falcon
Minister