PROVINCIAL RESPONSE

to the

Resolutions of the 2006
Union Of British Columbia
Municipalities Convention

Government of British Columbia
Ministry of Community Services
Local Government Policy and Research Branch

February 2007
SPECIAL RESOLUTIONS

SR2  BC BUILDING CODE CHANGES REGARDING SLOPE STABILITY
SR3  PUBLIC TRANSIT TRUST

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RESOLUTIONS INTRODUCED OFF THE FLOOR

CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE PROPERTY BYLAWS
WHEREAS changes to the BC Building Code that will be effective December 15 contain significantly higher seismic hazard probabilities;

AND WHEREAS as a result of these changes, sloping ground that was considered safe previously will be considered unsafe under the new levels:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government delay the effective date for changes to the BC Building Code until the acceptable level of risk and properly defined standards for slope stability can be determined.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Forests and Range (Ministry Responsible for Housing)

The Ministry Responsible for Housing (Ministry) is approaching this core issue in a number of ways.

Immediately, by:
• Implementing a new building regulation that establishes, for geotechnical analysis of slope stability, criterion of seismic hazard level that does not exceed a probability of 10% in 50 years, carrying forward current practices;
• working with the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientist of BC (APEG-BC) on practice guidelines for geotechnical assessment of slope stability, and
• Working with the Union of British Columbia Municipalities on guidance for local governments on determining the acceptable level of risk that a community is willing to accept related to slope or soil movement resulting from a seismic event.

Over the long term, by:

• working with stakeholders and other ministries to address the policy issues associated with geotechnical assessment of slope stability.
WHEREAS local government expected to receive $102 million in federal funding for transit over two years under the Public Transit Agreement (PTA);

AND WHEREAS the PTA was reduced to a one-year agreement and funding was subsequently included in the Public Transit Trust:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Province of British Columbia commit to transfer to UBCM a minimum of $52 million from the $119 million federal Public Transit Trust for equitable distribution to local transit systems.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Community Services

Contingent on a 2005/06 federal surplus in excess of $2 billion, the 2006 Federal budget provided for the establishment of a $900 million, one-time Public Transit Capital Trust (PTCT). This initiative is to provide supplementary funding to provinces and territories for capital investments in public transit infrastructure that are intended to: reduce traffic congestion in urban areas, reduce carbon dioxide and other emission and make communities more liveable.

On September 26, 2006, a Federal surplus of $13.2 billion was announced, confirming British Columbia’s (Province) maximum trust allocation of $119.3 million. The federal government has provided a set of operating principles intended to guide investments made under the PTCT. Work is currently underway to develop a range of options for the distribution and use of the Trust funds.

The views expressed by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities will be taken under consideration as this work progresses. More details on how the trust funds can best be used for the benefit of the Province’s communities should be available over the coming months.
WHEREAS joint and several liability can have a devastating financial impact on local governments;

AND WHEREAS local governments have no way of mitigating their chances of a joint and several liability occurrence happening:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities petition the provincial government to reduce the ultimate limitation period from 30 years to 10 years;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the provincial government require all participants in the building system to have insurance.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Forests and Range and Minister Responsible for Housing

The Province of British Columbia (Province) is aware of the financial effects of joint and several liabilities on defendants in construction litigation. The Province’s Modernization Strategy (Strategy) will aim to rationalize the regulation of the construction and housing industry. The Strategy will consist of five inter-related projects with a goal towards balancing system benefits and accountabilities among all key building participants.

As part of this Strategy, a Liability and Risk Project has goals of reducing inequity in the liability system, and enforcing accountability by ensuring all building participants can cover their share of liability if a claim is made. The Liability and Risk Project will examine options related to changes in the general ultimate limitation period and government mandated liability insurance.

The Province will be holding public consultations and meeting with stakeholders, including local governments, to discuss these issues in late 2006 and spring 2007.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Attorney General

The Ministry of Attorney General (Ministry) will be reviewing the Limitation Act. The Ministry intends to discuss changes in this area with stakeholders and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities will be invited to participate in the consultations once they are underway.
WHEREAS manufactured home parks are a unique type of housing that provides an affordable option and lifestyle for people who may not wish to live in traditional multi-family housing;

AND WHEREAS the redevelopment of existing manufactured home parks is an aspect of urban growth and change, and manufactured home parks are under increasing pressure for redevelopment;

AND WHEREAS residents who are more vulnerable (e.g., seniors, those with health issues) and with low incomes may find displacement due to potential redevelopment of these areas to be a particular challenge:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government be requested to make changes to the Manufactured Home Park Tenancy Act, similar to those outlined in the City of Coquitlam’s Mobile Home Park Redevelopment Tenant Assistance Policy, to ensure that tenants being displaced due to redevelopment are assisted in the relocation process and fairly compensated for their displacement by the developer.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Forests and Range and Minister Responsible for Housing

The Ministry of Forests and Range (Ministry) has made changes to the Manufactured Home Park Tenancy Act to provide stability to tenants. The intent is to encourage manufactured home parks to remain open and to encourage the expansion and development of new parks. In addition, the Government of British Columbia (Government) has doubled the funding for the Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) program to provide more assistance to low income seniors on fixed incomes.

Government commissioned an independent consultant to identify options to maintain and increase affordable housing in manufactured home parks. Recommendations are being considered.
WHEREAS the *Land Title Act* provides that the Lieutenant Governor in Council may authorize a regional district board to appoint a person as an approving officer for the rural area of the regional district;

AND WHEREAS requests for such authority have not been granted:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities urge the Province to ensure that regional district boards and the Islands Trust are granted the authority to appoint a person as an approving officer for the rural area of the regional district when and if requested.

**RESPONSE: Ministry of Transportation**

The Ministry of Transportation (Ministry) is focusing on improving the subdivision approval process through policy, procedure, technology and inter-agency relationships. Cooperation and collaboration with relevant agencies, including local governments, is part of that. The intent is to work together to best serve the interests of applicants, agencies and the general public.

Transfer of approval authority would involve a change of roles but would still involve the Ministry and other agencies. Transfer of authority could be disruptive for applicants, at least temporarily, and could have a deleterious effect on this sector of the economy. This would be undesirable, especially at a time when development activity is high. The Province of British Columbia is therefore not considering transfer of authority at this time.
WHEREAS the Province of British Columbia and the Union of BC Municipalities, by Memorandum of Understanding, are committed to:

• Fostering co-operative inter-governmental relations,
• Recognizing the jurisdiction and accountability of both orders of government,
• Facilitating the responsible development of clean, renewable energy sources to meet the energy needs of British Columbians,
• Providing efficient and effective Independent Power Project (IPP) review and approval processes for both orders of government;

AND WHEREAS amendments to the Utilities Commission Act, proposed by Bill 30, will have significant impacts for local governments throughout the province when the full scope and potential of IPPs are considered (e.g., wind, geothermal, coalbed methane and run of river projects) and will serve to:

• Eliminate local government involvement and engagement in IPP review and approval processes,
• Remove jurisdiction of local government over IPPs on Crown land,
• Remove local government from the responsible development of clean, renewable energy sources,
• Impair co-operative inter-governmental relations:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Province of British Columbia be requested to repeal Section 53 of Bill 30 and return to working with the Union of BC Municipalities to complete the commitments of the Memorandum of Understanding on Independent Power Projects.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources

