

LABRADORWEST

Working Together During Covid-19

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

03/29/2020

Labrador City & Wabush, NL, March 29, 2020 – On Saturday, March 28 2020, Mayor Fabian Benoit, Mayor Ron Barron and MHA Jordan Brown held a conference call with Premier Dwight Ball, Minister Siobhan Coody and Leader of the NDP, Allison Coffin.

Both Mayors and the MHA presented a clear, strong and united message urging the Premier to take further measures to avoid the arrival and spread of COVID-19 in our communities.

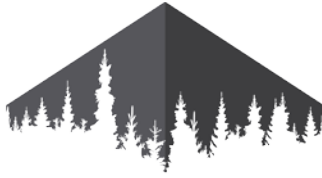
In statements to the Premier, both towns are requesting that check points at both entrances to our region have a police presence and be patrolled to ensure only those entering Labrador West fall under the legislated exemptions. Any other persons entering Labrador West by way of the Trans Labrador Highway or from Quebec via Route 500 for non-essential reasons should be required to self-isolate for 14 days. In addition, any persons arriving at the Wabush Airport should be required to self-isolate for 14 days.

Premier Dwight Ball acknowledged that Friday, March 27, 2020, the Quebec Provincial Police had set up at the Quebec border between Fermont and Labrador City for information purposes, and to educate travelers on the importance of staying home and not be moving between communities for non-essential purposes.

On Saturday March 28th the Quebec Government announced that beginning at 4 pm Quebec time, there will be a 24-hr presence at the Quebec-Labrador border. This means that moving forward, only essential services will be allowed to cross the border. The Province of NL is in agreement to provide coverage through the RNC to partner with the Quebec Police officers; however, the Labrador West RNC detachment does not have the resources to provide full coverage at this check point. Both Towns are in discussions to aid with coverage due to the shortage of manpower with the RNC and will work with them to ensure we have proper resources for coverage at the check points. We will continue to work with the province over the next few days on how we will provide a partnership with the RNC and Quebec Provincial Police.

In responding to Labrador West's request to impose self-isolation for those travelling into the region through the Wabush Airport, the Premier said he would need some time to ensure that the correct process is followed. Mayor's Benoit, Mayor Barron and MHA Brown are now awaiting information from the Premier office as to whether they have the authority under a municipally declared State Of Emergency to impose self-isolation restrictions at all three points of entrance to the region of Labrador West.

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While it may be viewed that these measures are extreme, an emergency situation calls for emergency measures. Council and Municipal Staff have not taken these decisions lightly. The Towns of Labrador City and the Town of Wabush have been in constant communication during this unprecedented global crisis. Municipal Staff, in collaboration with community partners from LG Health, RNC, Fire and Emergency Services-NL, and representatives from both the Iron Ore Company of Canada and Tacora Resources have been holding conference calls to debrief the Team on actions taken to date to protect our residents and workforces.

The time to act is now! Both Towns of Labrador City and Wabush are ready to do whatever it takes to protect our residents, our senior and vulnerable population as well as our front-line workers.

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