

Hon Minister Shirley Bond  
Minister of Jobs, Tourism, and Skills Training and Minister Responsible for Labour  
Room 138, Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC  
V8V 1X4  
Via email

November 30, 2015

Dear Minister Bond,

Thank-you very much for meeting with the Regional District of East Kootenay Directors from the Columbia Valley on September 23, 2015 to hear about our branding and marketing initiative.

As a follow-up to our meeting with you during UBCM, and further to your request, attached is a 2 pager outlining the project. We would like to know if our concept of amalgamating the *Radium Hot Springs DMO* with the *Invermere Panorama DMO* and expanding the area to include Fairmont Hot Springs and other communities in the Columbia Valley would be something your Ministry would support.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind Regards,

Wendy Booth

cc.

Hon Minister Bill Bennett,  
Minister of Energy & Mines and Minister Responsible for Core Review

Wendy Booth  
Area F Director, Regional District of East Kootenay and  
Member, Branding & Marking in the Columbia Valley Steering Committee

November 30, 2015

Via email

Dear Wendy,

Further to your request after your meeting with Minister Bond, attached is a 2 pager outlining our collaborative Columbia Valley branding and marketing initiative project. We would like to know if our concept of amalgamating the Radium DMO with the Invermere-Panorama DMO and expanding the area to include Fairmont Hot Springs and other communities in the Columbia Valley would be something her Ministry would support.

We would like to address the broad stakeholder group on January 27, 2016 so a response by mid-January would be ideal. Thank you for taking this forward and we await Minister Bond's response.

Sincerely,

Co-chairs of the *Branding & Marking in the Columbia Valley Steering Committee*

Pascal van Dijk  
President & CEO, Fairmont Hot Springs Resort  
250-345-6060

Steve Paccagnan  
President & CEO, Panorama Resort  
250-341-3012

#### **Additional Committee Members**

Amanda Robinson	General Manager, Copper Point Resort; President, CV Chamber of Commerce; Member of the Board of Directors of the BC Hotel Association
Michael Anderson	Radium Hot Springs DMO, Radium Chamber of Commerce; President, True Key Hotels and Resorts
Penny Powers	Invermere-Panorama DMO; Owner, Columbia River Paddle
Andrea Tubbs	Marketing Manager, CV Golf Trail; Principal, Swansea Communications
Pat Bavin	Columbia Valley Arts Council (CVArtsC); Columbia Cultural Tourism Association (CCTA); Owner, Bavin Glassworks
Mark Halwa	Executive Director, Columbia River Greenways Trail Alliance
John Rouse	CBT Columbia Valley Advisory Committee (CVAC); Retired CA; Director CCTA and CVArtsC
Rick Thompson	CVAC; Business Owner
Dee Conklin	CVAC; Former Mayor of Radium; Owner, Palliser Printing and Casa Vino Wine & Tapas Bar
Wendy Booth	CVAC; RDEK Director, Electoral Area F; CBT Board Member; UBCM Executive Member

## **Brief Prepared for Minister Bond November 27, 2015**

RE: Concept proposed by the *Branding and Marketing in the Columbia Valley Steering Committee* for Columbia Valley Collaborative Marketing.

### **Columbia Valley Background and Location**

The Columbia Valley is comprised of 3 municipalities (Radium, Invermere and Canal Flats) as well as Electoral Areas F & G. We have a full time population of approximately 10,000, with a seasonal population of about 40,000. Currently our valley has 2 ski hills, 2 lakes, 2 hot springs and 13 golf courses; with many additional recreational and tourism attractions for all seasons. Collectively, the Columbia Valley has over 800 businesses, including over 30 accommodators.

Currently there are 2 DMO's in our region: *Invermere Panorama* and *Radium Hot Springs*.

The *Invermere Panorama* DMO was established in 2009 and represents more than 500 rooms. The current contract expires on February 1, 2019.

The *Radium Hot Springs* DMO was established in 2007 and represents almost 700 rooms. The current contract expires on August 1, 2017.

Other accommodators in the Columbia Valley not currently represented with a DMO include more than 475 rooms.

Provincial DMO contracts are held with local Government and each DMO is administered by a board of core stakeholders, community businesses and municipal leaders under subcontract from local Government. Both DMOs work closely with *Destination BC* and *Kootenay Rockies Tourism*.

### **Branding and Marketing Initiative**

In December 2013, The *Columbia Valley Community Directed Funds Committee* (CVCDF) completed a Columbia Valley Community Priorities Plan. There was broad consultation during this process. The number one priority identified was branding and marketing the valley as a whole. In 2015, the CVCDF committee took the lead on the project and held 2 forums for all industry stakeholders and local Government. We found a considerable common ground. The results were published in the "Tourism Industry Survey Results and Regional Forum April 27, 2015 Summary Report", download found at this link: [April 27 Summary Report](#)

In June 2015, supported by the CVCDF committee, the *Branding and Marketing in the Columbia Valley Steering Committee*, representing 9 key tourism stakeholders in the region (2 DMOS, 3 major resorts, arts & culture, destination development and golf), was formed. This committee, working with a consultant, has made significant progress:

- Created and adopted a shared long term vision of a single entity working together on collaborative marketing and destination development for the region.
- Agreed that MRDT funds collected by accommodators are a key source of sustainable funding that can leverage other marketing resources.
- Increasing geographical representation to incorporate communities and resorts (including larger Fairmont Hot Springs Resort and Copper Point Resort for example) who do not currently have a DMO is an opportunity to generate more MRDT revenue and be able to leverage more funds.
- Reaffirmed a shared belief that working together to attract tourists to our region as a whole will be more successful and more efficient than competing amongst each other.
- Developed by laws and policies that are currently in final stages of review ready to form the new entity.
- Facilitated formation of an application for *Destination BC* funding for a workshop held on Nov 2<sup>nd</sup> that looked at the key opportunities in region for collaboration.

### **Next Steps**

The next step is to first meet with the existing DMO's of both Invermere/Panorama and Radium in mid December to gather further input. Provided we have the DMO's support and the support of the broad stakeholder group from our January meeting we would ideally move towards the steps in developing the new entity and start the transition plan to a single DMO, encompassing, if possible, the two existing DMOs and the areas in our region that do not currently have a DMO (Electoral Areas F & G and Canal Flats). This process will include working to gather support of all stakeholders as well as provincial support for the concept.

The transition plan timeline is contingent on knowing:

- if there is provincial support for a single Columbia Valley DMO, and
- that Columbia Valley accommodators support this process as well.

### **Request for Ministerial Support**

Given that we are in the process of working with all stakeholders to gather alignment which ultimately includes support for this vision and before we go too much further with our process with individual stakeholders, we would like to know if the Ministry will allow us to form a Columbia Valley DMO? This will include amalgamating the current 2 DMO's into one entity which would include the municipality of Canal Flats and the other communities within Electoral Areas F & G not currently covered by the two existing DMOs.

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