

Leah Volkmann

From: Alice Johnston
Sent: September 8, 2021 1:41 PM
To: CRD Files
Subject: FW: Minister Letters Regarding North Central Local Government Association 2021 Resolutions
Attachments: Minister Beare.pdf; Minister Farnworth.pdf

Alice Johnston

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From: NCLGA Admin <admin@nclga.ca>
Sent: September 8, 2021 1:33 PM
To: Margo Wagner <mwagner@cariboord.ca>
Cc: John MacLean <jmaclean@cariboord.ca>; Alice Johnston <AJohnston@cariboord.ca>
Subject: Minister Letters Regarding North Central Local Government Association 2021 Resolutions

Dear Chair Wagner,

Yesterday NCLGA emailed letters to several Provincial Ministers which pertain to resolutions endorsed by members at NCLGA's 2021 AGM & Convention. I am pleased to forward to you the Minister letters that relate to 2021 resolutions which the Cariboo Regional District sponsored and submitted to NCLGA.

Later this week an advocacy report will be forwarded to NCLGA members regarding all of the Minister letters.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Kind Regards,

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September 7, 2021

The Honourable Lisa Beare
Minister of Citizens' Services
Room 151 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

SUBJECT: NCLGA Resolution R2

Dear Minister Beare,

Established in 1955, the North Central Local Government Association (NCLGA) is the voice of local governments in North Central British Columbia representing over 240 elected officials in 39 local governments.

At our 2021 AGM & Convention on May 5 & 6, NCLGA members debated 2021 member and executive resolutions related to important local government issues. We would like to bring to your attention NCLGA Resolution R2, titled "*Ensuring Access to Broadband and Cellular Services in BC*," which highlights the importance of the BC and federal government investing in developing the capital infrastructure necessary to deliver cost effective broadband services in rural and remote communities when the business case does not exist for the private sector.

Due to the high cost of installing the fibre-optic or co-axial cable to each home or organization in rural and remote communities, Internet Service Providers (ISPs) may decide not to invest in the infrastructure given the length of time to receive a return on their investment. As a result, many of these communities do not have reliable broadband or cellular service for work, school, health services, and connecting with family and friends.

While senior governments currently offer grant assistance for this infrastructure, NCLGA recommends that the federal and provincial government build, maintain and own the infrastructure for rural and remote areas of BC that are not serviced by current ISP's. They could lease the lines to ISP's for a reasonable cost to recover some of the costs to build the infrastructure. All parties would benefit – government, ISPs and communities.

Since the topic of this resolution falls within your Ministry's mandate, NCLGA wanted to bring the resolution to your attention. According to the Ministry's mandate letter, you will "*lead work to deliver high-speed connectivity throughout the province until all regions are connected to the high-speed network*". The NCLGA would like the opportunity to discuss this resolution with you this fall (see below).

Thank you for your attention to this matter and we look forward to your reply.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cori Ramsay', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Cori Ramsay
NCLGA President

Enclosed: NCLGA Resolution R2

CC: Chair Wagner, Cariboo Regional District

R2 – Ensuring Access to Broadband and Cellular Services in BC

Whereas broadband and cellular services are essential components of sustainable, resilient, and vibrant communities;

And whereas there are still considerable impediments to overcome in looking to the private sector providing meaningful, cost effective service to rural and remote communities:

Therefore be it resolved that NCLGA and UBCM lobby the federal and provincial governments to directly invest in the ownership and development of the needed capital infrastructure to facilitate effective, efficient and cost effective broadband services in rural and remote communities where a private sector business case does not exist.



September 7, 2021

The Honourable Mike Farnworth
Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General
Room 128 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

SUBJECT: NCLGA Resolutions ER1, R4, R5, and R7

Dear Minister Farnworth,

Established in 1955, the North Central Local Government Association (NCLGA) is the voice of local governments in North Central British Columbia representing over 240 elected officials in 39 local governments.

At our 2021 AGM & Convention on May 5 & 6, NCLGA members debated 2021 member and executive resolutions related to important local government issues.

