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**Subject:** FW: Letter to Mayor and Council: Strengthening Wildfire Preparedness in Our Community  
**Attachments:** Strengthening Wildfire Preparedness in Our Community.pdf

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**From:** Mike Nash [Redacted]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 25, 2025 1:34 PM  
**To:** cityclerk <[cityclerk@princegeorge.ca](mailto:cityclerk@princegeorge.ca)>  
**Subject:** Letter to Mayor and Council: Strengthening Wildfire Preparedness in Our Community

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**To:** Mayor and Council  
**From:** Mike Nash  
**Subject:** Strengthening Wildfire Preparedness in Our Community

Please include the attached letter on an upcoming Council meeting agenda.

Sincerely

Mike Nash,  
2453 Sadler Drive, Prince George, BC, V2K4N7.

[Redacted]

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Mayor and Council,  
City of Prince George,  
1100 Patricia Blvd,  
Prince George, BC, V2L 3V9.

November 25, 2025.

## Subject: Strengthening Wildfire Preparedness in Our Community

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am a 47-year resident of Prince George, concerned about the level of wildfire preparedness for our forest-based city in a time of ever-increasing climate-driven risk.

This is a follow-up to my letter of July 26, 2025,<sup>[1]</sup> in which I wish to offer some added perspective on the fire disaster that occurred last year to our neighbouring community of Jasper, and to share with you some recent research on wildfire mitigation and what we can expect from the changing climate in our region. I appreciate that you are already dealing with many challenges with respect to the downtown, the aquatic centre and an uncertain economic future, but as you begin budget deliberations for 2026, I urge you to take a more proactive approach with respect to wildfire mitigation and preparedness for our city.

While I am not a forestry or wildfire professional, I have gained much relevant experience through years of public involvements during my time here, including three years as a lay board member with the *Association of BC Forest Professionals* and six years as a board member with BC's *Forest Practices Board*. I led a site evacuation team at the former Northwood Corporate Office for ten years, and I have had other involvements in outdoor safety and forest safety. I am also the author of four books on the outdoors and outdoor safety in the Prince George area.

First, in the spirit of *a picture being worth a thousand words*, I invite you consider this pair of photographs that I took from the parking lot at the north end of the Skyline Trail in Jasper. The first image could have been taken from any number of wooded areas in Prince George, places such as the trailhead parking areas for the Cranbrook Hill Greenway, Forests for the World, or the Pidherny Recreation area. Imagine what the aftermath of a similar fire might look like here:



*(Photo Mike Nash, July 2017)*



*(Photo Mike Nash, July 2025)*



*As far as the eye can see... Hwy 93A south of Jasper (Photo Mike Nash, July 2025)*



*Above: Town of Jasper at the north end of the 35 X 10-kilometre fire complex - Image 36 of 68, Parks Canada: Jasper Wildfire 2024 - Photos of infrastructure,*  
<https://parks.canada.ca/pn-np/ab/jasper/visit/feu-alert-fire/feudeforet-jasper-wildfire>

A few years ago, I would have said that Prince George was punching above its weight on this issue relative to much of BC. In the aftermath of the mountain pine beetle a lot of good work was done removing dead pine and associated underbrush in the city, for example in the *Forests for the World* park. I recall that this work was aided by provincial funding and by the City's self-sustaining Community Forest. At that time the City also had a professional forester on staff who could provide local knowledge, continuity and a quick response to issues arising such as Douglas fir bark beetle outbreaks. It is true that there has been more recent additional wildfire mitigation work in a few places around town, for example in the Pidherny Recreation Area, notable because of the quality of the work and its location on the prevailing windward side of the city. However, we are not doing nearly enough at a time when wildfire risks are increasing.

A recent journal paper <sup>[2]</sup> presented the results of new climate modelling of the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) showing a rapid change to more regular and more intense effects. For Prince George, this implies more frequent higher temperatures, elevated wildfire risks, persistent multi-year droughts, reduced mountain snowpacks, higher oceanic temperatures and atmospheric *heat domes*.

Another perspective on wildfire mitigation was presented in a recent Prince George based webinar <sup>[3]</sup> on active forest and wildfire management versus forest resilience. The first presenter, renowned forest scientist, Dr. David Lindenmeyer (Order of Australia recipient, and no stranger to Prince George) presented new research on wildfire mitigation in Australia suggesting that work done close to communities must be repeated every seven to ten years as, after this, wildfire risk can be greater than if no work had been done at all.

In June 2023, the *Forest Practices Board* produced a special report on landscape resilience and fire management in BC.<sup>[4]</sup> This helps put things in a regional and provincial perspective.

The editorial <sup>[5]</sup> in a recent *Science* journal noted that "*Climate change is not a distant environmental issue, but a present financial and macroeconomic concern that will affect all of us, whether we accept it or not.*" It cited the January 2025 Palisades Fire in Los Angeles County with \$100 billion in property and capital losses and concluded that the work to adapt to a rapidly changing world cannot wait.

