

April 10, 2023

David Eby
Premier of B.C.
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Harwinder Sandhu
MLA for Vernon-Monashee
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Re: BC Electoral Boundaries – District of Coldstream

Premier Eby and MLA Sandhu

The Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce writes regarding the Legislative Assembly approving the final report of the B.C. Electoral Boundaries Commission April 6, 2023, just three days after receiving the report from the Commission.

Among the changes approved by the Legislature is moving the District of Coldstream from an electoral district with the City of Vernon and Areas B and C of the Regional District of North Okanagan to an electoral district with the District of Lake Country and part of the City of Kelowna. We oppose this shift for the following reasons:

- The District of Coldstream belongs to the Regional District of North Okanagan and is considered a part of Greater Vernon along with the City of Vernon and Areas B and C.
- Through RDNO, Greater Vernon partners on domestic water, trails and cultural services;
- Greater Vernon is a single economic and social unit, with businesses supporting consumers in all jurisdictions, and creating employment for residents throughout the region. Coldstream plays a significant role in the local economy;
- Organizations such as the Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce, as well as vital social service agencies, serve all residents and businesses of Greater Vernon;
- The eastern portion of Coldstream has a close association with the Village of Lumby, which is in the same electoral district as the City of Vernon.

We appreciate that the B.C. Electoral Boundaries Commission was responding to population growth in B.C. by redistributing boundaries, but population should not be the only consideration when determining

boundaries. Our Chamber believes strongly that the District of Coldstream should remain in the same electoral district as the City of Vernon and Areas B and C of the RDNO for the following reasons:

- A single representative will simplify the process for RDNO and the Greater Vernon partners to pursue senior government support for joint projects and local services;
- Residents and Businesses Owners will better understand the roles and responsibilities of their representatives within Greater Vernon when there is one electoral district;
- Organizations such as the Chamber can direct limited resources to a single elected representative when advocating on behalf of their membership and community;
- A single Member of the Legislative Assembly will be able to provide effective representation for Coldstream and Greater Vernon.

The Commission's recommendation to move Coldstream in with Lake Country and Kelowna in the final report had not been highlighted in the preliminary report, meaning there had been no ability for local government, the public or organizations such as the Chamber to provide input on this specific boundary adjustment. We are extremely disappointed that all members of the Legislative Assembly ratified the Commission's report without consulting with the communities impacted or how this change may impact their participation in the democratic system.

We urge you to meet directly with our Chamber, the District of Coldstream and the Regional District of North Okanagan in the hope that this decision can be revisited. We would also encourage the Legislative Assembly, in the future, to provide the public with meaningful input once the Electoral Boundaries Commission's final report has been tabled and before MLAs vote on the document.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Robin Cardew
President
Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce

CC. Raj Chouhan, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

BC Official Opposition

Leader of the Green Party of BC

District of Coldstream Mayor and Council

City of Vernon Mayor and Council

Regional District of North Okanagan Board of Directors

District of Lake Country Mayor and Council

Okanagan Chambers of Commerce

BC Electoral Boundaries Commission

North Okanagan media