The Province will soon be releasing a new energy plan. At that time, a response to this resolution will be available.
WHEREAS the Competition Council has recommended that if municipalities do not reduce taxes on Major Industry then the provincial government should remove the authority of municipal governments to set the relative municipal tax burden amongst the various property assessment classes in their communities, with the intention of shifting the local property tax burden from owners of heavy industry onto owners of residential, small business, commercial and light industrial property;

AND WHEREAS the effect of such an initiative on the provision of critical local government services will be negative and large, particularly in resource communities which contribute disproportionately to the wealth of the province;

AND WHEREAS such a tax shift will contribute to the infrastructure funding crisis facing municipalities, which is particularly acute in areas across Canada where such initiatives have taken place;

AND WHEREAS the authority of municipal councils across BC to set the relative municipal tax burden amongst the various assessment classes is a unique and highly successful feature of community governance and local autonomy in BC;

AND WHEREAS municipal councils in BC are better able to appreciate the complex issues unique to each community surrounding the balance amongst local industrial, commercial, light industrial and housing market competitiveness and its relationship to municipal property taxation;

AND WHEREAS municipal taxes are a very small cost component of industrial production and the assertion that business competitiveness or the rate of investment is related in any significant way to municipal property taxes is empirically unproven and highly suspect;

AND WHEREAS local property taxation is the only public policy vehicle for communities to capture a portion of the industrial wealth created in their communities;

AND WHEREAS the vast majority of taxes are appropriated by the two senior levels of government and leave the communities in which they are created:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities strongly endorse the current authority of municipal governments to set the relative municipal property tax burden amongst the assessment classes within their respective communities and oppose initiatives to remove this important feature of municipal governance in British Columbia.
RESPONSE: Ministry of Finance

The BC Competition Council (Council) was established to advise the private sector and the government on ways to make our economy more competitive, more productive and more attractive to job-creating investment.

The Government of British Columbia (Government) is continuously reviewing the Province of British Columbia’s tax rates to ensure they are fair and competitive and is considering Council's recommendations carefully.

The Government is reviewing Council’s report and does recognize the importance of ensuring the competitiveness of the industrial sector and will review the report and recommendations in that light.
WHEREAS many community groups have already taken advantage of the opportunity to address Crystal Meth in their communities by accessing funding through the very successful Community Methamphetamine Response Funding Program, initiated by the Premier of British Columbia and provided through the Union of BC Municipalities;

AND WHEREAS there are still many community groups that have not had the opportunity to access funding in this program:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the deadline for the Community Methamphetamine Response Funding Program be extended for a further period of time and augmented with additional funding from the Province in order to afford other groups the opportunity to address Crystal Meth in their communities by accessing funding through this Program.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

The Province of British Columbia has provided nearly $2 million in provincial grant funds to help foster a community response to crystal methamphetamine.

The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General intends to review and evaluate the impact of this provincial grant program before making decisions on additional funding.

In addition, the Crystal Meth Secretariat will examine ways to help strengthen community task forces, coalitions and other efforts at the local level in responding to the dangers of crystal meth use.
WHEREAS seat belts have been proven to save the lives of the people who use them;

AND WHEREAS the percentage of seat belt usage is lower in Northern British Columbia than in the rest of the province and infractions result in a fine being levied:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities lobby the provincial government to ask that points be registered against the driver’s license as well as the fine for seat belt infractions to encourage increased seat belt usage.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (Ministry) is committed to improving road safety in the Province of British Columbia (Province).

The Ministry is currently exploring strategies, in partnership with ICBC and other ministries, to make improvements and better protect road users throughout the Province, including increasing seat belt use.

The use of sanctions and penalties is one area that will be explored and considered.
WHEREAS the provincial government has funded province-wide public anti-littering campaigns such as “Pitch-In” and the adopt-a-road program;

AND WHEREAS while a deposit refund system for producers is in place, more could be done to unite and educate the public in BC, particularly children and youth, in efforts to reduce litter in public spaces and all environments:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government develop and fund an expanded province-wide public anti-littering campaign, in cooperation with industry, non-profit organizations, schools and local governments, that complements other current initiatives designed to reduce waste.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Environment

While the Ministry of Environment is responsible for environmental protection legislation, including anti-littering provisions, directly funding a widespread anti-littering campaign would not be consistent with provincial policy of industry product stewardship. This policy places a life-cycle responsibility on producers and consumers of products as opposed to local governments or the general taxpayer,

The Province of British Columbia encourages interested local governments to leverage existing community, industry and non-government organization (NGO) expertise to form anti-littering partnerships that can draw on the strengths of existing resources. Local clean-up campaigns have the advantage of achieving tangible outcomes for citizens, while also encouraging environmentally responsible behaviors.

Additional support for local environmental clean-up projects is available in the form of community grants and organized volunteer corps.
WHEREAS the Community Charter states that the provincial government recognizes that local governments require adequate powers and discretion to address existing and future community needs;

AND WHEREAS the provincial government, withheld approval of a local government Fire Services Bylaw due to sprinkler requirements that exceeded the minimum provisions set forth in the British Columbia Building Code:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities request that the provincial government grant authority to local governments to establish sprinkler bylaws to increase life safety to occupants and to minimize property damage caused by fire.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Forests and Range and Ministry Responsible for Housing

The BC Building Code establishes the minimum building standards for health, safety, structural sufficiency and accessibility that are applied at the time of construction. Changes to building regulations are rationalized on a cost-benefit basis. The cost to the industry and the owner is weighed against the increased level of safety achieved.

The Office of Housing and Construction Standards has assembled a working group to look at this issue. The working group is meeting with stakeholders in late 2006 and the Minister will receive a report of the results in 2007.

The Province of British Columbia and many building industry participants are promoting consistent building regulations from one community to the next to maintain a consistent level of safety and streamlined approval processes.
WHEREAS the Corporation of the City of Penticton wishes to ensure skateboard users minimize the risk of head injury;

AND WHEREAS the Corporation of the City of Penticton wishes to reduce exposure and liability for head injuries that may occur on city lands:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities request the implementation of provincial legislation making helmet use mandatory when operating or riding a skateboard or rollerblades.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

Local governments have the authority to regulate small-wheeled vehicles on their roadways and in municipal areas and parks where, for example, skateboarders are typically concentrated. The Province of British Columbia (Province) continues to support municipalities in developing effective bylaws and believes that operating conditions of skateboarders are best addressed at the local level.

The Motor Vehicle Act contains specific provisions that provide municipalities with authority over the regulation and control of persons using roller skates, sleighs, skates, skis or other similar means of conveyance. Local governments are well positioned, therefore, to pass bylaws that will ensure broad and consistent regulation of this issue.