A social science paper <sup>[6]</sup> in the same issue laments that "...whereas the predictions of climate models have increasingly borne out, the assumptions about human behavior have not. Even as disasters mount, climate change remains low on voters' priority lists, and policy responses remain tepid." Is this 'boiling frog' metaphor the situation we face here in Prince George? And who is better positioned to take the lead to help change these attitudes than you, our elected city leaders?

If it can happen in Fort McMurray and Jasper and Los Angeles, it can certainly happen here in Prince George, a forest-based community that is increasingly affected by periods of high to extreme fire risk and increasingly frequent and intense windstorms. We have dodged a bullet here in recent years with minimal wildfire activity close to the city while many other parts of BC have been afflicted by extreme

wildfire and smoke. This may have led to a level of complacency within the community similar to that discussed in the social science article.

As a hiker and backpacker, I have seen first hand the impacts of climate-related disasters in the nearby Mount Robson Provincial Park, Jasper National Park, and elsewhere. I was acutely aware of the developing Jasper wildfire situation in the years leading up to the July 2024 catastrophe and its aftermath through many visits to the town and surrounding backcountry, and by attending Jasper National Park public forums over the years where wildfire was always a top issue among residents.

In the longer term (beyond ten years), and because they were relatively well prepared, the Jasper wildfire may be seen as a success story for reasons that I outlined in two provincial magazine articles.<sup>[7] [8]</sup> For several years wildfire had been a top issue of concern both within the community of Jasper and for Parks Canada, and they had done a considerable amount of fire mitigation and preparation that ultimately led to a successful nighttime evacuation of residents and visitors on one remaining highway, and saving two thirds of the town and all of its key infrastructure.

I do acknowledge the work that the city has undertaken recently with its *Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan* and the public input opportunity provided via its online portal, as well as the field trip that some councillors undertook recently to look at potential problem areas in the city; but I am not yet encouraged by what I see coming out of it.

In conclusion, I respectfully recommend the following:

1. Undertake significantly more wildfire mitigation work, especially on windward-facing escarpments and associated forestland, as well as in areas that might be prone to post-wildfire landslides.
2. Jasper is less than five hours away by road... take the opportunity (Council and senior staff) to go there to see first hand the impacts to the community and its surrounds; meet with your counterparts to learn more about what happened, what worked, and what didn't.
3. Review, communicate and practice (on paper at least) the city's emergency plans for a large-scale evacuation of the city in a wildfire emergency.
4. Hire a full-time professional forester with wildfire mitigation experience to provide day-to-day guidance and quick response to emerging issues and questions.
5. Undertake a risk assessment and cost/benefit analysis of the impact of a high-risk, high-consequence Jasper-scale wildfire disaster happening here in the next decade. This is not an unrealistic scenario when considering the changing climate, the experiences of other communities and the prospect of wind-driven embers falling on large parts of the city and quickly overwhelming fire crews.
6. Invest, in the 2026 budget, in seriously upping this game. There are no magic bullets, as Jasper (arguably better prepared than Prince George is today) found out; but we can and must do more.
7. As our elected representatives, you must take the lead to ensure a more wildfire resilient community, because the alternative is unthinkable.

I would be happy to discuss this further if you have any questions or follow-up.

Sincerely,

Mike Nash,  
Prince George, BC

## References

- [1] Letter to Mayor and Council, Jul 26, 2025, “*Wildfire Mitigation and Preparedness in the City of Prince George.*”
- [2] \**Nature Communications*, October 16, 2025, “*Global climate mode resonance due to rapidly intensifying El Niño-Southern Oscillation.*”
- [3] Webinar *Logging's Final Frontier? How "Active Management" Imperils Forest Resilience*, September 23, 2025: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRn4dS3JVao>. (It’s all worthwhile watching, but the key message is from Dr. Lindenmeyer in the first 30 minutes).
- [4] *Forest Practices Board*, Special Report, June 29, 2023, “*Forest and Fire Management in BC: Toward Landscape Resilience*”: <https://www.bcfpb.ca/release-publications/releases/forest-and-fire-management-in-bc-toward-landscape-resilience/>
- [5] \**Science*, November 6th 2025, “*Advancing Research on Financial Stability and Climate-Related Financial Risk.*”
- [6] \**Science*, November 6th 2025, “*The Normalization of Almost Everything: Our minds can get used to anything, and even crises start feeling normal.*”
- [7] “*Jasper Fire a Further Wake-Up Call for BC*” by Mike Nash; *BCnature* Winter 2024, p. 22-23.
- [8] “*The Jasper Wildfire: The Aftermath and Implications for B.C*” by Mike Nash; *Cloudburst* Fall/Winter 2025, pages 44-48: <https://issuu.com/fmcbc/docs/cloudburst-fall-winter2025>. (This article ends with a short promotion for Prince George).

\* *Nature* (and its public outreach *Nature Communications*) and *Science* are among the world’s most respected science journals.