



Peninsula Township Fire Department
14247 Center Rd.
Traverse City, Michigan 49686
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Re: Bluff Road closure

February 15, 2023

Dear Town Board,

Good day. I am writing in regards to the potential continued closing or dead ending of Bluff Road due to shore erosion. As you are aware, there are quite a few homes on Bluff Road that a closure of any length could cause slower responses from the fire department for emergency calls. The fire department has gone to the area north of where Bluff Road is closed and has seen further issues with erosion that has forced immediate action by the department when driving our heavy vehicles on this stretch of road. Department members have been advised to stay away from the east shoulder of Bluff Road, but concerns still arise as the vehicles will have to be turned around in the roadway due to the road being closed.

The primary concern for the fire department is the delay of department vehicles responding to calls on Bluff Road north of where the road is temporarily closed. Initial vehicle comes from fire station 1, but additional vehicles such as the advanced life support ambulance come from the south and are forced to take a route that takes them north and then back south which creates extra time. The extra time can be anywhere from 1 to 5 minutes depending on road conditions. In medical runs where a person has stopped breathing, our crews have 4 to 6 minutes to intervene before the victim may suffer permanent or deadly brain damage. Any delays in responding can severely affect the crew's ability to help a patient have a successful outcome after experiencing a medical emergency.

One of the fire departments biggest concerns are fire situations. For fires in the Bluff Road area, water has to be hauled in to support operations and suppress fire. Water is typically dropped into a holding tank by a tanker then the tanker goes to refill. With the road closed, it does not allow for tanker trucks to use two-way traffic lanes and continue in an opposite direction of incoming tanker trucks. These trucks would have to turn around in the road way which would take considerable time and block other incoming tanker trucks hence potentially decreasing the amount of water available for use to fight the fire. Fire doubles in a size every minute, so any delays created to getting water on the fire can result in increased property damage as well as potential loss of life.

In closing, the Peninsula Township fire department asks that all efforts be made to fix and reopen Bluff Road. Having the road open could be the difference in the department's ability to provide medical and fire suppression assistance to the residents we serve.

Respectfully,

Fire Chief Fred Gilstorff