



April 17, 2020

Dear Sunshine Coast citizens,

We are doing so well on the Sunshine Coast right now to flatten the curve. But we are hearing from you that you fear it will have all been for nothing if we can't stop visitors from coming to the Coast. We'd like to address that.

There is no question that tourists are not welcome right now. Our economy depends on visitors, who we will welcome again once we are on the other side of this pandemic. Our message since March is the same today: Stay home and explore the Sunshine Coast...later. In small communities throughout B.C. the message is the same. Stay home, stay local in your own town, and do not visit your second home, your campsite, your family and friends down the highway or a ferry ride away.

Sunshine Coast local governments are in daily contact with BC Ferries to ensure this crucial transportation link is maintained for essential travel during this crisis. BC Ferries shares our message: we are here for essential travel, otherwise do not leave home. We are also operating the Emergency Operations Centre which responds to needs in our community and liaises with key regional and provincial bodies every day.

We hear you. Visitors to our remote towns and villages can stress grocery supply chains, and increase the risk of transmitting a deadly virus. Your local governments, First Nations Governments, and regional districts are tasked with ensuring all of the Provincial Health Officer's recommendations and orders are acted on. We work with local businesses and stakeholders to ensure measures such as safe physical distancing are in place to protect local citizens and to ensure essential services continue.

The most important part of protecting citizens is up to YOU. Keep doing what you have been doing: stay home, grocery shop once a week, wash your hands, keep two metres from others when outside, get some fresh air and exercise. Discourage friends and family from traveling and instead offer to host a Zoom gathering. Dr. Bonnie Henry has the best advice: Be calm. Be kind. Be safe.

We are all in this together – but 6 feet apart.

Warmest regards,

Mayor Bill Beamish, Gibsons
Chair Lori Pratt, Sunshine Coast Regional District of Sechelt
Mayor Darnelda Siegers, Sechelt
Chief Warren Paull, shíshálh Nation