



May 19, 2026

The Honourable Ravi Parmar, M.L.A.
Minister of Forests

Deena Beeston
Mayor of Ladysmith

via email

Re: Closure of Banon Creek Forest Service Road

Dear Minister Parmar and Mayor Beeston:

The BC Civil Liberties Association writes to you regarding the planned closure of the Banon Creek Forest Service Road.

We are deeply concerned about this action being taken by the Province and the Town of Ladysmith. As you are aware, limiting the ability of persons experiencing homelessness to shelter outdoors when indoor space is not available engages their Charter rights, as has long been recognized by the courts of British Columbia.

Closure of the gate limits the ability of unhoused individuals to shelter in the area, creating a threat to the safety and livelihood of an already compromised population by limiting their access to survival services such as food, employment and medical care. Additionally, it creates an inability to safely and quickly evacuate the area in case of an emergency, or for emergency response to attend efficiently. For these reasons, closure of the gate is effectively an eviction as it creates an inability for individuals to continue to shelter in the area.

We understand that individuals were provided with information about “alternatives” by the Ministry of Forests, however, the alternatives provided are either at capacity, unsuitable to many occupants (for example shelters for women fleeing abuse), or not sheltering facilities at all. It is our understanding that there are no actual alternatives for those residing in the area, which is why they are sheltering outside.

This is all in clear violation of a long line of caselaw in BC, including very recent decisions in Abbotsford and Prince George that require municipalities to ensure adequate and accessible alternative shelter is available before evicting encampments.

Can you please advise where individuals are expected to relocate? And please confirm that no action will be taken to destroy or remove the shelter and possessions of these individuals without ensuring they have a safe alternative place to go.

Preventing overnight sheltering where alternative shelter is not available is clearly unconstitutional. Recent caselaw suggests that preventing daytime sheltering also violates peoples Charter rights. As you may be aware, BCCLA currently has ongoing litigation against the City of Vancouver on this issue.

We urge you to halt this proposed eviction, and instead to work with the residents sheltering in the area to find a path forward that properly respects their human rights.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vibert Jack', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Vibert Jack
Litigation Director
BC Civil Liberties Association

CC: The Honourable Christine Boyle, M.L.A.
Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs