



Chamber *of* Commerce
Maple Ridge Pitt Meadows

April 22, 2019

Re: Modular Housing on Burnett Street

The Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows Chamber of Commerce is greatly concerned with the manner in which the provincial government has chosen to respond to the homelessness and related addiction problems in our community. While opinions vary as to the right governmental and societal responses to these issues, we believe that local government, the members of the community, non-governmental organizations, and local businesses must all have a say in determining the direction chosen by the provincial government. For the second time in less than a year, Victoria has ignored our elected officials, disregarded decades of precedent concerning the decision-making authority of local government, and summarily dictated an outcome without regard to the concerns of the local community.

We agree there is an urgent need to help many struggling members of our community, including low-income families, the elderly, as well as those who are homeless and/or drug-addicted. We feel that the Maple Ridge Housing Plan prepared by the City and endorsed by Council best resolves these difficult issues without compromising the interests of the homeless or those of local area residents. We have also supported the findings of a committee of local citizens that sought to formulate solutions to respond to these issues in a way that would be more broadly supported by the community of Maple Ridge. Yet the Maple Ridge Social Housing Plan, the findings of this committee, the hard work that was undertaken, and the reasonable compromises proposed have all been categorically rejected by the provincial government in favor of a top-down, undemocratic process dictated by special interest groups who do not reside in the area.

The desire to help those experiencing homelessness and addiction does not excuse the casting aside of a carefully calibrated system of democracy that for decades has successfully balanced the interests of provincial authority with the concerns of local communities. We urge the provincial government to consider the dictatorial framework in which they are operating and to take into account the legitimate concerns of area residents.

Ken Holland
President
Chamber of Commerce serving Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows