

# Friday, Feb. 5: More restriction needed on mining, not less

## Common sense restrictions would reduce conflict, uncertainty

FEBRUARY 4, 2016

Re: Province should allow miners greater access to land for exploration, Editorial, Jan. 29

Increase access for mineral exploration? As it is, 81 per cent of B.C. is open for mineral exploration. Mining companies enjoy a “free entry” system in B.C. and this is what creates conflict and uncertainty.

We need to establish common sense restrictions on where mineral claims and mining leases are allowed. Establishing certain areas, such as key salmon habitat, off-limits to mining will go a long way to avoid opposition from First Nations and local communities.

We should ensure First Nations, private landowners and the public have a more meaningful role in decisions about mineral tenure. We need to increase limits and provide greater certainty to industry.

After Mount Polley, most British Columbians are probably less sympathetic to the Association for Mineral Exploration B.C.’s cries that having 19 per cent of the province’s land as off-limits is too much.

NIKKI SKUCE

Smithers

### **Brohm makes lousy ski hill**

Re: Concerns mount over Brohm Ridge ski hill proposal, Feb. 3

Having skied and hiked on Brohm Ridge, I can’t see the potential for much of a ski development on the ridge. The runs are not great, the weather is dodgy, and the snow level is inconsistent.

So there must be something else afoot — real estate development for sure — but could the proponents have their eye on eventual incursion into Garibaldi Park and onto Garibaldi Mountain itself?

Now that would be a ski area.

LARRY EMRICK

Vancouver

### **Add train link to new bridge**

The B.C. government’s commitment to a 10-lane bridge to replace the Massey tunnel is a critical link in TransLink’s transportation plan. The route is one of the province’s most critical transportation corridors, connecting the Metro Vancouver region to the U.S. highway system, the Tsawwassen ferry terminal,

Port Metro Vancouver's Deltaport container terminal and Vancouver's airport.

An opportunity exists to develop Paterson Park in Ladner in coordination with the mega-project. It could include an above-ground light rapid transit link from the corner of Highway 17 and Ladner Trunk Road crossing the Massey Bridge to connect with the Canada Line in Richmond. A "park and ride" at Paterson Park would allow commuters from many communities in the Fraser Valley access to the Canada Line. This would reduce traffic congestion at the Oak Street Bridge.

The cost of a light rapid transit link on the Massey Bridge mega-project could double before the bridge is completed so it is critical to include rapid transit in the plan from the start.

PAT PETTMAN

Tsawwassen

### **Feds should act quickly to fill pot policy and enforcement vacuum**

Re: Vancouver set to approve first legal marijuana shops, Feb. 1

It's important for people to know that, regardless of municipal business licensing processes, marijuana retail stores are illegal in Canada — full stop.

What this means on a practical level is that consumers who buy products from these stores do not have the protection of the law behind them. If they were stopped by police, they could be charged with possession, which unfortunately happens to far too many people across Canada every year.

The sole legal way for patients to access medical cannabis is through a licensed producer regulated by Health Canada, supported by a medical authorization from the patient's doctor. Forty thousand Canadian patients receive their medical cannabis this way, typically delivered to their door by mail within two days of ordering. Registered patients are legally protected, and can even claim the cost of their medicine as an allowable medical expense under the Income Tax Act.

As the industry association for Canada's legal, regulated medical cannabis producers, we are sympathetic to the efforts of municipalities such as Vancouver, who are attempting to use bylaws to gain some control over the proliferation of illegal marijuana dispensaries. However, what is really needed is for the federal government to close the policy and enforcement vacuum by moving quickly to establish a regulated and enforced legal industry for both medical and recreational cannabis.

COLETTE RIVET

Executive Director, Canadian Medical Cannabis Industry Association

### **NDP byelection do not come as a surprise**

Re: Is NDP sweep a sign of things to come, Feb. 3

The results of the two byelections are indicative of nothing. The NDP has held Vancouver-Mount

Pleasant for 80 years and it was one of only two seats they retained when they were crushed in 2001. No one expected them to lose that one.

The results in Coquitlam-Burke Mountain indicate a high level of voter apathy as only 20 per cent of those eligible bothered to vote. The NDP winning margin there was 626 votes, not exactly a ringing endorsement. Naturally the BC Liberals are disappointed to lose it, but will likely recover it in the general election when more voters turn out.

Governments usually lose byelections. Voters see it as a chance to send the government a wake-up message without defeating them. If the results are indicative of anything, it is that the electorate isn't really interested. When the general election comes and voters are required to take a hard look at the alternatives, they will again choose the safe path with the Liberals instead of leaping into the economic dark with the high-risk NDP.

GARTH M. EVANS

Vancouver

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