In 2005, the Province contributed $50,000 to the Canadian Standards Association to support the development of safety standards for sport helmets such as those used for skateboarding, snowboarding, inline skating and skiing. In the same year, the Province also extended the helmet exemption under the Social Service Tax Act (provincial sales tax) to include all safety helmets used for sport, recreation and transportation.
WHEREAS the increasing use of dangerous drugs such as “Crystal Meth” is causing much harm to our community, and the consequential penalties are proving insufficient to stem the increase;

AND WHEREAS the stiffer penalties awarded in Alberta appear to be having the required effect:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the judiciary in British Columbia be asked to impose stiffer penalties on those convicted of serious drug related offences, with particular attention to those involved in the trafficking of drugs and the violent collateral offences related to drug use.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Attorney General

The federal government has announced plans to change penalties for drug offences, including mandatory minimum penalties, to ensure that sentences for serious drug offences are appropriate to the offence.

Recently, the Province of British Columbia (Province) joined other provinces and territories in urging the federal government to increase the maximum penalties for methamphetamines offences, which the federal government has done. For example, the maximum penalty for methamphetamines production, trafficking or possession for import/export is now life in prison.

The Province continues to work with its partners across the country to develop strategies that will help increase the strength of the cases and the awareness of the court regarding the seriousness of drug issues.
WHEREAS there is increasing concern over public health and safety and increased related local government costs as a result of the expansion of marijuana grow operations and methamphetamine laboratories into residential neighbourhoods;

AND WHEREAS there is an increase in the sale of special equipment and supplies used to grow marijuana indoors and produce methamphetamines and an increase in the number of hydroponic and drug paraphernalia stores in the province:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities request that the Province amend Section 59 of the Community Charter to more clearly articulate local government’s authority to impose requirements on businesses that sell goods in the community which may endanger health or public safety.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

The Government of British Columbia is keenly aware of the public health and safety issues arising from illegal drug production operations and related drug paraphernalia businesses.

There are a number of issues, including privacy issues, which need to be carefully examined before proceeding.

The Office of Fire Commissioner and the Fire Chiefs Association of BC are co-chairing a Public Safety Task Force to examine issues that contribute to the production of illegal drugs and create a risk to public safety.
WHEREAS the significant problem of property crimes negatively impacts the citizens of British Columbia, costs the economy millions of dollars annually and causes police to expend tremendous resources investigating property crimes and the closely linked illegal drug trade;

AND WHEREAS the electronic reporting technology exists to facilitate the reporting of second-hand property to police, is in use in several jurisdictions across Canada, and has a positive impact on the problem by assisting police with the identification of active criminals and the return of stolen property to victims:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities urge the provincial government to enact legislation making it mandatory for businesses to report second-hand property transactions to police using a compatible electronic reporting system.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

Local governments wanting to implement Xtract can adopt a bylaw that requires pawnbrokers and second hand stores to enter information on Xtract, make necessary arrangements with the system administrator (Vancouver Police Department) and pay a licensing fee to the software development company.

The Province of British Columbia continues to monitor this issue in order to ensure that a coordinated solution can be developed.
WHEREAS supportive recovery residences provide accommodation for persons recovering from drug or alcohol addictions and the unregulated operation of these residences is a serious matter of public safety;

AND WHEREAS the provincial government, which is responsible for public safety, abdicated its responsibility to regulate supportive recovery residences by exempting those that provide two or less prescribed services from the requirement to obtain a community care facility license under the Community Care and Assisted Living Act:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities urge the provincial government to regulate and license supportive recovery residences in the interest of providing better access to treatment for individuals seeking assistance for substance misuse.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Health

The Government of British Columbia (Government) worked closely with municipalities and health authorities on the creation of the 2002 Community Care and Assisted Living Act (Act), which provides for the regulation of support recovery as assisted living residences, and the licensing of more intensive treatment facilities.

Facilities are fully licensed by Government where intensive addictions treatment or detox services are provided, or several health care services, such as: storing and dispensing medications, management of cash or other resources, nursing care, professional counseling, or monitoring food intake.

While many support that recovery homes provide tremendous service to those who use them, Government recognizes there are those who may take advantage of those in need of recovery services. The Ministry of Health, in partnership with health authorities, continues work to develop a registration process for recovery houses and other mental health and addictions residences that provide a lower level of support.

A support recovery home that offers housing, five specified hospitality services and one or two prescribed services, such as medication assistance and maintenance or management of resident cash resources or property, would have to register as an assisted living residence under the Act unless otherwise exempted under section 2 of the Act.

Registration as assisted living residences under the current Act will ensure that support recovery homes meet basic health and safety standards, and that a complaints-based regulatory model is available to residents.
WHEREAS community detoxification facilities available at northern interior hospitals are inadequate for community needs and RCMP staff are not suited as a resource to address the needs of substance addicted persons;

AND WHEREAS the City of Quesnel has specifically doubled the RCMP drug enforcement section in its efforts to combat drug addiction problems associated with drug trafficking, which should decrease the availability of drugs in the area:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Province and the regional health authorities provide province-wide detox facilities that guarantee a minimum number of beds available for the treatment of substance addicted persons who can be treated and adequately cared for in their communities.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Health

Health authorities provide a broad range of comprehensive services for youth and adults with substance use addictions. These services include:

- early intervention and outreach
- withdrawal management (detox)
- outpatient counseling
- intensive day treatment
- family support programs
- case management
- residential treatment
- support recovery and after-care services.

Beds for addictions treatment services in the Province of British Columbia (Province) have increased to 1,038 beds from 874 in 2003. These include withdrawal management or detox facilities in all five regions of the Province, with a total of 206 detox beds. This includes 20 beds in the Northern region, 28 beds in the Interior region, 35 beds in the Fraser region, 51 beds on Vancouver Island, and 72 beds in the Vancouver Coastal region.

In Quesnel, GR Baker Hospital provides detox services as does the Quesnel Unit for Emergency Short Stay Mental Health Program (QUEST). Furthermore, all health authorities are piloting daytox and home detox services to better meet the needs for withdrawal management in local communities.
WHEREAS the police- and community-based Victim Services programs in operation throughout British Columbia provide invaluable assistance to victims of crime, and thus promote effective operation of the provincial justice system;

AND WHEREAS the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General’s contribution to these programs was reduced in 2002 and has not increased since 2003, thus making it increasingly difficult for communities to offer these services:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities seek a commitment from the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General to conduct a thorough review of the formula utilized to determine provincial contributions to police- and community-based Victim Services programs;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, until the above-noted review is completed, the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General return funding for police- and community-based Victim Services programs to 2002 levels.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (Ministry) continues to provide $9.5 million annually for victim service programs. An additional $12 million is provided for crime victim financial benefits through the Crime Victim Assistance Program.

The Ministry will review the victim service funding formula to ensure equitable access to services across the Province of British Columbia.
WHEREAS Canada’s court system is experiencing exceptional demands, including the expectation to address numerous young first time offenders;

AND WHEREAS a restorative justice program can successfully and cost effectively divert young offenders from the courts through community justice forums:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UBCM appeal to the appropriate federal and provincial ministers to provide sufficient, continuous funding to enable the establishment of restorative justice programs, where desired, by local governments throughout the province.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (Ministry) continues to support restorative justice community-based, pre-court diversion through the Community Accountability Program initiative.

Restorative approaches are utilized throughout the Ministry, including victim services programs which facilitate victim participation in justice processes, as well as corrections programming and post-release/re-integration processes.

