

District of Sicamous

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January 26, 2024

The Honourable David Eby, MLA
Premier of the Province of British Columbia
premier@gov.bc.ca

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Re: Support for Bill-34

Dear Premier,

District of Sicamous council would like to express its support for Bill 34 and the *Restricting Public Consumption of Illegal Substances Act*.

We are disappointed by the Supreme Court's decision to grant a temporary injunction against Bill-34, which would protect children and youth from being exposed to illicit drug use and impose fines on those who choose to use drugs openly in public parks, sports fields and beaches.

Council urges the Province to appeal the Supreme Court decision.

When decriminalization came into force, council saw that the pilot program lacked guardrails and undermined provincial legislation regulating the possession and consumption of alcohol, tobacco and cannabis in public spaces.

For Sicamous, it was important to ban drug use in our parks, aligning with existing prohibitions for smoking, alcohol and cannabis. We knew we had to keep parks safe and welcoming for families. Amending our parks regulation bylaw allowed the District to implement its own guardrails and we were pleased to see the Province taking a similar approach.

Public spaces should continue to be enjoyed and used for their intended purpose.

Decriminalization aims to reduce the stigma that prevents illicit drug users from accessing lifesaving supports and services. We fear decriminalization will not solve the toxic drug crisis. Many of us have either lost a friend or loved one from toxic drugs or know someone who has lost a friend or family member. The number of overdoses, the lives lost, in our Province is devastating.

Increased funding and immediate access to addiction supports and treatment beds are

needed to help individuals and families suffering from addiction.

When help is sought, and a glimmer of hope exists, it must be available at that moment for there to be healing and change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colleen Anderson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Colleen" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Anderson".

Colleen Anderson, Mayor
DISTRICT OF SICAMOUS

cc. Mel Arnold, MP North-Okanagan Shuswap
Greg Kylo, MLA Shuswap
B.C. Municipalities and Regional Districts