We would like to bring to your attention NCLGA Resolutions R4, R5 and R7, which pertain to costs and risks associated with various emergency services. RCMP costs represent the largest expense in a local government's operating budget. Future wage increases will place a further financial burden on municipalities. To minimize costs, a police funding formula that fairly and equitably distributes RCMP expenses to all governments in BC is needed. Meanwhile, additional funding is necessary to support local government 911 service providers. A 911 call answer levy on cellular devices, similar to landline phones, is recommended. Since local governments are unable to collect a 911 call answer levy from cellular platforms, NCLGA requests that the Province of BC enact a 911 levy on mobile devices and forward these funds to local government 911 service providers. The third resolution pertains to independent fire services. Many local governments are receiving legal advice that providing financial or other support to these entities can expose local governments to legal and financial risk. Thus, legal and statutory measures that remove these risks from local government are needed.

A fourth resolution, ER1, pertains to timely information during states of emergency. Local governments need accurate and prompt information that can be shared with their residents. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that communication from regional health authorities and the provincial government to local governments has been less frequent than needed once a local COVID-19 outbreak has been declared. Moving forward, NCLGA requests that the Province identify ways to provide community-based information more quickly to local governments during local and provincial states of emergency.

Since the topic of these resolutions fall within your Ministry's authority, NCLGA wanted to bring these resolutions to your attention. Resolution ER1 is well aligned with priorities in your Ministry's mandate letter. According to the mandate letter, you will work "*closely with the Provincial Health Officer and your cabinet colleagues, continue to oversee the COVID-19 state of emergency and implement emergency orders as needed to support the health and well-being of British Columbians*". Meanwhile, your Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Preparedness will "*work with communities to identify gaps in existing emergency response procedures and resources, with the goal of updating and future-proofing our province-wide ability to respond to crises, including pandemics*".

The NCLGA would like the opportunity to discuss these resolutions with you this fall (see the enclosed list on page 3). Thank you for your attention to this matter and we look forward to your reply.

Respectfully,



Cori Ramsay
NCLGA President

Enclosed: NCLGA Resolutions ER1, R4, R5, and R7

CC: Minister Osborne, Ministry of Municipal Affairs; Minister Robinson, Ministry of Finance; Attorney General Eby, Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Housing; Mayor Ackerman, City of Fort St. John; Chair Thiessen, Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako; Chair Wagner, Cariboo Regional District

ER1 - Timely Information to Local Governments during Local/Provincial States of Emergencies (e.g. Floods, Wildfires and Pandemics)

Whereas local governments in BC are orders of government that are the first to respond to questions/concerns, resulting from emergencies, whether natural disasters like wildfires and floods or pandemics like the current COVID-19 pandemic;

And whereas local governments require accurate and timely information that can be shared with their residents, both for safety purposes and to reduce anxiety of their residents;

And whereas the communication from local health authorities and the provincial government to local governments, although improving, has only reached the minimum acceptable standard of twice weekly updates once a local pandemic outbreak has been declared:

Therefore be it resolved that NCLGA and UBCM lobby the BC Government to find ways/means to have accurate and more-timely community-based information that can be shared with local governments and their residents during declared local and provincial states of emergency.

R4 - RCMP Costs for Municipalities

Whereas municipalities between 5,000 and 14,999 in population pay 70% of RCMP costs and municipalities over 15,000 in population pay 90% of RCMP costs which is the largest cost centre in a local government's operating budget;

And whereas RCMP contract policing wage increases are imminent with the implementation of a unionized workforce within the next two years which will place an additional financial burden on municipalities;

Therefore be it resolved that the NCLGA and UBCM lobby the provincial government to implement a police funding formula that fairly and equitably distributes RCMP expenses to all governments throughout the province.

R5 - 911 Call Answer Levy

Whereas local government is only able to collect a 911 call answer levy from landline subscriptions;

And whereas landline subscriptions across the province are decreasing;

And whereas local governments in the province do not have the ability to collect a 911 call answer levy from cellular telecommunications platforms;

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM petition the Province of BC to enact a provincial 911 levy to include the collection of monthly charges from mobile devices, and provide these funds directly to local government 911 service providers.

R7 - Funding for Independent Fire Services

Whereas many of our smaller and remote rural communities are served by independent fire services;

And whereas many local governments are receiving legal advice that offering funding or other supports to independent fire services can expose the local government to legal and financial risk;

Therefore be it resolved that NCLGA and UBCM lobby the provincial government for specific legal and statutory measures designed to remove any and all legal or financial risk from local government for providing financial or other supports to independent fire services.