The Ministry provides communities with Direct Access Program grants through the Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch for local restorative justice initiatives.
WHEREAS there is a high number of RCMP member positions within the province that are vacant;

AND WHEREAS the number of recruits being trained and graduating from the RCMP training facility is significantly lower than the number of vacant positions:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that a training centre be established in British Columbia to increase the capacity of the RCMP to train recruits to meet demand.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

RCMP recruit training is the responsibility of the federal government and the RCMP.

The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General continues to work with the other provinces and territories at the national level to ensure that the federal government and the RCMP adequately address training capacity. The Province of British Columbia (Province) supports the federal government’s plan to expand the capacity of Depot, the RCMP training facility in Regina, to meet growing demands.

The RCMP operates the Pacific Region Training Centre, a state-of-the-art facility in Chilliwack which is responsible for delivering training to RCMP members and some civilian members and public service employees in the Province and the Yukon. It also provides training to police from independent municipal police departments in the Province.
WHEREAS the RCMP has the ability to backfill member positions vacated due to long-term leave (medical / maternity / paternity) in municipal detachments;

AND WHEREAS there is no provision to backfill member positions vacated due to long-term leave in rural detachments:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the RCMP be provided the ability to backfill member positions vacated due to long-term leave in rural detachments.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

The filling of vacant positions is based upon RCMP policies.

The Province of British Columbia has supported the RCMP by working with them to develop alternatives such as the Reserve Constable Program, which provides an opportunity for recently retired police officers to continue serving the RCMP in the capacity of a uniform officer to cover off vacant positions.
WHEREAS the courts and the Crown, when issuing or requesting a warrant for the arrest of an offender, often impose a geographical limitation on the warrant where the practical effect of this geographical limitation encourages the offender to flee the jurisdiction in which the warrant is valid;

AND WHEREAS these types of outstanding warrants, which are generally referred to by the police community as “non-returnable warrants”, are left un-enforced by police officers who contact these offenders in jurisdictions beyond the radius of the warrant;

AND WHEREAS a 2005 study conducted by the Vancouver Police Department found that 84% of these offenders had more than one prior criminal conviction, while at least 55% of these offenders had 11 or more prior criminal convictions, and that permitting violent and/or chronic offenders to avoid prosecution through inter-provincial flight endangers the safety of Canadians and brings the administration of justice into disrepute:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities call upon the appropriate provincial minister(s), the Minister of Justice, and the Minister of Public Safety to:

• take affirmative action to prevent the threat to public safety and the erosion of public confidence in the criminal justice system caused by the proliferation of “non-returnable” warrants; and
• assist in developing and funding an operationally practical and cost effective, national transportation system that will ensure that those individuals who are arrested on inter-provincial warrants are brought before the justice system.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

The Province of British Columbia recognizes this as a serious issue and is working with the other provinces, territories and federal government to explore opportunities to develop best practices, protocols and, if appropriate, legislation for a national approach to the problem of offenders who move from jurisdiction to jurisdiction to avoid prosecution.
B14 ENABLING MUNICIPALITIES TO CREATE BLANKET SPEED ZONES

WHEREAS the speed limit in cities and municipalities in BC is “50 km/h unless otherwise posted”, with no differentiation between major roads and local streets;

AND WHEREAS lower speeds can decrease the severity and incidence of car crashes, benefit livability and safety of neighbourhoods, improve drivers’ respect for neighbourhoods, and improve cyclist and pedestrian safety;

AND WHEREAS in 1999 the Union of BC Municipalities passed a resolution supporting blanket speed zones in residential areas, however, removing the words “in residential areas” from the original resolution would simplify the process of amending the Motor Vehicle Act:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities request that the Minister of Transportation and Highways consider an amendment to the Motor Vehicle Act that would allow incorporated municipalities to institute blanket speed zones.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Transportation

Municipalities have the ability to establish municipal speed limits. To do so, they must pass a bylaw and post a speed limit sign on every affected road to inform the traveling public.

The City of Vancouver has met with the Ministry of Transportation (Ministry) about the possibility of lowering side street speed limits without having to post signs on every street. This would require a change to the Motor Vehicle Act. The Ministry expressed concerns about how the traveling public would know the speed limit if signs were not in place, and how the speed limit would be enforced.

The city was asked to consult with police and stakeholders to address these issues before submitting a proposal for the Province of British Columbia to review.
WHEREAS it is desirable for motorists to bear the full cost of travel, including the cost of damage to private and public property caused by collisions through insurance premiums;

AND WHEREAS the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) is required by law to compensate private property owners for hit and run damage to private property, but not local governments for hit and run damage to public infrastructure:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the regulations to the Insurance (Motor Vehicle) Act, and specifically s.107 of B.C. Regulation 447/83, be amended so that hit and run damage costs incurred by local governments are recoverable from ICBC.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

Each Canadian jurisdiction has a fund established to compensate victims of unidentified (hit and run) motorists. Except in jurisdictions with public automobile insurance, these claim payments are generally restricted to injury claims only.

The Province of British Columbia’s (Province) fund is administered and paid for by Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) policyholders through basic premiums. In addition to injury claims, it also includes compensation for the uninsured part of property damage claims subject to a $750 deductible; however, an exemption applies to certain types of property. While the Province’s fund already provides better protection than funds in most other Canadian jurisdictions, it was never intended to extend to public infrastructure near a highway.

Premiums collected for the fund are calculated on the basis that certain types of claims are exempt. If the fund were to take on new costs, ICBC’s Basic premiums would need to reflect that new cost which would require ICBC to seek approval for an equivalent rate increase from the BC Utilities Commission.

Municipalities obtain most of their funding from property taxes and use these monies to pay for common services for the community, including maintaining municipal property. Transferring costs from one rate payer group to another rate payer group would result in many of the same people paying and ultimately would not achieve any efficiencies.
WHEREAS the provincial government is responsible for the *Motor Vehicle Act* and its regulations, including the establishment of school and playground zones with reduced speed limits to enhance the safety of children in the vicinity;

AND WHEREAS measurements of speeds at schools and playgrounds confirm a significant level of noncompliance with speed limits and anecdotal evidence suggests a flagrant and hazardous disregard of crosswalks and other regulatory measures within school zones in particular:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the fines for *Motor Vehicle Act* infractions including speeding in school and playground zones be doubled.

**RESPONSE: Ministry of Transportation**

Safety is the first priority of the Ministry of Transportation (Ministry), especially where children are concerned. In 2003, with the support of law enforcement agencies, the B.C. School Trustees Association and the B.C. Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils, the Province of British Columbia (Province) amended the *Motor Vehicle Act* to allow school speed zone hours to be expanded beyond the traditional 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. period where children are attending extracurricular and community activities outside regular school hours.

The Province has also implemented a supplemental fine, in addition to the regular fine and driver penalty points, for significant speed violations. Current fine levels for speeding in school and playground zones are relatively high compared to other moving violation fines. A person who drives at a speed greater than 40 km/h over the speed limit commits an offence and is liable to a fine (column B in the table) plus the applicable supplemental fine (column C in the table). Fines range from a minimum of $170 plus 3 driver penalty points to $903 plus 6 driver penalty points.

These actions taken by the Province provide for a higher level of safety in and around school speed zones and is an example of the Province’s commitment to safe roads.

