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MINISTRY OF SOLICITOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CORONER

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CHIEF CORONER

January 27, 2014

Lisa Lapointe, Chief Coroner
Province of British Columbia
Metrotower II
4720 Kingsway, Suite 800
Burnaby BC V5H 4N2

Reference: 221061

Dear Chief Coroner Lapointe:

Re: Coroner's Inquest into the deaths of:
Cha, Kwang Soo – BCCS Case File #2011-0441-0003
Lee, Chul Sin – BCCS Case File #2011-0441-0004
Koh, James Chung Jik – BCCS Case File #2011-0441-0005

The Honourable Todd G. Stone, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, has asked me to respond directly to your letter of October 8, 2013. I appreciate this opportunity to address the recommendations of the inquest jury that reviewed the Highway 95 Spillimacheen Rest Area crash of January 19, 2011, which resulted in three tragic deaths. I am glad to participate in any process aimed at preventing similar future crashes and apologize for the delay in my response.

It should be noted the ministry has conducted a thorough review of the traffic volumes, maintenance operations, vehicle operating speed, location and the design of the rest area in question. We have concluded the current posted speed limit, design and location of the rest area comply with ministry requirements for a safe and accessible rest stop. Please find responses to each of the jury's recommendations separately below:

- 1. If the Trans-Canada Highway (TCH) is closed for any length of time and Highway 95 becomes the alternate route, we recommend Highway 95 should be upgraded to a "Class A" highway.***

In past, when Highway 95 has been designated as an alternate route (e.g. during winter closures of the TCH), traffic volumes have remained well below those warranting a move to the "Class A" maintenance level. In fact, a review of recent data shows the increased traffic volume on Highway 95 during TCH closures is approximately 50 per cent of the threshold required for "Class A" highways. As such, the ministry is not considering a change in maintenance classifications at this time. Ministry staff will continue to monitor traffic volumes to determine if a change might be required, should they increase in future. Please rest assured that events triggering significant changes in the operational characteristics of Highway 95 are evaluated continuously and when conditions warrant them, additional resources are allocated.

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2. After close examination of the evidence we recommend that an acceleration lane and deceleration lane be built at the Spillimacheen Rest Area.

A review of the existing Spillimacheen Rest Area layout shows that it conforms to the ministry's design standards as implemented throughout the Province. The sight distances available at this particular rest area are well in excess of the required design minima to allow traffic safe access to and from the rest area.

3. Considering the location of Highway 95, we recommend the speed limit be reduced to 90 km/h from Golden to Radium.

The section of Highway 95 between Golden and Radium was constructed to a design speed of 100km/h and this current posted speed limit is considered appropriate and conforms to accepted engineering design practice. However, as you may be aware, the ministry is currently undertaking a province-wide Rural Highway Safety and Speed Review, which is helping to identify areas on longer stretches of highway between communities where speed limit changes may be appropriate. Staff conducting this review have been seeking public and stakeholder input through online feedback, social media and public forums held across the Province. Practical recommendations from this review and a strategy for implementation will be ready early this spring. Should you be interested, more information about the review is available at <http://engage.gov.bc.ca/safetyandspeedreview>.

4. When Highway 95 becomes an alternate route, due to the closure of the Trans-Canada Highway, portable road signs should be immediately placed south of Golden and north of Radium Hot Springs to inform the public of the current road conditions.

The ministry continuously looks for ways to enhance the safety of our road network and agrees this recommendation could prove beneficial to the travelling public. Ministry staff will implement additional portable Changeable Message Signs for use along Highway 95 south of Golden and north of Radium Hot Springs when operational conditions triggered by an event, such as a closure of the TCH, require it. Staff will also investigate the possibility of installing permanent Changeable Message Signs along the Highway 95 corridor between Radium and Golden for more timely communication of road condition information following events.

Should you have any concerns regarding these responses to the jury's recommendations, or further questions or suggestions, I would be happy to assist you. Please feel free to contact me at (250) 356-0723 or by e-mail at Dirk.Nyland@gov.bc.ca.

Thank you again for taking the time to share the jury's recommendations with the ministry.

Sincerely,



Dirk Nyland, P.Eng.
Chief Engineer

Copy to: Honourable Todd G. Stone
Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure



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DEC 12 2013

MINISTRY OF SOLICITOR GENERAL
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DEC 11 2013

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DEC 17 2013

CHIEF CORONER

Dear Lisa Lapointe:

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Thank you for your letter of October 8, 2013, and enclosed copies of the Verdict at Inquest, regarding the deaths of the three men listed above on January 19, 2011.

The incident that occurred on Highway 95 in Spillimacheen was tragic, and I appreciated the opportunity to review the findings and recommendations of the inquest jury. I have asked the ministry's Chief Engineer, Dirk Nyland, to respond directly to the specifics of your recommendations, as he is in the best position to comment on highway design and engineering along the stretch of highway in question.

Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,

Todd Stone
Minister

Copy to: Dirk Nyland, Director
Engineering Branch