



STATEMENT

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Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training with
Responsibility for Labour

June 3, 2016

Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

An Open Letter to the residents of Golden, British Columbia

Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training and Minister Responsible for Labour Shirley Bond and Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Todd Stone posted the following open letter to the residents of Golden today:

“Residents and visitors of the Golden area have enjoyed world class rafting on the Kicking Horse River for decades. Since we first heard about access issues to the Lower Canyon the province has worked non-stop to find a way to allow for safe crossing of CP tracks.

Provincial staff has been in Golden as well as working directly with the rafters, the Mayor, the regional district and CP Rail to help facilitate an agreement.

On April 22nd, an agreement in principle was reached between CP, local government and the rafters that would have allowed rafters temporary access to the Lower Canyon for the 2016 rafting season. Two weeks later CP approached the province with a draft agreement that would transfer unlimited liability to the Province for any direct or indirect incidents related to the permitted crossing by rafters.”

It is totally unreasonable to think B.C. taxpayers would take on basically the full financial responsibility for any loss or injury from CP’s operations despite having no jurisdiction over CP. That is why we continued to negotiate with all of the parties and even offered to cover the full cost of a safe crossing (estimated to be \$250,000) as well as offering to take on the financial responsibility for any injuries suffered by rafters during a permitted crossing.

CP again declined these offers. Their only position was for the province to assume full liability for the permitted crossing by rafters. An unfair position according to all parties, except CP.

We continue to be open to reasonable solutions. The province has offered to explore infrastructure funding options for permanent safety improvements that will allow rafting at this location in future seasons. CP has continually declined to enter into a Canadian Transportation Association mediation process.

The Province remains committed to Golden and tourism in the surrounding area. Though the lower portion of the river may be closed unless CP reconsiders its position, we are thankful that rafting will continue elsewhere on the Kicking Horse River and urge CP to reconsider their position.”

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