

August 29th, 2025

The Honorable Mike Farnworth
Minister of Transportation and Transit
Parliament Building
Victoria, BC V8V1X4

Dear Honorable Minister:

RE: Cowichan Valley Regional Transit Strike

On behalf of the Town of Lake Cowichan, its Council, and our residents, I am writing to express our community's deep concern over the prolonged labour dispute between Unifor Locals 114 and 333 and Transdev Canada, the transit operator.

This strike commenced on **February 8, 2025**. As of today, it has been ongoing for nearly seven months, with no resolution in sight. The length of this disruption is unprecedented for our area and is now placing a severe strain on our community, particularly our seniors who make up the majority of our population.

With local transit services within and between our communities effectively halted, residents have been left with very limited options. Seniors in particular are relying heavily on neighbours and volunteers from the local centre simply to attend critical medical appointments and access essential services. Many must travel 40–50 kilometres to reach doctors, specialists, or amenities not available in Lake Cowichan. This situation is already burdensome and unsustainable, and it is growing more untenable with each passing week.

Our concern is amplified as we approach the fall and winter seasons. Without a resolution, the lack of transit services will further isolate vulnerable residents, especially as inclement weather and shorter daylight hours make long-distance travel more difficult and hazardous. This raises serious equity, safety, and health concerns for our residents.

Given the significant and ongoing impacts on our community, we respectfully request that your Ministry intervene as soon as possible to bring the parties back to the table. We urge you to use all the tools available to assist in facilitating a negotiated settlement and to expedite the steps necessary to restore transit services in Lake Cowichan and the surrounding areas of West Cowichan, including Mesachie Lake, Youbou, and Honeymoon Bay.

Our residents urgently need a resolution. We ask for your leadership and support to bring this matter to a close before the situation worsens as we enter the fall and winter months.

Yours truly,

Mayor Tim McGonigle
Town of Lake Cowichan

cc: Cowichan Valley Regional District Board and Directors
Ministry of Labor

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