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Dear Stakeholders,

I am writing to followup my January 2017 letter regarding the planned new interchange at 216th in Langley, on the north side of Highway 1.

As the deliberations continue on this project, in spite of some momentum to push forward in spite of very reasonable opposition and skepticism as to the adequacy of the response, I want to reiterate my position and be clear that substantial unresolved questions remain such that significant concern as to the adverse health impact of this plan is as yet unalleviated.

I have been involved in a series of emails and teleconferences with the community members and also the Ministry of Transportation.

- The community including vulnerable children and elderly will have increased exposures to traffic-related air pollution and noise. The amount of the increase is debatable, and the measures to mitigate this open to question, but these exposures are nearly certain to increase.
- Using the lens of prevention and a wide margin of safety and deference to uncertainty, these increased exposures can be predicted to infer an unwelcome increased risk of new asthma, allergy, low birth weight babies, heart disease and other substantial health concerns (including worsening of pre-existing disease) in nearby residents.
- A new Health Impacts Assessment, using current (state-of-the-art) methodology (which has evolved and improved significantly in recent years) is highly recommended. To date, the Ministry of Transportation has relied on a 2008 Environmental Assessment (EA), which is woefully outdated and had no focal attention to the 216th interchange – the 216th interchange was included in the EA but not with nearly the depth required given the current concerns.
- My concerns regarding the Sierra report, which I raised in a series of early May emails following the April 26, 2017 teleconference with the MoT (Sierra in attendance), were not met with any substantially reassuring response. I remain doubtful of the rigour of the analysis and concerned that the parameters of proximity to traffic volume are chosen conveniently but inadequately relative to the current concerns. Furthermore, further elements of the modeling remain subject to large uncertainties in terms of its likelihood to reflect reality in the current environment. Less optimistic assumptions would paint a significantly more health-adverse picture. Finally, the ability of sound and pollution abating walls to perform as ideally intended is highly questionable.

- The Fraser Health Authority Medical Health Officer (Dr. Taylor) noted concerns similar to mine, in her May 1, 2017 letter to the community, but reflected limited jurisdiction to act on her concerns and a lack of response from requests to get more information that would inform her concern.
- Several stakeholders have yet to respond to my concerns of January 2017 (inclusive is Honourable Amarjeet Sohi, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, whose correspondence officer wrote on May 29, 2017 to apologize for the lengthy delay).

In summary, the last 6 months have not assuaged my concerns but rather have increased them. Several legitimate and outstanding concerns remain and I remain convinced that the appropriate action for the protection of the community is a halt to the interchange project until a rigorous and focused response from all stakeholders, including an HIA directed to this location, is complete.

I am happy to elaborate further should you have any doubt as to the seriousness of my concerns, reflecting real threat to the community surrounding this interchange, due to the proposed new highway exchange.

Sincerely,



Chris Carlsten, MD MPH FRCPC ABIM

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