



Chairperson's Address to the BCAAP Funding Announcement at Long Beach Airport August 5, 2015

Try as we might, we cannot predict the future and I wonder the decision-makers of the 1940s had any idea that what was built as a military airport would become a critical piece of transportation infrastructure in a thriving regional economy some 75 years later.

It's a historical irony that an airport built to defend our shores from enemies is now a gateway to welcome people from all over the world. The airport, although hastily built during WWII and initially only used for a decade or so as a military base, provided "good bones" for the way we use it today. The airport is the fastest way for people and goods to reach, and leave, the West Coast of Vancouver Island and it is a critical to regional emergency response, including medical emergencies since it currently serves as the West Coast's only access for air ambulances.

So it's perhaps a bit of *geographical* irony that the flattest land between Tofino and Ucluelet is also the foggiest, and today we live with the decision made 75 years ago to locate the airport here, which has presented some significant issues, especially with respect to safety.

The ACRD has worked hard to improve the airport since acquiring it from the federal government in 2000, but it takes many partners to realize a successful airport, and I would be remiss not to mention them, including:

- the airlines that serve Tofino, Ucluelet and the First Nations communities of the region
- all the local businesses and residents who use and support the airport,
- and the federal government which has invested heavily in the airport and which, through Parks Canada, has worked with us very closely over the past years to increase the safety of the airport.

I am so pleased to have the Province of British Columbia as one of these partners, and on behalf of the Regional District, I'd like to express a sincere thank you for your significant investment in the safety of our airport, and in our region's economy.

And in my thanks please let me also express sincere appreciation to the ACRD's remarkable staff which has been working incredibly hard on the operations of both the ACRD's airports, and on a myriad of funding applications in the past months.

I remarked that we cannot predict the future, and as this event was being planned we didn't know that MLA Sturdy would be taking on a new portfolio and leaving the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. I'd like to thank you for your and the Ministry's support of Vancouver Island's transportation network and for the great dialogue we have had in the past few years about highways, airports, railways, ports and more.