



## CHAIR REPORT

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**DATE:** July 14, 2023

**TO:** Directors  
Regional Board

**FROM:** Mark Baker  
Chair

**RE:** WILDFIRE STATUS NOTIFICATIONS

During both the Newcastle Creek and Browning Creek wildfires in Sayward, staff from the Village of Sayward and SRD, the Fire Chief etc. all found out about the fire through people seeing it live (on Facebook) and calling us asking for more information. When we received these calls from the public we were in the dark about what to tell people and had to scramble for information by calling the BC Wildfire Service public information line and then putting the information that was obtained on the SRD's Alertable system to let people know they were safe. Both these fires were very visible to the community, so it is understandable people were nervous and required reassurance that they were not in harm's way.

On a follow up call with BC Wildfire Service, a representative stated that their current notification system (which consists of putting information on their app/website) is acceptable. I do not believe this is acceptable when the general public requires better access to current information. BCWS service stated the only way to get this to change would be for SRD and other organizations to advocate for a change, which again is a request for local government and First Nations to receive current information about a wildfire close to or visible to their community even if assets aren't at risk.

I believe the current approach from BCWS is that it considers local government and First Nations as though they're the same as the general public, when they should be treated as partners to provide proper timely information to the public.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THAT the report from the Chair be received.
2. THAT the BC Wildfire Service be requested to provide local authorities and First Nations with timely information regarding the status of wildfires that are close to a community, even when homes and other infrastructure are not at risk.

Respectfully:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Baker", is written over a light blue rectangular background.

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Mark Baker  
Chair