

### **Request to Minister of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation re: Garnet Valley Road Pit**

**SUMMERLAND** – Summerland Council is asking Hon. Jose Osborne, Minister of Energy, Mines, and Low Carbon Innovation, to overturn a decision by the Inspector of Mines to approve a gravel pit operation in a highly sensitive habitat area at the end of Garnet Valley within the District’s municipal boundaries.

Mayor Doug Holmes has written to Minister Osborne directly asking for the decision to be overturned, and Council has also requested a face-to-face meeting with the Minister at the Union of BC Municipalities Convention Sept. 16 – 20 in Vancouver.

In a referral letter to the Ministry, dated January 24, 2024, the District of Summerland strongly recommended refusal of the application to open the gravel pit, citing numerous environmental, zoning, safety, infrastructure, economic and cultural concerns. The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) also submitted a referral recommending refusal.

These referrals were validated by a growing chorus of concerned community groups and residents who wrote to Council and the Province asking that the proposal be denied. However, despite the community concerns and a surplus of gravel in the vicinity, the decision was made by provincial regulators to approve the pit.

#### Quote

*“Garnet Valley is known for its sensitive ecosystems, agriculture, agri-tourism and recreational values. Those of us who live in Summerland know this is the wrong place for a gravel pit. Given that the decision was made rashly with such disregard for the community’s wishes, we are appealing to the Minister to overturn it.”*

- Doug Holmes, Mayor of Summerland

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#### **For further information/Media Contact/Contact**

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Honourable Josie Osborne  
Minister of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation  
email: [emli.minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:emli.minister@gov.bc.ca)

**RE: Mine Number: 2000391, pending approval of Garnet Valley Road Gravel Pit**

Dear Minister Osborne,

On behalf of Summerland Council, I write to ask you to overturn a pending decision by the Inspector of Mines to approve a gravel pit operation in a highly sensitive habitat area at the end of Garnet Valley within the District of Summerland's municipal boundaries.

The 15.9 hectare area is within an Environmental Sensitive Development Permit area and is rated as ESA-1 (high), containing locally and provincially significant ecosystems, and critical habitat for rare and red listed wildlife species.

The area is habitat for mule deer, mountain goat, big horn sheep and other species of importance to First Nations and for recreational hunting, as identified by the BC Wildlife Federation. A gravel pit operation will have substantial impacts on wildlife movement, overwintering, and impacts to existing wildlife corridors, and will erase years of conservation efforts to improve wildlife habitat in the area.

The landscape is also sensitive due to the presence of Eneas Creek, a major tributary into Summerland, and a gravel operation could have impacts to the existing riparian habitat area.

The property is zoned Forestry Grazing (FG), which does not allow for natural resource extraction. The creation of flat arable benches as proposed for the gravel operation also is not in conformance with the District of Summerland's zoning bylaw.

The peaceful Garnet Valley is an important recreational and tourist destination as it connects to the historic Fur Brigade Trail and provides the only connection between Peachland and Summerland for the emerging continuous hiking and biking trail from Sicamous to Osoyoos, known as the Trail of the Okanagans.

A gravel pit right in the middle of this world-class trail would create an unsafe environment for hikers and cyclists and would not meet minimum safety standards set by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure's Active Transportation Design Guidelines. The gravel pit will preclude using Garnet Valley for the Trail of the Okanagans and would effectively destroy the vision of a pan-Okanagan multi-use pathway that so many people in multiple communities have worked long and hard to create.

The Garnet Valley supports orchards, vineyards, wineries, horse stables and agritourism accommodations. Tens of millions of dollars have been invested in these businesses, all of which will be impacted by a gravel pit at the end of the valley.

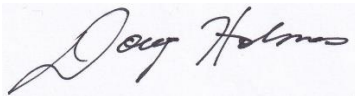
Garnet Valley Road, the only road to the gravel pit, is a winding rural road with narrow sections and poor visibility. It is shared by cars, cyclists, horse riders, and pedestrians and was never constructed to handle heavy and constant gravel trucks and trailers.

In our referral letter to the Ministry, dated January 24, 2024, the District of Summerland strongly recommended refusal of the application. The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) also submitted a referral recommending refusal. Environmental groups, tourism associations, agricultural producers, recreation and community groups, and many individual citizens all wrote asking the Ministry to refuse the application.

Those of us who live here know this is the wrong place for a gravel pit, and there is sure to be a huge public outcry once the decision of approval is made public

Given that the decision was made rashly with such disregard for the community's self-governance, we appeal to you to please overturn it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doug Homes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "D".

Doug Homes  
Mayor, District of Summerland

cc Hon. George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy  
Hon. Anne Kang, Minister of Municipal Affairs  
Shannon Baskerville, Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation