



August 16, 2017

Dear MS Bike West Kootenay Challenge participant,

We have continued to closely monitor the fire and air quality situation in the Nelson area. This past week has continued to see fluctuations in the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) ratings in the region, as well as the onset of new fires. While there have been periods of high risk AQHI ratings, the average daily ratings have remained in the moderate risk range and we remain optimistic that the AQHI will stay below the high risk range. At this time, we have determined that the event will proceed as planned, but with caution and full understanding that any changes to the AQHI ratings may trigger a cancellation without notice in the hours leading up to, and during the event itself. Further, we are paying close attention to the fires burning in the surrounding area of Nelson. At this time, the proximity of those fires remains a safe distance from all points of our route, however should that situation change, it would call for an immediate suspension of the tour and we would work with local authorities regarding any evacuation orders and safety protocols. As previously communicated, the health and safety of our participants, volunteers and staff is our primary concern and we will not put you at risk if the air quality or fire situations worsen.

We do expect that at best, AQHI ratings will remain within the moderate risk range and we ask all participants to consider their own individual health profile and the challenging nature of the route when determining their ability to participate and complete the tour. It is critically important that all participants understand the risks and the impact that poor air quality can have on health, especially during strenuous activity. Some information regarding determining your own risk can be found [here](#) and we encourage you to speak with your health providers if you have any concerns.

As we recognize that ever-changing conditions brings some uncertainty, we will continue to accommodate any requests to transfer to another MS Bike event. The Cowichan Valley experience is proceeding this weekend (as there are no longer any AQHI concerns in the Duncan area of Vancouver Island), and we would be happy to welcome participants to that event, or to our Okanagan experience taking place in Kelowna on September 9-10. We also offer our support and understanding to any participants who wish to withdraw in light of the uncertainty of the current situation, and we will be pleased to provide you with complimentary registration to a 2018 MS Bike event of your choice.

We are looking forward to welcoming you this weekend, and celebrating your achievements. Once again, the dedication of participants has been inspiring and we are grateful for your support. Your patience and understanding during this unique situation has been truly appreciated. We commit to communicating with you as quickly as possible if the situation changes in the coming days.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to Jillian Earl at [jillian.earl@mssociety.ca](mailto:jillian.earl@mssociety.ca) if you have further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tania Vrionis', is positioned to the left of a vertical grey line.

Tania Vrionis, President  
MS Society of Canada, BC & Yukon Division