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February 8, 2024

Honourable Bruce Ralston  
Minister of Forests and Minister  
responsible for the Consular Corps  
Parliament Buildings Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Via email: [FOR.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:FOR.Minister@gov.bc.ca)

**Re: Relocation of Chetwynd Initial Fire Attack Base**

Dear Minister Ralston,

On behalf of the District of Hudson's Hope (District), we would like to express the District's concern over the arbitrary removal and relocation of the Initial Attack Crew based in Chetwynd and assigning them to Dawson Creek, BC. This relocation will change the BC Wildfire's average response time from an hour to approximately two and a half hours to areas in and around our community. This decision was made without any consultation with local stakeholders and First Nation Communities, including West Moberly First Nations, Sauteau First Nations, Halfway River First Nations, the Districts of Chetwynd and Tumbler Ridge, Moberly Lake, Hassler Flats, Jack Fish Lake, Ferrel Creek, and Upper Halfway. This delayed response could impact thousands of residents of the northeast and millions of dollars of lost commerce.

Year after year, the Initial Attack crews from Chetwynd and their quick response to incidents have been vital to controlling wildfires in our community and region. Wildfire season in the northeast starts in April and can be prolonged into the late fall, as in the 2023 season. In 2023, there were four wildfires in the District and surrounding area, and the Initial Attack group from Chetwynd was vital in suppressing these fires. In 2022, three Fires of Note directly impacted the District of Hudson's Hope: Dinosaur Lake Fire, Flood Falls Fire, and Battleship Mountain Fire, resulting in Evacuation Alerts and an Evacuation Order, which displaced residents from the community for eight days. In 2014, the McCalister Fire resulted in Evacuation Alerts and an Evacuation Order, which displaced residents for five days.

The new *Emergency and Disaster Management Act* (Act) requires the District to consult with all our stakeholders, particularly First Nations Communities, on such an important issue; however, this requirement doesn't seem to apply to the Ministry. The District requests that the Ministry revisit this decision and realize the importance of the staffed Initial Attack Base in Chetwynd, BC.

Sincerely,

**DISTRICT OF HUDSON'S HOPE**

*Travous Quibell*

Travous Quibell  
Mayor, Hudson's Hope

*Fred Burrows*

Fred Burrows  
Director of Protective Services