



Information Release

April 9, 2020

St'at'imc Chiefs and Mayor tell would-be visitors to 'Stay Home'

Ahead of the Easter long weekend, St'at'imc Chiefs and District of Lillooet Mayor Peter Busse are sending a strong message to cottagers, travelers and would-be adventurers to "Stay Home."

Sekw'el'was Chief Michelle Edwards said the potential for spread of the COVID-19 virus from people travelling into St'at'imc Territory from outside poses a serious threat to the health of her community.

"People can put their recreational life aside to save ours," Chief Edwards said. "This whole weekend could be a detriment to us here, and we won't even know for a week or two."

She said Sekw'el'was will have security patrols 24 hours a day for the entire long weekend ensuring people aren't camping in their community.

T'it'q'et Chief Courteney Adolph-Jones echoed Chief Edwards' concerns about the risks posed by visitors to St'at'imc Territory at this time.

"Our communities are working together with the primary goal of protecting our members and citizens from COVID-19. Our communities residing within the St'at'imc Territory have always welcomed visitors from near and far. We look forward to better days when we can safely resume this practice, but now is not the time for accepting visitors. The risk of exposure is too high for our population and the impact to our community's modest resources would be devastating. For now, please stay home," said Chief Adolph-Jones. T'it'q'et has also activated a watchman patrol to monitor activity in the community.

Residents of the District of Lillooet, which is located in St'at'imc Territory, are also very concerned about the virus being spread by visitors to the District over the long weekend and in the weeks to come.

"Normally we welcome visitors but these are not normal times," said the mayor. "The COVID-19 virus is especially grave for smaller communities with limited resources. By travelling here and visiting our grocery stores and other retail shops, you are putting all of us at greater risk."

"We understand your desire to visit our beautiful region, but in these highly-anxious times, it is selfish, it is unnecessary, and it is potentially very dangerous."

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The same “Stay Home” message is being delivered by the Provincial Health Officer, the Minister of Health, the Board Chair and Mayors within the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District, and by Mayors and Indigenous Leaders throughout the B.C. Interior and the North.

The Chiefs and Mayor say Lillooet’s grocers, pharmacies and other retailers have done an admirable job under dire conditions keeping shelves stocked and ensuring local residents have access to life’s essentials despite extraordinary demand.

“The last thing these stores and our residents need right now is an influx of cottagers and back-country warriors emptying our store’s shelves,” they say.

Local residents are also concerned about the risk out-of-towners pose for our medical professionals, who are on the front lines of the local fight against the COVID-19 virus.

“We are very proud of doctors and nurses and health care workers and our facilities,” they say. “They are our guardian angels and we don’t want them endangered by outsiders coming just for the sake of their desire to escape the city.”

Our community leaders say, with a few exceptions, they are heartened and reassured by local residents’ adherence to edicts from provincial health officials and reminds everyone to remain vigilant about hand hygiene, physical (social) distancing, and keeping public places safe and virus-free.

“To all local residents, we urge you to stay apart but stay strong,” the leaders say. “If we remain vigilant, we will soon return to better days and continue the job of building better communities together.”

Issued by the Lillooet Emergency Operations Centre
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