<table>
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<th>A</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variation from posted speed limit</td>
<td>Fine</td>
<td>Supplemental Fine</td>
<td>Total Fine</td>
<td>Driver Penalty Points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than 21 km/h</td>
<td>$170</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$170</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater than 60 km/h</td>
<td>$420</td>
<td>$483</td>
<td>$903</td>
<td>3+3=6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
WHEREAS Search and Rescue organizations provide an essential service to British Columbia’s visitors and residents;

AND WHEREAS the funding for Search and Rescue organizations is a mix of private fundraising events, local government grants and other grants:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities petition the provincial government to provide adequate, predictable funding for Search and Rescue organizations.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (Ministry) is considering a number of strategies to address the ongoing funding concerns of volunteer Search and Rescue (SAR) organizations.

The Ministry currently provides $1.7 million towards the operational costs incurred through SAR responses and contributes $345,000 annually towards SAR training. The Ministry is also assisting SAR groups with accessing federal funding through the Joint Emergency Preparedness Program and the New Initiatives Fund.

Within the Province of British Columbia (Province), many volunteer SAR organisations have entered into service agreements with local authorities including regional districts. Some of these agreements include the establishment of a regional district SAR function to ensure a secure source of funding is available for the local SAR volunteer group.
WHEREAS the majority of communities within the Province of British Columbia are situated in proximity to rivers, streams and water bodies, many within floodplains and upon estuaries;

AND WHEREAS there have been insufficient funds available to these communities to maintain and improve dykes and flood prevention measures, the consequences of which have been highlighted with the recent catastrophic events in the City of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast where hundreds of lives have been lost and billions of dollars in property damage incurred:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities request that the provincial and federal governments develop a comprehensive and sustainable program for funding dykes and flood protection measures for communities in British Columbia.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Environment

The Ministry of Environment (Ministry) is responsible for the provincial Dike Safety Program and the administration of the Dike Maintenance Act (Act). The Act empowers the Ministry to require effective dike maintenance by diking authorities and to ensure that construction of new dikes and changes to dikes meet provincial standards.

Preliminary results from a new Fraser River hydraulic model indicate that most of the Fraser River dikes would not withstand the 1894 design flood, which was set as a provincial standard in 1969. The costs to improve the dikes to updated design levels could exceed several hundred million dollars.

The federal government is continuing to develop a National Disaster Mitigation Strategy. Further provincial/federal discussions are required to explore possible federal participation in flood protection funding. Federal participation is key for completion of the larger capital funding projects.

The Ministry will continue to implement the provincial dike safety program and work with the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, the federal government and others, to develop a comprehensive and sustainable funding program for flood protection.
WHEREAS the Fraser Basin Council Multi-stakeholder Proactive Strategy recommends that the existing flood profile, prior to 1997, be maintained by targeted removal of gravel and sediment accumulations;

AND WHEREAS each year of failure to achieve targeted gravel or sediment removals raises the Fraser and Harrison River bottom elevations and diminishes the level of flood protection:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial Ministry of Environment and the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans be requested to allow substantial gravel and sediment removal from two areas:
1) the junction of the Harrison and Fraser River; and
2) adjacent to the outflow from the Hammersley Pumping Station.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Environment

It is estimated that the sedimentation in the Fraser River gravel reach has raised flood levels by up to 0.5m in some locations. An average of 280,000 m$^3$ of sand and gravel must be removed each year to meet an updated design flood profile.

In response to concerns about the safety of communities along the Lower Fraser River, in September 2004, the provincial and federal governments signed a comprehensive five-year plan to remove gravel from the Fraser River. The Fraser River Gravel Removal Plan outlines the elements of the process, including environmental assessment and consultation with First Nations.

The Province of British Columbia is responsible for planning the Fraser River gravel removal under the Land Act (Ministry of Agriculture and Lands), and for issuing related permits under the Water Act (Ministry of Environment), while the Government of Canada is responsible for decisions under the Fisheries Act (DFO) and under the Navigable Water Act (Transport Canada)

Details of a technical advisory committee for review of gravel extraction on the lower Fraser River, including at the junction of the Harrison and Fraser River and outflow of the Hammersley Pumping Station are currently being discussed between federal and provincial agencies. Direction will be determined in the fall and early winter of 2006.
WHEREAS the Corporation of the City of Penticton wishes to provide extended transit service within the City of Penticton;

AND WHEREAS population growth is creating increased demands for additional routes and increased hours of transit service:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities request that the Province and BC Transit no longer require municipalities to pay 100% of service expansions but continue to use a cost sharing arrangement as currently used in existing agreements.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Transportation

The Province of British Columbia (Province) has been conducting a review of BC Transit’s governance and funding.

This review is addressing a number of issues that both the Province and local government partners have identified with the current governance and funding framework.

It would be premature for the government to make funding changes or commitments prior to the completion of the review.
WHEREAS the provincial Ministry of Small Business and Revenue is currently undergoing a Provincial Sales Tax (PST) review and is requesting input and the PST is a tax on a tax that ultimately results in local government property tax increases;

AND WHEREAS local governments are facing rising infrastructure needs but have few revenue opportunities other than property taxes, and the federal government, in recognition of the infrastructure funding challenges faced by Canadian local governments, recently provided local governments with a 100% Goods and Services Tax rebate:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities enter into dialogue with the Province of BC to seek a 100% local government Provincial Sales Tax exemption or rebate.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that such exemption or rebate should not result in any reduction of grants in lieu or any other monies presently directed from the provincial government to local governments, nor should this be seen as an opportunity to download additional responsibilities to local governments without providing sufficient funding to compensate for such additional responsibilities.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Finance

The issue of the application of sales tax to local governments was submitted to the Provincial Sales Tax (PST) review which is still underway.

Consideration is currently being given to extending the existing sales tax exemption for production machinery and equipment to local governments as part of the 2007 Budget process.

The Province of British Columbia has traditionally chosen to support municipal governments in ways other than through sales tax exemptions because exemptions complicate the tax system and set precedents that could ultimately reduce the effectiveness of the tax as an important provincial revenue source.
INCOME TAX DEDUCTION FOR UNPAID VOLUNTEER FIRE FIGHTERS AND FIRST RESPONDERS

WHEREAS unpaid volunteer fire fighters and first responders are essential for providing adequate emergency services in small and rural communities, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to find individuals to volunteer their time;

AND WHEREAS unpaid volunteer fire fighters and first responders are not paid for training and providing emergency services, which results in a significant cost savings for the government:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UBCM lobby the provincial and federal governments to amend the Income Tax Act to provide unpaid volunteer fire fighters and first responders with a tax exemption;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that for every 50 hours of unpaid volunteer service for practices, training and callouts, volunteer fire fighters and first responders be granted a $500 tax exemption to a maximum of $5,000 on their income tax in recognition of the service they provide.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Finance

This is an area of federal responsibility.

In addition, this suggestion would raise difficult policy issues, including the issue of whether other types of volunteer work should be eligible for a similar exemption.
WHEREAS in many British Columbia communities there are many residents and low income workers who cannot obtain affordable housing for their families, and communities need additional resources to assist in addressing the situation;

AND WHEREAS the Provincial Treasury is the principal beneficiary of the British Columbia Property Transfer Tax, which is derived from the sale of lands within the community:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Minister of Finance be requested to make a portion of the British Columbia Property Transfer Tax available to the communities in which it is raised for the purpose of providing funding for attainable housing for working people in the Province of British Columbia.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Finance

Tax revenues are generally not dedicated to fund specific programs because tax revenues fluctuate in ways that do not necessarily match changes in the funding needs of programs.

