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June 13, 2025

File No: 8500-40 Interregional

Honourable Mike Farnworth
Minister of Transportation and Transit
PO Box 9055 Prov Stn Govt
VICTORIA BC V8W 9E2

via email: TT.Minister@gov.bc.ca

and

Sherri Bell, Board Chair
BC Transit
PO Box 9861
520 Gorge Road East
VICTORIA BC V8W 9T5

via email: sravelli@bctransit.com

Dear Minister Farnworth and Sherri Bell:

**Re: Support for Better Island Transit Request to Improve Interregional
Transit Service on South Vancouver Island**

Following a presentation from Todd Litman, President of Better Island Transit on May 22, 2024 and his follow up letter of June 12, 2024 (attached), on June 26, 2024 the Cowichan Valley Regional District Board passed the following resolution:

24-324 *It was moved and seconded that a letter be sent to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure and BC Transit, jointly signed by the three Regional District Chairs, supporting Better Island Transit's request that BC Transit develop a plan to expand transit services between the Capital Regional District, Cowichan Valley Regional District and the Regional District of Nanaimo by 2025, including necessary infrastructure, fleet, and expansion hours; and that the Province provide sufficient funding to support a maximum fare of \$5.00 and at least hourly service between approximately 6:00 am and midnight on #66 and #70 routes.*

The Province is best positioned to develop a plan that includes the necessary infrastructure, fleet, expansion service hours and funding to improve the vital interregional transit service between Victoria and Nanaimo to support residents and visitors alike. A plan for more frequent and affordable bus service between these regions will not only increase road safety, reduce congestion and GHG emissions and it can help achieve the Provincial goal of Clean BC Roadmap to 2030 targets to increase walking, cycling and public transit mode share to 30% by 2030.

Thank you for your consideration of this important transportation matter.

Yours truly,



Kate Segall
Chair, Cowichan Valley Regional District



Cliff McNeil-Smith
Chair, Capital Regional District



Vanessa Craig
Chair, Regional District of Nanaimo



Ryan Windsor
Chair, Victoria Regional Transit Commission

Attachment:
Letter from Better Island Transit, June 12, 2024

pc: John Elzinga, General Manager, Community Services Department
Rachel Rondeau, Transit Analyst, CVRD
Christina Crabtree, General Manager, Corporate & Transportation Services, Regional District of Nanaimo
Board of Directors, Capital Regional District
Elise Wren, Government Relations Manager, BC Transit on behalf of Victoria Regional Transit Commission
Todd Litman, President, Better Island Transit
Erinn Pinkerton, CEO, BC Transit



BETTER ISLAND TRANSIT

ADVOCATING FOR CONVENIENT, AFFORDABLE TRANSIT
www.betterislandtransit.ca

Advocates for frequent and affordable transit service on Vancouver Island.

Reduced driver stress

Independent mobility for non-drivers

Affordability

Emission reductions

Reduced traffic congestion

Improved highway safety

Rural economic development

Serving visitors and tourist

CVRD Board
Cowichan Valley Regional District
175 Ingram Street
Duncan, British Columbia, V9L 1N8
12 June 2024

Re: Improving Vancouver Island Interregional Bus Services

Dear CVRD Board,

Thank you very much for letting me speak about our campaign for more frequent and affordable bus service at your 22 May board meeting. Your response is very encouraging. As Chair Aaron Stone said, "Hallelujah!"

There are many reasons to improve Vancouver Island transit services including increased affordability, more independent mobility for non-drivers, reduced highway traffic problems, and rural economic development. Although Duncan and the Cowichan Valley have wonderful tourist attractions, the region is difficult to access without a car. On one hand the province promotes Vancouver Island tourist destinations but on the other hand it fails to provide the transport services visitors need to reach them.

More frequent and affordable bus services can help achieve provincial goals including Clean BC *Roadmap to 2030* targets to increase walking, cycling and public transit mode shares to 30% by 2030, and MoTI and BC Transit *Mandate Letter* goals to make transit a priority, increase affordability, reduce emissions, provide safe and reliable transportation services in rural and Indigenous communities, reduce congestion, and increased safety on provincial roadways. Many travellers on the #66 (Duncan-Victoria) and #70 (Duncan-Nanaimo) routes are simply passing through the CVRD -- they are neither residents nor visitors -- so it is unfair to expect Cowichan Valley taxpayers to subsidize their travel.

We therefore ask the CVRD to send letters to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure and BC Transit's Board recommending that BC Transit develop a plan to expand transit services between the Capital Regional District, Cowichan Valley Regional District and Regional District of Nanaimo by 2025, including necessary infrastructure, fleet, and expansion hours; and that the Province provide sufficient funding to support a maximum fare of \$5.00 and at least hourly service between approximately 6:00 am and midnight on #66 and #70 routes.

Please let me know if you have questions about this request.

Sincerely,

Todd Litman, BIT President