

November 1st, 2021

Minister Katherine Conroy
FLNR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Re: Letter of Support for Cascade Skyline Gondola Project

Dear Minister Katherine Conroy,

We understand that the Province is in the process of considering an application for a Crown land tenures for the Cascade Skyline Gondola Project (CSGP), which will be an eco/cultural tourism project with its infrastructure situated over 90+% on Cheam (Pil'alt) First Nation lands. After reviewing the application, Indigenous Tourism BC supports the Cascade Skyline Gondola Project.

We understand that CSGP devoted considerable time and energy developing a vision for protecting and restoring the lands of the Chipmunk Creek watershed for sustainable use, integrating cultural and spiritual practices that follow snoweyelh, the laws, values, and principles that have been passed down over many generations and are still in use today. Moreover, CSGP has found broad support in the First Nations community and has the Cheam First Nation as a co-proponent and investor in the project. We also understand that the Skwah First Nation seeks to be an investor. At the core of the CSGP project, it is a \$80M eco-cultural tourism amenity providing more natural/human-powered activities and experiences for the local community and visitors alike. We are happy to learn there is potential for this project to be a majority-owned First Nation amenity as well.

Indigenous tourism is the fastest-growing sector of tourism, and we continue to reach historic numbers. Indigenous tourism is growing at roughly twice the rate of traditional tourism, supporting job growth, economic prosperity, Indigenous connection to land, and cultural and language resurgence within First Nation communities. The CSGP represents an unprecedented opportunity for the Indigenous tourism industry in BC. It is a cornerstone of the principles of reconciliation.

CSGP would be in alignment with your government's commitment to its foundational principles and has a myriad of other strengths that include:

- Stó:lō Cultural Centre at the base that could expect visitation numbers (>150k) that would make it the largest cultural centre in Canada, supporting cross-cultural education, job development and creation, cultural and heritage resurgence, language training, and more all woven into the gondola experience and the natural landscapes it accesses.
- Lasting and meaningful reconciliation – supporting CSGP would uphold the spirit and intent of your Governments many statements regarding First Nation rights.
- UNDRIPA which promotes Indigenous self-determination - economically, socially, and culturally
- A better future fighting climate change with CSGP having a light carbon footprint

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- Restoring wildlife habitat and enhances traditional use and cultural use
- Building a strong sustainable economy based upon our traditional values and interests
- A project that is innovative, clean, and feasible
- Doppelmayr and Leitner Poma, the world's two largest lift companies recently announced they would offer \$28 million in financing the Cascade Skyline Gondola Project which represents a very strong endorsement and is a testament this project is of significant value to the community in jobs and economic development and has long-term sustainability and viability.
- Support from the local governments of Chilliwack and Agassiz including the local tourism associations.

We wholeheartedly endorse the Cascade Skyline Gondola Project based on the ecological and cultural benefits that it will bring to the community through sustainable tourism, creating spectacular outdoor experiences for our local communities, the Fraser Valley, the rest of British Columbia, and beyond.

Yours Truly,



Brenda Baptiste (Chair)
Board of Indigenous Tourism B.C.

Cc: Charlene Mortensen, Land Technical Officer, Mountain Resorts Branch (FLNR&RD)
Allan Johnsrude, Executive Director South Coast Region (FLNR&RD)
Jennifer Goad, Executive Director, Mountain Resorts and Heritage (FLNR&RD)
MLA Kelli Paddon, Chilliwack-Kent
Hon. Melanie Mark, Minister of Tourism and Culture
Hon. Kathrine Conroy, Minister of FLNRORD
Walt Judas, President, Destination B.C.