



April 5, 2017

By Email (premier@gov.bc.ca)
The Honourable Christy Clark
Premier of British Columbia
PO Box 9041
Station Provincial Government
Victoria, BC V8W 9E1

Dear Premier,

Re: Converting the E&N Rail Line into a Multi-use Non-Motorized Recreation Trail

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC (FMCBC). Our organization promotes self-propelled activities, such as hiking, mountaineering, trail running and backcountry skiing through leadership, advocacy and education. We are a federation of outdoor clubs with a membership of over 5500 people from across the province. By working with outdoor recreation organizations, industry and government agencies, the FMCBC works to protect and maintain access for quality non-motorized recreation in B.C.'s mountains and wilderness.

Our organization supports the efforts being made by the Friends of Rails to Trails Vancouver Island (FORT-VI) to convert the old E&N rail bed from a rail track into a multi-use, non-motorized recreation trail system. According to representatives from FORT-VI, the current condition of the E&N rail bed is deteriorating so quickly that without a large investment by the provincial and federal governments the operating rail service will inevitably come to an end. According to FORT-VI, the operating revenue of the Island Corridor Foundation (ICF) who own the rail track and the associated right of way of the old E&N rail bed is inadequate and the ICF will be unable to achieve a rail service as the tracks and associated bridges and trestles have deteriorated to a point that it is no longer feasible to fix them. In addition, because the rail line has been dormant for several years now, local First Nations bands have filed for the right to take over the portions of the track that run through their reserves.

With all of these issues working against the reopening of a rail line on Vancouver Island, many people see this as a recreation and community building opportunity. FORT-VI is working on a viable alternative which is to remove the tracks from the rail bed and convert it to a multi-use, non-motorized trail. The FMCBC supports this initiative and encourages your government to support this concept as well because not only would it provide Vancouver Island residents with a viable walking, hiking, cycling and horseback riding trail, but it would also be an international tourism draw, bringing substantial economic benefits to the communities through which the trail would pass.

Yours truly,

Dave Wharton, President
Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC