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July 16th, 2020

Sunshine Coast Regional District
1975 Field Road
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Dear SCRD Directors and Staff,

Thank you for allowing us to appear as delegates at the July 9th Planning Committee meeting and present on the importance of the re-opening of the SCRD Ice facilities on August 4th.

As emphasized in our presentation, the well-being of our youth is of the utmost importance. Over the past 4 months, our youth have been impacted the most. Sport is a major contributor to economic and social development. Its role is well recognized by Governments, including in the Political Declaration of the 2030 Agenda, which reflects on "the contribution sports make to the empowerment of women and of young people, individuals and communities, as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives."

Sport cements social cohesion, contributes to the social and emotional development of youth and promotes greater physicality. Sport has long been considered a valuable tool for fostering communication and building bridges between communities and generations.

The WHO recommends 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity per week. The benefits of such periodic exercise are proven very helpful, especially in times of **anxiety, crisis and fear**. There are concerns therefore that, in the context of the pandemic, lack of access to regular sporting or exercise routines may result in challenges to the immune system, physical health, including by leading to the commencement of or exacerbating existing diseases that have their roots in a sedentary lifestyle.

Lack of access to exercise and physical activity can also have mental health impacts, which can compound stress or anxiety that many will experience in the face of isolation from normal social life. We know the impact of the pandemic will be seen for many years to come. [Statistics Canada is already reporting concerning data regarding the impact seen to date.](#)

We shared with you Mental Health Stats and other reasons why it is so imperative that our facilities on the Sunshine Coast re-open as soon as possible. In the past we have presented on the importance of providing these facilities right here on the Sunshine Coast, giving every family access to ice sports, and reducing barriers that come about from travelling, including the extra cost associated with, time and family commitment.

Having travelled to multiple facilities in the lower mainland and now on Vancouver Island, it is apparent that, amidst a global pandemic, facilities can operate safely with proper protocols in place. Our Board volunteers have once again risen to the challenge and created protocols and safety measures that will protect our skaters and their families.

We are optimistically planning for the Gibsons Ice Arena to open on August 4th to offer our members the development they are longing for. This is what is right for our communities on the Sunshine Coast. Please do not deny us the right to use our local facilities at home during these unprecedented times. The increased footprint of travel to other communities puts us all at greater risk. Please do not deny our youth their ability to play sports, receive mentorship and learn essential values and ethics so important to their social and mental well-being.

Financial consequences and liabilities must not prevent our youth from participating in sports. As we like to say, Pay now- or pay later- or as written in an [August 2012 American Sports Medicine journal- Play now- or pay later....](#)the future of our youth depends on it.

We look forward to hearing the opening date for the Gibsons Ice Facility immediately following the July 23rd Committee meeting.

Thank you again for your dedication to our communities.

Sincerely,

Sunshine Coast Skating Club Board of Directors
and
Sunshine Coast Minor Hockey Association Board of Directors.