

June 25, 2021

John Horgan
Premier of B.C.
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Selina Robison
Minister of Finance
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Melanie Mark
Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture & Sport
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Ravi Kahlon
Minister of Jobs, Economic Recovery & Innovation
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Harwinder Sandhu
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Re: Greater Vernon Festivals

Premier Horgan, Minister Robison, Minister Mark, Minister, Kahlon, MLA Sandhu

As in many communities across this province, Vernon is home to numerous festivals that not only contribute to our lifestyle but draw visitors and serve as an economic catalyst.

The pandemic has put pressure on the non-profit organizations that operate these festivals as the events have been cancelled, impacting sponsorship and attendance revenue. Without that revenue, fixed costs, such as staffing, are challenging to cover, as is planning for a resumption of events once the pandemic is over.

For Vernon, our premier festivals include:

- Funtastic slo-pitch tournament and music festival
- Creative Chaos
- Shoparama
- Vernon Winter Carnival
- Okanagan Military Tattoo
- Vernon Proms Classic Musical Festival

All of these festivals help increase the profile of Vernon and the North Okanagan as a destination and they encourage diverse demographics to visit, including recreational athletes, crafters and those passionate about history and music. Vernon Winter Carnival is the largest winter festival in Western Canada.

Those attending these festivals have a significant impact on our local economy through accommodations, restaurants, retail and transportation, while local suppliers provide the resources these festivals require to succeed. Non-profit organizations and recreational facilities also benefit through 50/50 draws, concessions and direct donations from the festival organizers.

However, the ability of these iconic festivals to proceed in 2022 and subsequent years is reduced because revenue has dried up in 2020 and 2021. It takes cash flow for staff, planning, renting facilities, purchasing supplies and marketing, and any reserves that may exist will be depleted quickly.

Obviously, there are similar festivals across B.C. that contribute greatly to their home communities, so the pressure on your government to provide financial assistance requires a province-wide approach. However, just imagine what our community and economy would lose if these festivals disappeared.

We recently requested that your government provide support for the Interior Provincial Exhibition, and we are now asking that you consider the other major festivals in Vernon.

Thank you for your time and we look forward to hearing from you on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Krystin Kempton, President
Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce

CC. Shirley Bond, Interim Leader of the Official Opposition
Sonia Furstenuau, Leader of the B.C. Green Party
Mel Arnold, North Okanagan-Shuswap Member of Parliament
Okanagan Indian Band Chief & Council
City of Vernon Mayor & Council

Regional District of North Okanagan Board of Directors
District of Coldstream Mayor & Council
Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association
Tourism Vernon
Okanagan-Shuswap Chambers of Commerce
Funtastic Sport Society
Vernon Winter Carnival Society
Creative Chaos Society
Shoparama
Okanagan Military Tattoo
Okanagan Association of Classical Music Enthusiasts
Interior Provincial Exhibition