



November 8, 2017

Fire Chiefs Association of British Columbia
118 Ravine Drive (Bsmt)
Port Moody, BC V3H 4T2

President Lemire,

I wish to express my appreciation to the Fire Chiefs Association of BC and all of the fire chiefs that directly and indirectly supported the Office of the Fire Commissioner during the 2017 Wildfire response. In this unprecedented fire season we saw over 1.2 million hectares burned without loss of life or serious injury which in itself is a tribute to all the responders involved.

On July 7th with over 100 fire starts on the first day, the season quickly progressed on multiple fronts affecting numerous communities simultaneously. Initial response actions focused on the deployment of Structure Protection Units (SPU) by the OFC, including many from fire departments across the province. As the scope and scale of the response continued to escalate, the OFC found it necessary to deploy structural engines, tenders and command units to provide strike team and task force resources to augment the SPU's. These ongoing OFC requests were continually met by fire departments that were able to offer their apparatus and crews to fill the identified needs. In many cases departments had their apparatus deployed through multiple crew rotations in order to maintain the response capabilities at the various incidents. To provide some context, overall there were in excess of 100 different fire departments that provided resources and during the peak days of the deployment this included; 8 Type 1 SPU's, 28 Type 2 SPU's, 58 Engines, 27 Tenders and 2 Command units (approx. 500 personnel).

I was extremely impressed at the seamless manner in which departments operated side by side in ever evolving circumstances, despite having never worked together before. A wide variety of skills of both career and volunteer firefighters were evident and there was a great deal of mentoring that took place as urban and rural departments alike shared their knowledge and skill sets in their respective areas of expertise. While travelling through the affected areas during the response, I was pleased to hear the regular positive comments being made about the high levels of cooperation and respect shown by all concerned. It truly was an example of the fire service coming together "as one" to protect the public and all concerned should be proud of the response.

As we move forward in the post season we are debriefing to gather 'lessons learned' and identifying improvements that can be made going forward. We look forward to input from the Association and fire chiefs for consideration in moving towards our next fire season in 2018. We also look forward to updating your members with any changes as they become finalized. In the near future we will be coordinating some provincial recognition for the departments that

were engaged in this year's response and our staff will work with the Association to facilitate that action.

In conclusion, I want to thank the fire chiefs, the members of their departments (including spouses and support staff), along with the Fire Chiefs Association for their outstanding contributions and importantly I thank you all for the support that you have given to the Office of the Fire Commissioner in the deployment of the Structure Protection resources and in providing support to local governments and their communities. This was an unparalleled team effort by all – it was a job well done!

Respectfully,

Gordon Anderson, FIFireE, CFO
Fire Commissioner