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To: Hannah Wasstrom <hwasstrom@nclga.ca>
Subject: NCLGA Advocacy Summary Reports

DEC 20 2019

Referred ToCAO / MCS
Board Jan 17/20

Good afternoon NCLGA Members,

As outlined in the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan, advocacy remains a key driver of operations for the Board of Directors. The NCLGA strives to adhere to our main advocacy goal: to provide Member input into informed decision-making.

On October 28th 2019, NCLGA President Lara Beckett, 1st Vice-President Sarrah Storey and Executive Director Terry Robert attended multiple delegation meetings with various Provincial Ministers, MLAs and Staff from Emergency Management BC. In each of the meetings, the NCLGA raised several topics that are underlying themes of many recent Member resolutions. For our Members we have prepared Advocacy Summary Reports detailing the discussions that took place during each meeting. Please find attached the first set of Advocacy Summary Reports.

1. Claire Trevena, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure
2. George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
3. Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development

In the months to come, the NCLGA will follow-up with many of the discussion items and resources collected during the meetings and continue to provide up-to-date information to our Membership.

Warm regards,

Hannah Wasstrom

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**Delegation: The Honourable George Heyman
Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy**

Discussion Highlights:

- **Municipal Solid Waste Forum (NCLGA #R22, 2019) and Subsidized Recycling Options for Small Municipalities (NCLGA #R38, 2019)**: The NCLGA discussed the challenges and expense of Solid Waste and Recycling in rural and remote areas, the need to include Industrial, Commercial and Institutional (ICI) paper and packaging in the EPR system for economies of scale, as well as the planning for the NCLGA Solid Waste Forum in 2020. Minister Heyman agreed that their Ministry would assist with the NCLGA Municipal Solid Waste Forum and offered to coordinate a conference call between the NCLGA, Peace River Regional District, Ministry Staff (Laurel Nash, Assistant Deputy Minister) and the Recycling Council of British Columbia (Brock MacDonald, CEO) to explore the topics further.
- **Geothermal Power (NCLGA #LR1, 2014)**: The NCLGA supported the development of geothermal power to contribute to the goals of Clean BC, and as a way to offset firewood burning and associated air quality issues. The NCLGA raised the need for the provincial government to support the business case for geothermal power by addressing the fees associated with the exploration permitting process currently under the Oil and Gas Commission (Note: drilling permit fees are estimated to be approximately 10 times cheaper if covered by the Mining Act. Under the Ministry of Energy and Mines) and limited access to Energy Purchase Agreements.

NCLGA Representatives:

- NCLGA President, Lara Becket (Area Director, Regional District of Fraser-Fort George)
- NCLGA Vice-President Sarrah Storey (Mayor, Village of Fraser Lake)
- Terry Robert, NCLGA Executive Director

Referenced Resolutions:

NCLGA Resolution	Sponsor Community	UBCM Status
<u>Municipal Solid Waste (#R22 – 2019)</u>	Bulkley Nechako Regional District	Not intended for submission to UBCM
<u>Subsidized Recycling Options for Small Municipalities (#R38 – 2019)</u>	Village of McBride	Endorsed as Amended
<u>Geothermal Power (#LR1 – 2014)</u>	Village of Valemount	Endorsed

Delegation: **The Honourable Doug Donaldson**
 Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations
 and Rural Development

Discussion Highlights:

- **Interior Forest Sector:** The NCLGA identified the need for the Provincial Government to recognize, prioritize and account for Local Government and community needs/benefits, from the forest industry in their regions, and to ensure that public interest is first and foremost under Bill 22 decisions. The NCLGA also emphasised the importance of local ecosystem integrity in multi-scale forest management decisions with reference to flood, wildfire, water quality (watershed health) and climate impacts on local communities. The Minister signified that changes to the BC Timber Sales model are under consideration that are intended to enhance regional and local operations.
- **BC Rural Dividend Program:** The NCLGA identified concerns regarding the reprofiling of \$25 million in Rural Dividend funding and inquired regarding the deployment of the \$69 million for programs and support for impacted workers and communities. The Minister reported that the Rural Dividend Fund is suspended for this year, not cancelled. All applications that are currently on hold will be considered in the next fiscal cycle (2020-21) and that the current funding structure to support impacted workers and communities is as follows:
 - \$40 million to establish a new cost-shared, early-retirement bridging program for older forest workers;
 - \$15 million to establish a new short-term forest employment program, focused on fire prevention and community resiliency projects;
 - \$12 million for workers to access skills, employer and community grant training;
 - \$2 million to establish a new job placement co-ordination office that will track the transition and employment of impacted forest workers on an individual basis; and
 - Community support grants aimed at providing short-term assistance to communities more profoundly impacted by the closure of a major forest employer.
 - **Recommended Local Government Action:** Ensure that the Rural Dividend Fund receives appropriate budget allocation for upcoming input cycles.
- **Geothermal Power:** The NCLGA emphasised the potential for geothermal power development to contribute to the goals of Clean BC, to help address Provincial air quality standards for ambient particulate matter exceedances (at a local and regional level) while creating new economic opportunities for communities experiencing decline due to significant changes to the resource management sectors in their regions. The NCLGA further expressed the need for the Provincial Government to support the development of the business case for geothermal power by addressing the fees associated with the current exploration drilling permitting process under the Oil and Gas Commission (Note: drilling permit fees are estimated to be approximately 10 times less under the Mining Act) and review the current position on Energy Purchase Agreements in light of current and future local community limitations, needs and opportunities. The Ministry indicated that no changes in Energy Purchase Agreements is anticipated at this time.

