



Date: 23/02/2024

To: Chair and Directors, Cariboo Regional District Board

And To: Murray Daly, Chief Administrative Officer

From: Gerald Pinchbeck, Manager of Communications

Date of Meeting: Cariboo Regional District Board_Mar01_2024

File: 0400-60/2024/NCLGA

Short Summary:

Request for NCLGA Resolution on Action to Address Challenges Facing B.C.'s Rural Seniors

Voting:

Corporate Vote - Unweighted

Memorandum:

Director Sjostrom has requested that the Board consider submitting a resolution to the NCLGA convention to address concerns raised by the Office of the Seniors Advocate about the availability of supports and services for seniors in rural B.C. The concerns are identified and discussed throughout the attached report from the Seniors Advocate, and culminate in seven recommendations to the Province of B.C. These recommendations include:

1. Develop and implement a rural seniors housing strategy.
2. Develop and implement a rural health human resource strategy.
3. Develop and implement a rural seniors' home and community care strategy.
4. Develop and implement a provincial long-term care and assisted living plan based on equity throughout the Province.
5. Develop and implement a provincial rural transportation strategy.
6. Improve and better promote both the provincial travel assistance program and Hope Air.
7. Increase rural representation in government through the creation of a ministry or minister of state for rural B.C.

The Union of B.C. Municipalities has endorsed 28 resolutions since 2003 on seniors' issues, encompassing issues pertaining to seniors' health, housing, long-term care, services, and transportation. The report in question broadly addresses current issues identified by these resolutions, in some form, and the proposed resolution seeks to consolidate advocacy around the issues contained within the report.

It should be noted that the Province of B.C. has established a Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Health (Ministry of Health) and a Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Development (Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation). However, the roles and influence of these offices

is limited, as Parliamentary Secretaries provide assistance to a designated Minister to fulfill that Ministry's mandate as directed by the Minister they have been assigned to. They also represent the Minister in the Legislative Assembly, at public events, and in carrying out ministerial duties in the absence of the Minister. However, a Parliamentary Secretary does not make key decisions and holds limited decision making authority with respect to their area of focus. A Minister, by proxy, is responsible and accountable for carrying out a mandate issued to them by the Premier, and has more authority to advance significant policy changes than other members of the governing party, save for the Premier. This key difference is highlighted in Recommendation #7 in the attached report.

The NCLGA and UBCM Executives reserve the right to provide or withhold recommendations about the resolution's disposition, or refer the resolution without consideration at convention. If the NCLGA endorses the proposed resolution and the UBCM Executive provides a recommendation to Endorse or Not Endorse it, this resolution would be introduced within the consent agenda for the convention, and would not require specific preparation as a result.

The proposed resolution reads as follows:

WHEREAS rural B.C. has a proportionately larger and faster growing seniors' population than urban B.C., yet has less infrastructure and resources to support its aging population;

AND WHEREAS a greater and more focused provincial response to ongoing concerns about inequities in services and supports for seniors in rural B.C. is required to address the inadequacies of current approaches to such issues;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the North Central Local Government Association and Union of B.C. Municipalities endorse the recommendations of the Office of the Seniors Advocate's report titled "Challenges Facing B.C.'s Rural Seniors" and dated February 2024, and calls on the Provincial Government to implement said recommendations;

AND FURTHER that the NCLGA and UBCM call on the Province of B.C. to begin doing so first by establishing a Ministry or Minister of State for rural B.C. in recognition of the geographic imbalance of regional representation in the Legislative Assembly.

Attachments:

Office of the Seniors' Advocate report titled "Challenges Facing B.C.'s Rural Seniors" dated February 2024.

Financial Implications:

None.

Policy Implications:

None.

Alignment with Strategic Plan:

- Infrastructure and Asset Management:** To establish a systematic, predictable approach to managing the regional district's assets and infrastructure that builds on current asset management data and condition assessments.
- Enhanced Communications and Engagement:** To build trust and credibility of the regional district by enhancing our communications and engagement with citizens, stakeholders, and volunteers.
- Effective and Responsive Land Use Planning and Development:** To ensure our land use planning and development is responsive to future growth and housing needs, anticipates risks and hazards associated with climate change and provides efficient and consistent processes for landowners and developers.
- Relationships with First Nations:** To foster a healthy and inclusive region by building and strengthening our relationships with First Nations and embracing the principles of reconciliation.

This item does not address a specific item in the Board's strategic priorities.

CAO Comments:

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Options:

1. Endorse recommendation;
2. Adopt an alternate resolution;
3. Refer to staff for additional information.

Recommendation:

That the following resolution be submitted to the North Central Local Government Association for consideration at its 2024 annual general meeting:

WHEREAS rural B.C. has a proportionately larger and faster growing seniors' population than urban B.C., yet has less infrastructure and resources to support its aging population;

AND WHEREAS a greater and more focused provincial response to ongoing concerns about inequities in services and supports for seniors in rural B.C. is required to address the inadequacies of current approaches to such issues;

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