

Dear Chair Mark Pendergraft,

I am writing to share my heartfelt sadness at the challenges faced by you and the people of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen as you navigate this punishing wildfire season. It breaks my heart to think of everyone whose lives have been disrupted by this terrible force of nature, and the evacuation orders, alerts, loss and uncertainty that comes with it.

I can only imagine the weight of responsibility you are carrying as you steward your communities through such frightening and rapidly changes circumstances. Please know you do not carry that burden alone. People across British Columbia are thinking of you and standing with the communities of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen. I have been deeply moved by stories from across the province of neighbours providing food and essential goods, First Nations opening their community spaces to evacuees, faith-based organizations providing hot meals, or volunteers helping to move and care for pets and livestock. The bright spot in such dark times are the ways in which we care for one another, and I am proud at how our fellow British Columbians have shown up, including our BC Wildfire Service teams, first responders, and all working tirelessly on the front lines.

The communities of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen are in hearts and thoughts of all British Columbians during this unimaginably difficult time. There are still challenges to come, but in the meantime, I share my hope for the safety and well-being of all those affected in your community, and my gratitude to all supporting you at this time.

Sincerely,
Wendy



The Honourable **Wendy Cocchia**, C.M., O.B.C., LL.D(Hon)
Lieutenant Governor, British Columbia

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Government House acknowledges the Lekwungen Peoples, the Songhees and Esquimalt, upon whose traditional territory we are situated.