

**From:** [Minister, SG SG:EX](#)  
**Cc:** [Minister, TCA TCA:EX](#) ; [mclayton@avalanche.ca](mailto:mclayton@avalanche.ca)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 24, 2009 8:29 AM  
**Subject:** Backcountry Access

February 24, 2009

Mr. Brian Wood  
President  
Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC

Dear Mr. Wood:

Thank you for your January 14, 2009 letter regarding search and rescue cost recovery or fines for people going out of bounds.

The Province is open to discussions with backcountry and ski area stakeholders regarding options to deter users (skiers, snowboarders, snowmobilers and others) from either skiing out of bounds or exposing themselves to known dangerous conditions. However, we have no intention of making it illegal for people to access British Columbia's backcountry for skiing or other activities.

I respect that the vast majority of skiers, snow-boarders and backcountry users in British Columbia are responsible and take a "common sense" approach to preparing for the conditions they may encounter. I am confident that they exercise good judgement, use the appropriate equipment, check weather conditions, and are knowledgeable and skilled in the activities they undertake. Equally as important is that most respect the warnings and/or bulletins that flag dangerous conditions and then make sound decisions to proceed, or not proceed, based on that information.

With regard to out of bounds skiers, the Province endorses strong actions by ski area owners/operators such as increasing patrol presence along area boundaries, revoking the privileges/passes of users who disregard their rules, and/or seeking recovery of their own search and rescue costs through civil litigation.

Government remains committed to increasing awareness and promoting education efforts for all ski area and backcountry users to encourage sound practices when engaged in these types of outdoor activities in British Columbia.

Thank you again for writing to express your views.

Yours sincerely,

John van Dongen  
Solicitor General

pc: The Honourable Bill Bennett  
Ms. Mary Clayton