



CITY OF NELSON

January 8, 2021

Honourable Adrian Dix
Minister of Health
Government of British Columbia

Delivered via email

Re: Vaccination Priority for Essential Critical Infrastructure Municipal Employees

Dear Minister Dix,

In early December, the BC government announced they secured a minimal number of initial doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to distribute to those populations identified as the most vulnerable. In the following weeks, the government released a phased approach to administering the vaccine and listed the populations included in each phase. While the City of Nelson acknowledges the extraordinary amount of work the Province has put into developing the distribution process, we would like to request a review of the vaccine distribution priority lists to include essential critical infrastructure employees.

The Province's website outlines the specific groups that will be first and second priority for receiving the vaccine; the list does not include essential service providers such as water, IT, energy and utility workers. This does not appear to align with the recommendations from the *National Advisory Committee on Immunization* upon which the Province has developed its priorities for the first and second phase of vaccinations. The Committee has indicated municipal workers identified as 'essential' should be prioritized to maintain reliable operation of critical infrastructure services and functions.

With COVID-19 cases circulating in rural communities, the risk of an outbreak causing the loss of key personnel trained to manage essential service delivery could exacerbate the current public health emergency. This would have a much larger impact in smaller communities, such as ours, as resources and appropriately trained personnel replacements are more challenging to access than in larger centers. For example, the City of Nelson has five linemen that maintain our electrical distribution & transmission system that serves over 10,000 customers.

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The City recognizes the number of vaccine doses and how they will be distributed throughout BC is a fragile and fluid process. We hope this request can be reviewed and addressed in time to include essential municipal critical infrastructure employees in the second priority group of the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out.

We appreciate your timely consideration of this matter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'John Dooley', written over a faint circular outline.

John Dooley
Mayor, City of Nelson

Cc: Premier John Horgan, Office of the Premier
Hon. Josie Osborne, Minister of Municipal Affairs
Brittney Anderson, MLA, Nelson-Creston
Nelson City Council
Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM)
Association of Kootenay Boundary Local Governments (AKBLG)
British Columbia Local Governments