Furthermore, any potential changes to the tax system or new expenditure programs must be evaluated carefully within the balanced budget context and against competing requests for funding.

The Province of British Columbia (Province) has made housing the most vulnerable a priority:

- The annual provincial budget for social housing has increased by $90 million since 2001.
- During that same period the Government of British Columbia (Government) committed to build over 10,250 social housing units. There were 1,583 new units created in fiscal 2005/06. That brings the total number of units completed since 2001 to over 6,189; work continues on over 4,000 more.
- With the federal government, the Province continues to subsidize the existing portfolio of 41,500 units, managed by BC Housing and non-profit housing providers.
- The Government also provides rent assistance to about 14,200 households renting in the private market.
WHEREAS municipalities have faced rising fire suppression costs due to increased duties and demand and cannot, in all conscience, cut back on fire protection services;

AND WHEREAS in 2003/2004, the Province of British Columbia collected $300 million in fire insurance tax premiums, of which the Fire Commissioner’s office received only $2.3 million in 2004:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that local governments work together to convince the provincial government to redirect insurance premium tax revenue towards community fire services.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Finance

The tax revenue generated from the 4.4 percent tax paid by insurance companies on property insurance premiums is intended to be a general revenue source and the Government of British Columbia (Government) does not believe it would be appropriate to direct the tax to municipalities to fund local firefighting.

Recent provincial support to municipal governments includes:
  • signing an agreement with the Government of Canada for the Canada-BC Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (MRIF), that commits $102 million in combined funding, over the coming year, for infrastructure projects across the Province of British Columbia;
  • increasing grants to local governments by $8.3 million for a total of $33 million in 2006/2007;
  • the transfer of 100 percent of traffic fine revenue to 70 local governments for community policing, crime prevention and other initiatives to help make communities safer; and
  • the $80 million BC Community Water Improvement Program to help ensure safe, reliable and accessible drinking water and improved waste water systems.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Community Services

The Ministry of Community Services (MCS) understands that current government policy does not provide a basis on which to utilize the Insurance Premium Tax outside of general revenue. The Government generally does not earmark provincial monies towards supporting local community services in the absence of compelling provincial interests.

At the same time, MCS does play a leadership role in ensuring that communities are able to meet their citizens’ needs, plan and prepare for sustainable development, and address issues affecting their social, economic, and environmental well-being. MCS is aware of a new idea that is currently being discussed among local governments whereby revenue
sharing proposals are tied to measurable results. For example, initiatives aimed at achieving greater efficiencies through cross-boundary coordination or regional integration of services (as is advocated by the Task Force on Community Opportunities) would be of interest.

MCS is interested in talking to local governments about results-based revenue sharing initiatives which clearly show how shared revenues would be used to deliver more integrated, effective and citizen-centred services to taxpayers.
WHEREAS the federal governments of Canada and the United States have entered into an Air Quality Agreement to address air pollution that flows across the Canada-USA international boundary, committing both countries to consult on any activities that might cause significant trans-boundary air pollution and to take steps to avoid or mitigate these risks;

AND WHEREAS the United States has implemented its part of Annex 1, Part 4 of the Agreement and Canada has not completed implementation of the Agreement:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities urge the Federal Government of Canada to implement its responsibilities under the Clean Air Accord and encourage the Provincial Government of BC to endorse and move forward with the ozone and particulate matter annex of the Clean Air Accord between BC and Washington State and participate in its implementation, in order to ensure that the interests of Canada’s residents and communities are defined and presented as part of any future trans-boundary air quality decision making process.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Environment

Canada/U.S. Air Quality Agreement
The Canada-United States Air Quality Agreement (Agreement) was signed on March 13, 1991 to address trans-boundary air pollution leading to acid rain. The Ozone Annex was added to the Canada-United States Air Quality Agreement (December 2000) to address the trans-boundary air pollution leading to high air quality levels of ground-level ozone, a major component of smog. The long-term goal of the Ozone Annex is the attainment of the ozone air quality standards in both countries. The geographical application of the Annex at this time is Eastern North America, and as such, does not apply to the Province of British Columbia (Province)

The Province was instrumental in convincing the Parties to the Agreement to leave open the possibility for the development of a western component to any future Annex involving fine particulate matter and ozone.

Western Component
There has been ongoing discussion since 2000 of the possible development of an Annex to the Canada-U.S. Air Quality Agreement that could include a western component addressing particulate matter (PM) and ozone. These discussions have now focused on the potential for a new PM Annex.

Most jurisdictions are in an information-gathering mode to determine what benefits and obligations would be associated with this. Further work and consultation with other partners will be required to determine the feasibility of proceeding with negotiations.
Inter-agency discussions about the possibility of developing a western component to a PM Annex have primarily occurred through the Georgia Basin-Puget Sound International Airshed Strategy, an international effort to address shared air quality management concerns.

**Georgia Basin-Puget Sound International Airshed Strategy**

The Georgia Basin-Puget Sound (GB-PS) International Airshed Strategy aims to achieve the following through international and regional co-operation and collaboration:

- Reduce the impacts of air pollution to human health, ecosystems, and visibility in the GB-PS airshed;
- Prevent future deterioration and work towards continuous improvement of air quality in the GB-PS region; and,
- Establish practical and effective instruments to address shared concerns regarding trans-boundary air pollution in the GB-PS region.
WHEREAS air emissions from coal-fired generation negatively affect human health, wildlife and airshed visibility, and contain significant amounts of greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change;

AND WHEREAS BC Hydro’s Integrated Electricity Plan, which allows coal-fired generation in BC, is indirect conflict with the Province of BC’s Climate Change Plan that seeks to maintain and improve BC’s third place ranking for per capita greenhouse gas emissions, and is also in direct conflict with BC Hydro’s own long-term goal of having no net incremental environmental impact:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Province give clear direction to BC Hydro to consider the full costs of all environmental impacts from coal-fired generation and other types of generation when determining the least cost options;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Province give equally clear direction to BC Hydro to more aggressively pursue improvements in energy efficiency and low-impact renewable energy sources, such as wind, tidal or run-of-river power.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources

The Province will soon be releasing a new energy plan. At that time, a response to this resolution will be available.
WHEREAS motor vehicles produce more than 30 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions and research in Canada has indicated that the addition of cellulose ethanol to vehicle fuel reduces emissions substantially and a blend of 10 percent cellulose ethanol in vehicle fuel reduces greenhouse gas close to 10 grams of carbon dioxide for every kilometer driven;

AND WHEREAS cellulose ethanol is a renewable resource produced from corn or sugar cane and is economical and user friendly to all vehicles:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government petition the federal government to legislate that all vehicle fuels contain a correct percentage of cellulose ethanol by 2010 to substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Environment

In May 2006, at a national meeting of ministers of energy, environment and agriculture, the federal government announced its intention to proceed with a five percent average national renewable fuel standard (RFS) in Canada’s gasoline and diesel fuel by 2010.

