



April 29, 2026

The Honourable Mike Farnworth

Minister of Transportation and Transit
PO Box 9055 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

RE: Urgent Action Required — Traffic Safety and Speed Concerns on Highway 19A (Courtenay to Black Creek)

Dear Minister Farnworth,

On behalf of the Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce and the businesses, residents, and community organizations included in this letter, I am writing to respectfully but urgently request that the Ministry of Transportation and Transit undertake immediate safety improvements and speed management interventions on Highway 19A from Courtenay through Black Creek to the Oyster River.

The Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce is advancing this issue based on clear, consistent evidence from our Rural Business Initiative and ongoing engagement with local businesses in Electoral Area C. Through a provincially funded survey conducted in 2024 with Area C business owners, transportation, road safety, and parking were identified as the single greatest negative impact on business operations. These ranked higher than all other factors assessed. Since the completion of the survey, the Chamber has conducted numerous in-person site visits with Area C businesses, where traffic speed and safety on Highway 19A continue to be the most frequently raised and pressing concern.

While some view Highway 19A as simply a route linking the Comox Valley to Campbell River, the lived reality for residents and businesses is very different. Highway 19A *runs* directly through the heart of multiple Comox Valley communities including Courtenay, Grantham, Merville, and Black Creek, Saratoga beach and Miracle Beach. It is the primary access point for a significant number of local businesses, homes, farms, and community services. It presents significant safety risks due to excessive speeds, unsafe passing opportunities, and high collision rates.

Highway 19A is used every day for:

- **Access to local homes, businesses, and driveways**, many of which have direct vehicle egress onto the highway.
- **School access and school bus routes**, with frequent stops to pick up and drop off children throughout the corridor. Children also walk along the 19a to these stops.

- **Agricultural vehicles and equipment**, which must enter and exit the highway to access fields and farms.
- **Slow-moving vehicles and local deliveries**, reflecting its role as part of the local road network rather than a controlled-access expressway.
- **Tourism**, with points of interest, community events (we have three active community halls either directly along 19a or within 500m of it) agritourism and 19a-facing businesses.

Contrast this with Highway 19, the Inland Island Highway, which was explicitly constructed as an express north-south route intended to move long-distance traffic faster and more safely by bypassing built-up local corridors. Highway 19's design and purpose are reflected in its grade-separated intersections, limited access points, and higher speed limits that are appropriate for a true regional connector.

Given these differences in function and context, treating Highway 19A like a high-speed regional through road has serious safety implications. Its role as a community street with high local access and mixed users; including children, pedestrians, cyclists, agricultural machinery, and commercial traffic; warrants speed limits, engineering, and enforcement that reflect that reality, ***not just the desires of through drivers to maintain high speeds.***

Requested Actions

We respectfully request that the Ministry consider the following interventions, many of which align with proven traffic safety strategies used in jurisdictions around the world:

1. **Comprehensive Speed Review & Adjustment**
Conduct an engineering speed study and adjust posted limits where warranted to reflect road context and reduce crash severity.
2. **Targeted Enforcement & Monitoring**
Increase enforcement presence and deploy automated or radar-activated speed feedback signs to improve compliance.
3. **Corridor Safety Enhancements**
Review and implement safety countermeasures including rumble strips, enhanced signage, sight-line improvements, and potential traffic calming elements at locations with high collision frequency.
4. **Intersection and Access Improvements**
Prioritize intersection redesigns with documented high crash rates and include turning lanes or signalization where necessary.
5. **Community-Driven Safety Plan**
Engage local stakeholders in developing a corridor-wide safety action plan that reflects resident experience and regional transportation goals.

Conclusion

The community deeply appreciates your Ministry's ongoing work to keep British Columbians safe on the road. However, absent additional focused action on Highway 19A between Courtenay and Campbell River, the risk of further injury or loss of life remains unacceptably high.

We stand ready to support your team from sharing local insights and data to participating in stakeholder consultations to ensure that this corridor reflects the safety expectations of all its users.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. We look forward to your response and to timely progress toward meaningful safety improvements.

Respectfully,

Tracey Clarke
Executive Director
Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce

Fiona McQuillan
Rural Business Advisor
Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce

Merville Community Association
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Macaulay Road and Area Neighbourhood Association
<https://macaulayroadneighbours.com/> macaulayroadana@gmail.com

Saratoga and Miracle Beach Resident's Association
<https://www.sambra.ca/>
(250) 203-3795

Hubband Park Elementary School PAC
<https://www.comoxvalleyschools.ca/hubband-park-elementary/parent-advisory-council/hubbandvolunteer@gmail.com>

MARS Wildlife Rescue
1331 Williams Beach Rd, Merville BC V0R 2M0
<https://marswildliferescue.com/>
(250) 337-2021

Sunnydale Golf Course

5291 Island Hwy, Courtenay BC V9J 1S7
(250) 334-3194 greens.super@sunnydalegolf.ca

Island Truss

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Fireweed Farmstead

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Shorewolf Farm

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Clever Crow Farm

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Eatmore Sprouts & Greens Ltd.

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Roots Rising

5225 N Highway, Courtenay BC V9J 1S7
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Ponderosa Sod Farm

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Sweet Spread Farm

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Giddy Up Farm

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