



Vancouver Island Cave Exploration Group

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Attn: His Worship Mayor Stewart Young and Council

Dear Mayor Young:

Subject: Protection of Langford Lake Cave

I am writing in my capacity as President of the Vancouver Island Cave Exploration Group (VICEG) to draw your attention to a matter that is of great concern to those whose interests I represent as well as our colleagues worldwide. This is the immediate need to take steps to ensure the long-term protection of a unique natural amenity known as Langford Lake Cave.

As you may know, a major development is currently taking place on Skirt Mountain (now often referred to as Bear Mountain) near Langford in the Greater Victoria area. Despite the developer's public commitment to an environmentally-responsible approach to his project, this development has apparently already resulted in the destruction of SPAET Cave, a limestone (or karst) feature which lay within the development footprint. The circumstances surrounding this sorry event drew heavy international attention from caving and karst management interests worldwide.

It has now come to our attention that a second cave, that located near Langford Lake and named accordingly, is threatened by the development of transportation infrastructure associated with the Bear Mountain development. Specifically, we have confirmed that the proposed Highway 1 interchange which will primarily serve the Bear Mountain area will be located immediately adjacent to the cave in an area formerly designated as green space. Furthermore, the alignment of the survey stakes (which are already in the ground) indicates that the cave will almost certainly be damaged or destroyed by road construction unless significant design changes are undertaken.

I understand that, unlike SPAET Cave which was on private property, Langford Lake Cave is located on land which is publicly owned through the Provincial Capital Commission. To allow the same development initiative to destroy a second cave in the same area, and one which is located on public land, would be to add insult to injury and would reflect extremely negatively upon the commitment of regional governments in our Province to encourage development in an environmentally sustainable and socially responsible manner. It would also appear as an indication of support by regional government for the Bear Mountain developer's earlier failure to honor his public commitment to environmental responsibility. This would not go unnoticed.

British Columbia is renowned throughout the world for the unique natural wilderness which exists underground in our Province. A significant proportion of this fragile resource is located on Vancouver Island. Each year our Club welcomes visitors from around the world who come to BC specifically to experience these remarkable features of British Columbia's landscape, bringing their tourist dollars with them.

Caves are different from many other features of the British Columbia landscape in that they take millions of years to form and to develop the astounding mineral displays which many of them contain, but can be

irreparably damaged or destroyed forever by careless human intervention in a matter of hours. Once damaged or destroyed, the time-frames mentioned above mean that the impact can only be viewed as permanent. Furthermore, there is no way of compensating or offsetting these impacts.

I therefore urge you and your colleagues to take whatever steps may be open to you to ensure the long-term protection of Langford Lake Cave and indeed the other karst resources of our Province. As in the case of SPAET Cave, the eyes of the world will be upon us as we pursue this matter further. We have a chance to offset the negative publicity which the former debacle has brought upon us as a Province – I hope most sincerely that we use this opportunity wisely.

If a visit to the cave in company with members of my organization would be of assistance, I have no doubt that this could readily be arranged.

Respectfully submitted,

Yours sincerely,

Adrian C. Duncan, B.A.Sc., M.A.Sc., P.Eng
President, Vancouver Island Cave Exploration Group.