



February 16, 2021

OPEN LETTER FROM *HUNTERS FOR BC – SCI* TO:

Honourable John Horgan, Premier of BC

premier@gov.bc.ca

Honourable George Heyman, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

ENV.minister@gov.bc.ca

Honourable Katrine Conroy, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development

FLNR.minister@gov.bc.ca

Honourable Nathan Cullen, Minister of State for Lands and Natural Resource Operations

nathan.cullen.MLA@leg.bc.ca

RE: SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT OF WILDLIFE IN BC

Dear Honourable Premier and Ministers,

We have read a recent media report attributing comments made by Premier Horgan and Minister Conroy regarding BC's predator management and how social media can influence your government's decision-making processes.

We are deeply troubled by the tone and inference of this reporter's story and sincerely hope that she did not accurately capture the intent of your conversations.

The comments as taken from the article reported by Justine Hunter, Globe and Mail on February 12th are in quotes below.

The first part attributable to Premier Horgan:

On Wednesday, Premier John Horgan said the reaction to Takaya's death demonstrated there is little public support for targeting the small population of Vancouver Island grey wolves. There are an estimated 250 wolves on the island

“It would certainly be counter to the sentiment in the community,” Mr. Horgan told reporters. “When one lone wolf was relocated to the western part of my constituency and then shot by a hunter, the groundswell of frustration and anger at that single wolf kill was significant.”

We at **Hunters for BC – SCI** do recognize that this one wolf was a community favorite, and that its death was mourned by many.

Our concern is that your statements give far greater credence to the emotions of the anti-hunting movement than the reality of the story.

We recognise that public sentiment is important to politicians, but sentiment means little in ensuring BC has effective wildlife management strategies that look out for the needs of all wildlife.

If you were to ask your Conservation Officers (CO’s) responsible for the relocation of habituated wildlife from urban areas back into the wilderness, they would tell you that they are likely giving them a death sentence. A death sentence that would most times go unnoticed and unreported as they occur by other predators, starvation or as in this case, their loss of fear of humans.

They would also tell you that their decision to relocate was made for political purposes. They understood that they could not leave a wolf to continue its hunting ways in the middle of residential neighborhoods and they could not dispose of it due to its popularity, unlike the unnamed coyotes in Stanley Park.

We are also concerned that you may now be considering this as a reason for imposing a ban on or limiting wolf hunting and trapping, as you did for the grizzly bears of BC. If you are considering this, before doing so, we would ask that you review the outcomes of the ban on grizzly bear hunting.

BC has not gained more bear viewers because of no hunting, incidents of bears attacking persons, destroying public property, and being shot by your CO’s are steadily increasing, ungulate populations are crashing in some areas due to increased predation by these bears (and other predators) and we have lost 100’s of jobs and millions of dollars of income, mostly affecting the rural people of BC.

The second part attributable to Minister Conroy:

Katrine Conroy, the Minister for Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, said in an interview Thursday that she was unaware until this week that there are no limits on trapping wolves in the province.

“I’m going to work with the B.C. Wildlife Federation to change the regulations, to close the loophole, because I think it’s a loophole,” Ms. Conroy said.

Ms. Conroy however said the posts on Instagram were troubling. “What I’ve seen is she tends to be more focused on increasing her social-media ‘likes,’” Ms. Conroy said. “I have many hunters in my family, and I talk to hunters and trappers – that’s something that most hunters and trappers would find offensive.”

We at **Hunters for BC – SCI** debate what belongs on our website and in our social media outreach. We recognize that not everyone has the same reaction when reading and viewing hunting and trapping photos and stories. We also recognize that others can take what we produce, use it against lawful hunting and trapping practices and launch an anti-hunting campaign based on a single photo or comment, and that these types of campaigns will be directed at politicians such as yourselves.

It worked.

You took one side of a story and let that be the publicly reported version of events, and now if reported correctly, wish to change wildlife management regulations and objectives.

What was not reported was that a well-known anti-hunting advocate was also involved in trolling a trapper/hunter’s social media site, copied photos and comments, then posted them to her own site, with the express purpose of enraging others to rise and demand action. Not only did she do this, but she also launched a bullying campaign against this same person and from your reported response, it appears you support.

Approaching sensitive topics this way is neither good for governance nor good for wildlife management.

We at **Hunters for BC – SCI** encourage our members to not engage in trolling media sites of those who oppose hunting and trapping. We also recommend that if our members wish to make comments or express concerns in what they see or read on other media sites, they do so constructively and positively.

We also believe that most persons recognize that if they are to visit a social media site owned by a hunter, trapper, or guide outfitter they can expect to view pictures and read stories about hunting and trapping, and that some of the content may offend them.

Our view, and the message we would wish for you to deliver to those who do not appreciate our thousands of years of hunting and trapping traditions is, stick with the places they are comfortable with. Tell them that although they may not like hunting and trapping, others do, and it is acceptable to let them engage in dialogue about it.

By this letter we would also ask that Minister Cullen contact us if he wishes to discuss how to make our hunting, trapping, and fishing traditions fit within our natural environments. We would be more than pleased to help him in his efforts to **“develop and invest in new strategies aimed at**

better protecting our shared wildlife and habitat corridors, including work to implement the Together for Wildlife Strategy”.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

If you wish to learn more about predators in our natural, and sometimes, not so natural environments, we are hosting a **Webinar on February 27th, 5:00 pm PST** and would invite you to dial in and listen to **Dr. Valerie Geist, Professor Emeritus of Environmental Science** and world-renowned Canadian biologist and author who has spent his life studying predator/prey relationships.

LINK FOR WEBINAR REGISTRATION:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_4QxdFekQx6n4UcpLFG_rg

If you wish more information about **Hunters for BC – SCI**, please visit our website at

<https://www.bcinteriorsci.ca/>

Sincerely

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cc BC MLAs; Justine Hunter, Globe and Mail; Hunters for BC – SCI website