



Date: February 6, 2024

The Honourable Bruce Ralston
Minister of Forests
Via email: FOR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister,

Subject: Support for Retaining the Northern Initial Fire Attack Crew (NIFAC) in Chetwynd

The District of Tumbler Ridge would like to express our firm support for the retention of the Northern Initial Fire Attack Crew (NIFAC) in Chetwynd. The decision to relocate NIFAC to Dawson Creek has prompted us to voice our concerns and advocate for the continued presence of this vital resource to our community and surrounding areas.

Chetwynd along with the surrounding communities of West Moberly First Nations, Sauteau First Nations, Hudson Hope, Tumbler Ridge, rural communities of Jackfish Lake, East Pine, and Hasler Flats, and also the main highway, rail, and utilities corridor through the Pine Pass has long benefited from the presence of NIFAC based in Chetwynd, whose swift response to wildfires in our region has undoubtedly played a crucial role in mitigating the impact of such events on our residents, environment, and infrastructure. Their expertise, dedication, and rapid deployment capabilities have been instrumental in containing wildfires and safeguarding our community's safety and well-being.

Moreover, the Peace Region possesses unique geographical and environmental characteristics that necessitate specialized firefighting resources like NIFAC. The crew's familiarity with our terrain, vegetation, and local fire dynamics ensures a more effective and efficient response to wildfires, thereby reducing the potential for extensive damage and loss.

Relocating NIFAC to Dawson Creek would not only disrupt the seamless coordination and response mechanisms established between the crew and our local authorities but also pose logistical challenges that could impede their ability to effectively address fire incidents in our area. Maintaining NIFAC in Chetwynd is not merely a matter of convenience but a strategic imperative to ensure the continued protection of our community and surrounding wilderness areas.

Considering the growing threat posed by wildfires in our province, we must bolster rather than diminish our firefighting capabilities. While we understand the need for equitable distribution of resources across various regions, we firmly believe that retaining NIFAC in Chetwynd aligns with the broader goal of enhancing wildfire preparedness and response efforts in British Columbia.

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Furthermore, the District of Tumbler Ridge shares its stance on this matter and stands ready to support the establishment of an additional attack crew should the need arise. This collaborative approach underscores our collective commitment to ensuring the utmost safety and protection of our communities.

In conclusion, we urge you to carefully consider and prioritize the to keep the NIFAC in Chetwynd. We are confident that your decision will reflect a steadfast commitment to safeguarding the interests of our community and preserving the invaluable services provided by NIFAC. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Darryl Krakowka,
Mayor
District of Tumbler Ridge

Cc: District of Chetwynd Mayor & Council