



COLUMBIA SHUSWAP REGIONAL DISTRICT

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July 10, 2026

Sent by Email: premier@gov.bc.ca

The Honourable David Eby
Premier of British Columbia
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC

Dear Premier Eby:

Re: Support for RDOS Concerns Regarding Bill M214 – Firefighters' Health Act

On behalf of the Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSRD) Board of Directors, we are writing to express our strong support for the concerns raised by the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) regarding the operational and financial implications of Bill M214 – Firefighters' Health Act. Like the RDOS, the CSRD fully supports the intent of this legislation and recognizes the importance of safeguarding the long-term health and well-being of firefighters across British Columbia. However, the challenges identified by the RDOS are equally present within our region for volunteer/paid-on-call fire departments that operate with limited financial and medical resources.

The RDOS notes that “screening costs may range from approximately \$250 to \$900 per firefighter, with some jurisdictions reporting costs of approximately \$750 per member annually” and that, for their region, “total annual costs could exceed \$190,000”. With 15 fire departments and more than 400 firefighters, the CSRD faces an even greater financial impact. Based on the same cost ranges cited by the RDOS, annual screening expenses for the CSRD could exceed \$300,000, representing a substantial and unfunded burden on local taxpayers.

We also share the concern regarding the shortage of qualified medical practitioners. This challenge is particularly acute in rural and remote communities within the CSRD, where access to primary care is already strained. Without reliable access to qualified assessors, compliance with the legislation may be unattainable despite best efforts.

The CSRD therefore supports the RDOS's recommendations and respectfully requests that the Province:

- Provide provincial funding or MSP coverage for mandatory firefighter health assessments.
- Address the shortage of qualified medical practitioners, including exploring alternative assessment models such as Par-Q+ or ePARmed-X+.
- Engage directly with local governments and volunteer/paid-on-call fire departments to ensure implementation is practical, equitable, and achievable across diverse service environments.

ELECTORAL AREAS

A GOLDEN-COLUMBIA
B REVELSTOKE-COLUMBIA

C EAGLE BAY-WHITE LAKE-TAPPEN
D FALKLAND-SALMON VALLEY

E SICAMOUS-MALAKWA
F NORTH SHUSWAP-SEYMOUR ARM
G BLIND BAY-SORRENTO-NOTCH HILL

MUNICIPALITIES

GOLDEN
REVELSTOKE

SALMON ARM
SICAMOUS

The CSRD remains committed to supporting firefighter health and safety. However, this must be done in a manner that is sustainable for rural communities and does not compromise service levels, firefighter retention, or compliance with Fire Underwriters Survey requirements.

We appreciate your consideration of these important issues and welcome the opportunity to participate in further discussions.

Yours truly,

COLUMBIA SHUSWAP REGIONAL DISTRICT

Per:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Melnychuk', is written over a horizontal line.

Natalya Melnychuk
CSRD Board Chair

NM/sc

cc: Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen