



PEACE RIVER REGIONAL DISTRICT

January 3, 2023

Province of British Columbia

BC Flood Strategy

Via Email: BCFloodStrategy@gov.bc.ca

Re: Written Submission for the BC Flood Strategy Intentions Paper

To whom it may concern,

Please accept the following as the official response from the Regional Board of the Peace River Regional District to the Provincial flood strategy intention paper titled "From Flood Risk to Resilience in B.C.: An Intentions Paper".

The Regional District recognizes the importance of flood resilience, particularly given the increasing frequency of flood events resulting from land use pressures and climate change. A modern provincial strategy on flood risk reduction, coupled with the necessary funding and resources, has the potential to significantly enhance public safety and reduce the people, economic and environmental impacts of flooding.

With respect to the intentions paper, the Regional District has comments aligning with three themes as follows:

1. Recognizing the need for sustainable funding

Sustainable funding is necessary in order to enable local governments to advance flood resilience efforts. Traditionally, the funding available from the Provincial and Federal governments has been restricted to project-specific grants, and often for only a portion of the project cost. As a result, flood risk reduction projects are often unaffordable for rural areas that lack the tax base to support significant investments in technical assessments, infrastructure construction, property buy-outs, and other risk reduction and mitigation efforts. In addition, many local governments lack the staffing resources to proactively address flood risk and would benefit greatly from sustainable funding for emergency planning and land use staff.

2. Recognizing that each region has unique needs and resources

The flood strategy, and any associated legislation, regulations, and guidance, must recognize that the needs and resources will vary greatly on both a regional and local level. For regional districts, it should be recognized that regional districts lack the ability to undertake significant flood risk reduction projects without the establishment of service functions by bylaw (with elector approval), and cannot borrow for greater than 5 years

diverse. vast. abundant.

without further elector approval. This often makes carrying out flood risk reduction projects that will only impact a small number of properties unfeasible unless they are fully funded by the Provincial or Federal governments.

Additionally, many potential flood mitigation projects relate almost entirely to Crown land and waterways, and as such, the Province should be responsible for planning and carrying out the work in those areas (in consultation with the local government) rather than placing the burden on local government to mitigate risks on Crown land.

For the Peace River Regional District (PRRD) specifically, the vast size and remoteness of the region should be recognized before prescribing specific requirements for regional districts. With an area of 117,000 kilometers, the PRRD lacks the capacity to plan and implement flood risk reduction across all areas of the region. It should also be noted that the region does not have mandatory building permits and inspections for the majority of our electoral areas due to the vastness and, as a result, we have limited influence on construction within potential flood plains.

3. Recognizing the potential for negative impacts on people and industry

While recognizing that there are many significant positive impacts for people, economies and environments that may result from the action areas identified in the intention paper, the Province must also recognize and plan for negative impacts. Greater identification of flood risk areas, and the potential resulting land use restrictions and infrastructure projects, have the potential for significant financial and way-of-life impacts for property owners and industry. Without substantial financial support from the Provincial government, there could be devastating impacts on many residents who currently live, work or recreate within flood-risk areas.

We trust that you will consider this feedback and hope that there will be further opportunities for feedback and engagement prior to the adoption of a formal flood strategy. Should you have any questions regarding our response, please feel free to contact Sean Cairns, Protective Services Manager, at sean.cairns@prrd.bc.ca.

Yours truly,

Leonard Hiebert,
Chair of the Regional Board

REPLY TO: prrd.dc@prrd.bc.ca