Both conventional and next-generation cellulosic ethanol provides roughly the same end-use GHG emission reduction benefits when used in gasoline blends. However, the use of cellulose instead of conventional feedstock results in greater GHG emission reductions when considered on a full life-cycle accounting basis.

The Province of British Columbia (Province) is supportive of a five percent average national renewable fuel standard to help reduce transportation-related air emissions and advance the renewable fuel industry in Canada. The Province supports a framework that recognizes regional biofuels challenges and opportunities, and advances the development of next-generation renewable fuel technologies.

The Province has advised the federal government of its interest in this and other areas relevant to addressing climate change.
WHEREAS the Province of British Columbia implemented an Enviro Levy on the purchase of new tires and lead acid batteries in the mid 1990s to assist local governments in the cost of recycling and transportation;

AND WHEREAS upon implementation of the Enviro Levy, the Province’s commitment was to redirect all taxes collected back to local governments in order to assist in recycling and transportation costs;

AND WHEREAS consumers are currently paying $3 per tire and $5 per lead acid battery as well as an additional cost for disposal of used lead acid batteries and tires:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UBCM lobby the provincial government to ensure that 100% of the Enviro Levy be directed back to local governments, as per the Province’s original commitment, to assist in recycling and transportation costs.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Environment

In 1990 the Government of British Columbia (Government) amended the Social Services Tax Act to introduce a $3 per tire levy on new tire sales and a $5 per battery levy on new battery sales. The levy revenue is deposited into the Sustainable Environment Fund (SEF) and used to fund the Financial Incentives for Recycling Scrap Tires Program and the BC Lead Acid Battery Collection program as well as other environmental protection programs such as product stewardship, contaminated sites, waste discharge and hazardous waste management. The tire and battery programs currently divert approximately 95% of the used tires and batteries from municipal landfill disposal.

The Government’s policy is to move the government-led recycling programs to industry and make producers and consumers responsible for the cost of industry product stewardship programs not general taxpayers or local government.
WHEREAS there is excessive and wasteful packaging that ends up in the garbage;

AND WHEREAS the producers rather than the taxpayers should fund the recycling of this packaging:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities request that the provincial and federal governments mandate reduction of excessive packaging through product stewardship recycling programs, including materials such as plastic shopping bags, disposable cups and dishes, styrofoam packing, bubble wrap packing and plastic film packaging.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Environment

It is the Government of British Columbia’s (Government) policy to place the onus for end-of-life product management on the producer and consumers of a product, and not the general taxpayer or local government. In 2004, the Government enacted the Recycling Regulation to facilitate industry-led product stewardship in the Province of British Columbia (Province). The regulation currently applies to products such as electronics, tires, beverage containers (milk containers are currently exempted), lubricating oil, pharmaceuticals, paint, pesticides, gasoline, solvents and flammable liquids.

At the current time, packaging is not regulated under the Recycling Regulation, although some packaging is collected and recycled through municipal (“blue-box”) systems. However, work that addresses this resolution is underway.

The Ministry of Environment is working with the Canadian Council of Environment Ministers to develop a priority list of further products that could be included under product stewardship regulations. The list will include packaging materials.
WHEREAS beverage containers for milk, milk substitutes and meal replacements are not included in the deposit-refund beverage container stewardship program, require extensive space in municipal blue boxes and collection vehicles, and contribute to garbage and litter throughout the province;

AND WHEREAS the deposit-refund beverage container stewardship program is the most effective and environmentally responsible way to divert these containers from disposal:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government designate milk, milk substitute and meal replacement beverage containers in the beverage container product category in the Recycling Regulation.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Environment

The Province of British Columbia (Province) is reviewing the exemption of milk containers in the Recycling Regulation.

The BC Dairy Council launched a province-wide voluntary milk container recycling program on October 20, 2006. The Dairy Council has an agreement with Encorp Pacific (Canada) for consumers to return used plastic milk jugs and paperboard milk cartons to Encorp’s Return-It™ Depots throughout the Province.
WHEREAS the Ministry of Environment carries responsibility for the overall water quality of lake systems in the province and originally recognized the negative impacts of invasive aquatic species within its lakes by funding milfoil control programs;

AND WHEREAS local governments have, since 1999, been required to assume these programs and fund same with taxes collected from local property owners without contribution from the Province;

AND WHEREAS the Province assumes a far greater benefit from enhancements to the lake recreation tourism industry than do local property owners:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities lobby the provincial government to reinstate funding support for active milfoil control programs.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Environment

Currently, the Ministry of Environment (Ministry) does not fund control for aquatic plants in water bodies, or operate programs to manage these invasive species. The previous milfoil control program, operated by the Ministry in the 1970-80’s, was determined to be outside of the core mandate of the Ministry, and has been discontinued.

The management of invasive species, such as milfoil, is the responsibility of local government. Some funding is available for invasive plant control through the Ministry of Community Services, on a cost-sharing basis.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Community Services

Local governments can apply to the Ministry of Community Services for both Infrastructure Planning Grants and/or capital works grants such as the recently announced Canada-BC Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund. These grants provide funding for local government infrastructure projects which, among other things, improve drinking water quality. If milfoil was determined to be negatively impacting water quality in a community’s drinking water supply, then a project to manage and mitigate the milfoil problem may be considered an eligible project.
WHEREAS the Land Title and Survey Authority of BC has the authority to adjust the natural boundary of water courses in the province, which have been established by legal survey plan;

AND WHEREAS the interests of local governments may be impacted by changes in the natural boundary of a water course within their jurisdiction; however they are not automatically notified when an application for a natural boundary adjustment has been submitted to the Authority:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities request that the Land Title and Survey Authority of BC establish a process to refer any application for a natural boundary adjustment to the local government within whose jurisdiction the property lies for comment, and that local government comments be considered by the Surveyor General’s office when adjudicating the application.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

The Land Title and Survey Authority (LTSA) is a fully independent agency whose actions are governed by its Board of Directors. The Surveyor General's role under the Land Title Act as a statutory decision maker is to confirm the effects of natural processes on property boundaries; it is not a planning or public policy decision role. Two years ago, the Government of British Columbia (Government) determined that the LTSA would be more effective if it were not directly under the control of the Government, so that it could base its decisions on criteria established between the LTSA and its clients.

The Surveyor General, along with the Registrar of the Association of BC Land Surveyors, recently met with the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) to review the process for confirming changes in property boundaries that might arise through natural accretions. The basis for this discussion is that a landowner has common-law right to own accreted lands and statutory right under the Land Title Act to have their boundaries adjusted to reflect these natural changes.

