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February 9, 2017

Honourable Christy Clark, Premier
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Gov't
Victoria, BC V8W 9E1

Dear Premier Clark:

RE: The Need for a B.C. Cave Protection Act

The purpose of this letter is to emphasize the need for a B.C. Cave Protection Act. British Columbia is blessed with an abundance of world-class Karst, particularly in the Rocky Mountains and on Vancouver Island. Karst ecosystems support unusual or rare plant and animal species, both on the surface and underground. For many aboriginal peoples Karst caves were not only used for shelter, but were often considered to be sacred places for burial and ceremonial purposes. As such, these Karst environments offer a variety of scientific, recreational and educational opportunities – as well as important economic tourist opportunities.

Karst resources are not randomly dispersed. They usually occur at hydro-geologically suitable locations such as valley slopes or bottoms and their surface and subsurface environments are highly interdependent. They are therefore extremely sensitive to disruption. Notwithstanding the best efforts of provincial and industry personnel, commercial forest operations remain the biggest threat to maintaining these sensitive cave systems today.

Since the 1980's efforts have been made by a variety of individuals both within and outside government to promote better management of these karst-cave systems. The principles of better management are embodied by two principles:

1. To conserve and protect the most significant caves as natural systems and,
2. To allow resource development to continue in a manner that avoids damage to cave systems where practical.

To this end, in May 2016 a Private Members Bill – The Cave Protection Act – was introduced into the Legislature. The purpose of this Act is to encourage and facilitate the protection and conservation of caves in the Province.

The purpose of this letter is therefore to encourage the Liberal government to support the need for a B.C. Cave Protection Act and move it forward in the upcoming sitting of the Legislature. Legislation to conserve and protect these special and fragile features would be well-received by all parties and the general public.

Thank you, we look forward to your positive response.

Bob

Bob Peart
Executive Director

Charly

Charly Caproff
Chilliwack River Valley Cavers

cc by email

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Note:

The need for a Cave Protection Act is supported by such well known cave scientists as Jim Baichtal, Alaska; Mike Buchanan, United Kingdom; Derek Ford, Ontario; Kevin Kiernan, Tasmania; Paul Griffiths, British Columbia; Carol Ramsey, British Columbia.