

March, 3, 2021

Honourable Josie Osborne
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
PO Box 9056 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC
V8W 9E2

Cariboo Regional District
File No. 400-60-06

APR 13 2021

Referred To CAO

Emailed to: MAH.minister@gov.bc.ca

Re: Emergency Fire Equipment and Facilities Funding for Small Rural Communities.

Dear Minister Osborne,

We are looking for your support regarding a critical public safety issue in our small rural communities, specifically the lack of Provincial funding for essential local fire and road rescue services, which would include apparatus, equipment, training and facilities.

As you are aware the cost of protecting our communities has increased significantly over the years. The cost of apparatus, equipment, training, and facilities are putting the small rural communities in a critical financial bind, taxing the residents beyond what is affordable and without provincial support we feel our financial situation will be unsustainable.

This request for Provincial funding assistance has been presented to the Province through endorsed resolutions to the UBCM for over 27 years, to date the provincial response has been "NO". We feel we cannot accept this answer anymore.

Through the Insurance Premium Tax, the Province has collected a 4.4% tax revenue through residential / commercial fire insurance and automobile insurance since 1921, which we now believe goes into the government's general revenue fund. The estimated revenue collected is in the hundreds of millions annually, we are asking for some of this revenue to be available through grant programs or another form of assistance to support our communities so we can provide an affordable, reliable, and sustainable essential fire protection and road rescue service for our regional residents and businesses.

We look forward to your assistance in setting up meetings with the appropriate Ministers to discuss ways we can leverage reliable funding support for fire and road rescue services in small rural communities.

We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely the Undersigned,

Dennis Dugas, Mayor, District of Port Hardy
Mayor Gaby Wickstrom, Mayor, Town of Port McNeill
Kevin Cameron, Mayor, Village of Port Alice

Dennis Buchanan, Mayor, Village of Alert Bay
 Andrew Hory, Chair, Regional District of Mount Waddington
 Julie Colborne, Mayor, Village of Zeballos
 Martin Davis, Mayor, Village of Tahsis
 Mark Baker, Mayor, Village of Sayward
 Brad Unger, Mayor, Village of Gold River
 Leslie Baird, Mayor, Village of Cumberland
 Mark Swain, Mayor, District of Lantzville
 Ken Williams, Mayor, District of Highlands
 Bill Beamish, Mayor, Town of Gibsons
 Bob Day, Mayor, Lake Cowichan
 Mayco Noel, Mayor, District of Ucluelet
 Mayor and Council, District of Tofino Council

cc: Ian Morrison, President, Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities
 Michele Babchuk, Member of the Legislative Assembly
 Brian Frenkel, President, Union of British Columbia Municipalities