Summary of Referenced Resolutions¹

NCLGA Resolution	Sponsor Community	UBCM Status
<u>Local Authority in Provincial Planning (#R1 – 2019)</u>	Northern Rockies RM	Not admitted for debate
<u>Southern Mountain Caribou (#R23 – 2019)</u>	City of Prince George	Endorsed
<u>Municipal Solid Waste (#R22 – 2019)</u>	Bulkley-Nechako RD	Not admitted for debate
<u>Geothermal Power (#LR1 – 2014)</u>	Village of Valemount	Endorsed

¹ Related resolutions were referenced in an original briefing note but discussions were limited during the meeting.

North Central Local Government Association ADVOCACY SUMMARY REPORT

Meeting Date and Location: October 28, 2019 in Victoria, BC

Delegation: **The Honourable Claire Trevena**
Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure

Discussion Highlights:

- **BC Bus North and Bulkley-Nechako Highway 16:** The Ministry is negotiating co-funding for long distance bus service with the Federal Government to support BC Bus North, beyond the current two-year commitment (until 2021). The Bulkley-Nechako Transit service has committed funds until 2022. The NCLGA requested a written commitment that goes beyond 2022 prior to the next election and for funding of Volunteer Road Rescue Services on provincial highways (referred to the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General).
 - Recommended Local Government Action: Contact your local MLA to support long-term funding commitments for rural bus services in the upcoming provincial budget.
 - Note: Changes in fairs may be experienced as the transition to the private sector develops.
- **Safety of First Responders Attending a Roadside Accident:** The Ministry considered the request to limit speed through highway accident scenes to 30 km/hour difficult to enforce and potentially confusing to travelers when work zones are often 60 km/hour and the Slow Down-Move Over campaign is set at 70 km/hour.
- **Fire Mitigation on Transportation and Utility Corridors:** The Minister acknowledged the concern related to secondary roads where brush is cut and left, rather than mulched as along highways. However, the cost of clean-up across large tracks of secondary roads is problematic and the Minister requests that members work with the Ministry to identify high risk routes for priority focus.
 - Recommended Local Government Action: Request that local governments identify routes of highest risk (such as single access communities) and work with local contractors to reduce risk.
- **Sign for Cellular Phone Service on Highway 37 North:** Following a request from the Regional District of the Kitimat-Stikine, the NCLGA discussed the potential for installing signs to notify travellers regarding gaps in cellular phone service along Highway 37. The NCLGA was referred to the Ministry of Tourism and Tourist Information Centres to identify gaps and share the information with travellers. The Ministry advised on the limitations of road signage but agreed that that information could potentially be added to Drive BC.
- **Diminishing Access to Provincial In-Person Services:** Places additional travel pressures on member communities and the transportation network, further exacerbating the need for bus services, safe (fire mitigation and emergency workers) travel corridors and consistent cellular coverage. NCLGA representatives underscore the importance of in-person services and recommends implementing further actions (i.e. collaborate with Federal government) to enhance local presence.

Referenced NCLGA Resolutions:

NCLGA Resolution	Sponsor Community	UBCM Debate Status
Diminishing Access to Provincial Government In-Person Services (#R37 – 2019)	Village of McBride	Endorsed
Safety of First Responders Attending a Roadside Accident (#R19 – 2019)	Fraser-Fort George RD	Endorsed
Fire Mitigation on Transportation and Utility Corridors (#R16 – 2019)	Cariboo RD	Endorsed