Three specific actions came out of this meeting:

- LTSA has agreed to institute a pilot project with the RDCK to include its comments on applications for accretion requests;
- LTSA has agreed to provide some guidance to the RDCK staff within this review process; and
- LTSA is adjusting the information available on its website respecting accretion applications to note that notice of accretion applications will be provided to those local governments who have requested the Surveyor General Division to send notification of such applications on a routine basis.
WHEREAS in the context of Board of Variance decisions rendered seemingly unassailable by the applicable legislation and case law, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) passed Resolution A14 at its 1996 Annual General Meeting and Resolution C9 at its 1998 Annual General Meeting, requesting that the Province of British Columbia amend the legislation to permit a council or citizen to appeal the substantive merits of a decision of a Board of Variance;

AND WHEREAS the Province of British Columbia has committed that this land use issue should be considered in the context of the proposal of the Minister to work with the UBCM on the development of a multi-year plan for the establishment of a new legislative foundation for local government:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UBCM petition the provincial government to amend the Local Government Act provisions regarding Boards of Variance, to circumscribe the scope of powers of Boards of Variance, and to provide for an adequate course of appeal for both citizens and local government councils.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Community Services

In addition to the past resolutions cited in the preamble to this resolution, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) has passed resolutions related to boards of variance in 1996 (B59), 1998 (C10), 1999 (B23) and 2000 (B38). There was a full UBCM discussion of the role and membership of boards of variance in 2000.

The Province of British Columbia (Province) responded positively to the 2000 resolution B38 which requested discontinuance of provincial appointments. While there are a variety of other concerns, there does not appear to be a consensus regarding how they should be dealt with and the perspective of some local governments conflicts with that of others.

This current resolution does not indicate what limitations local governments would like to see put on the role of boards of variance, nor what type of appeal system would be considered appropriate (e.g., who could make an appeal, who should hear the appeals, what types of decisions could be appealed, and what could form the basis for an appeal.) The Ministry of Community Services would need a better understanding of what the UBCM considers the objective of the legislative reform should be in order to review this issue.
WHEREAS a conflict of values may occur between provincial and local authority regarding land uses and resource management;

AND WHEREAS such conflict limits local governments’ ability to represent the best interest of their constituents:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that local governments be assured of their authority to regulate in accordance with established bylaws without challenge from the provincial government.

RESPONSE:  Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources

The Province will soon be releasing a new energy plan. At that time, a response to this resolution will be available.
WHEREAS the Province of British Columbia once administered a “Downtown Revitalization Program”, which generated tremendous benefits and returns to those communities who participated in the program;

AND WHEREAS direct benefits were also returned to the Province through increased commerce, tourism and income tax revenues:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of the Province of British Columbia be requested to reinstate the “Downtown Revitalization Program” and to provide adequate financial resources to provide substance to this extremely valuable provincial program.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Community Services

The Downtown Revitalization Program provided funding for projects at a time when local government had fewer financing tools. In recent years, the Province of British Columbia (Province) has created a number of tools that could be used by local government to undertake downtown revitalization programs. Furthermore, with the creation of the Municipal Finance Authority (MFA) and changes to the Community Charter, local governments now have access to short and long-term capital financing at competitive interest rates.

The Community Charter authorizes local governments to provide tax exemptions for protected heritage properties and areas designated for revitalization. Local governments can designate revitalization areas through a financial plan or official community plan. Local governments can also establish local area services and business improvement areas. Any type of local government service may be provided through a local service area and business improvement areas allow for a broad range of initiatives including improving or beautifying streets, heritage conservation or projects to encourage more business. Local area services are financed in whole or in part by property owners within the service area.

The Local Government Act authorizes municipalities to exchange density for community amenities. A broad range of public amenities can be secured to support revitalization projects including street beautification, environmental enhancement or underground parking.
WHEREAS the Province has committed to developing tourism as an essential part of a sustainable, vibrant economy for British Columbia;

AND WHEREAS visitor centres are a vital part of attracting visitors to our small rural communities, helping them provide economic opportunity and diversity:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities lobby the provincial government to restore funding, directly to local communities, for the development and operation of effective and productive visitor centres.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts

There are 108 community-operated Visitor Centres (Centres) in the Province of British Columbia (Province) owned by sponsor organizations such as Chambers of Commerce, regional districts, municipalities or historical societies. Tourism British Columbia has never funded community-operated centres directly but rather provided a fee-for-service for provincial and regional servicing of the traveling public. In 2005, Tourism British Columbia announced a new Visitor Centre Program in recognition of the key role these Centres play in generating real economic benefits for communities and the Province.

Working closely with the BC Chamber of Commerce, Tourism British Columbia implemented the following:

- Doubled the funding provided to community centres to approximately $3M.
- Increased base funding by an average of 48% per community. Funding was changed to be measured by visitor volume and guaranteed for three calendar years.
- Created a special project fund for new community initiatives (up to $10,000 per community)
- Developed research tools to help communities benchmark the economic value of their operations.

The program is being received as a welcome commitment to the future of tourism in the Province and a key contributor to the doubling of tourism revenues by 2015.
WHEREAS the Province has a long-standing history of mining, exploration and development;

AND WHEREAS past activities have impacted on the local environment and the lives of residents:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities lobby the provincial government to enhance the public consultation process and ensure that the local government having jurisdiction is informed of mineral exploration and development initiatives that may impact its residents.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources

The Province will soon be releasing a new energy plan. At that time, a response to this resolution will be available.
WHEREAS the gravel operation permit process employed by the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources does not engage adequate local input or consider local concerns:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources be requested to review its notification process, including signage and notification to neighbouring properties, the amounts requested for reclamation bonds from applicants, and the consideration of off-site infrastructure and social impacts.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources

The Province will soon be releasing a new energy plan. At that time, a response to this resolution will be available.
WHEREAS resource activity such as mining, petroleum extraction, and wind harvesting are increasing;

AND WHEREAS landowners and other tenure holders require information and assistance to deal with this additional activity within their tenure:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that a land surface office, independent of the resource-related ministries, be established by the Province to assist surface tenure holders to obtain information and understand the processes involved.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources

The Province will soon be releasing a new energy plan. At that time, a response to this resolution will be available.
WHEREAS the Mountain Pine Beetle is an ecological and economic disaster for British Columbia and Canada:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities lobby the provincial and federal government to employ all possible financial and other resources within their means to alleviate both the Mountain and Western Pine Beetles before they spread further to the rest of Canada.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Forests and Range and Minister Responsible for Housing

A key objective of the Province of British Columbia’s (Province) Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan is preventing damage to susceptible forests. Last year (2005), the federal government transferred $100 million to the Province, and this spring committed another $200 million to help the Province mitigate impacts of the beetle infestation – including spread control activities.

British Columbia and Alberta have signed a multi-year agreement to work together and share costs in managing pine beetle populations. $15 million was spent on last year’s spread control program along the British Columbia-Alberta border, with another $36 million to be spent this fall and winter. 68,000 infested trees were felled and burned in 2005/06 in the inter-provincial border zone to minimize the beetle’s eastward spread. British Columbia is sharing with Alberta everything learned and experienced to date in dealing with the mountain pine beetle.

The Province updates its Emergency Bark Beetle Management Area annually to enable aggressive action against the beetle in expanded outbreak areas.

The western pine beetle does not pose the same kind of threat as the mountain pine beetle. Western pine beetles attack ponderosa pine, an uncommon timber species east of the Rocky Mountains.
WHEREAS BC local wood manufacturers have been hurt by the softwood lumber dispute and there is a strong concern with the survival of our local forest industry;

AND WHEREAS it is critical that the provincial government consider pro-active ways to help the industry, and especially local manufacturers to survive, for the sake of local economy, which in turn is the sake of the whole province:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government work with local governments to develop proactive measures to assist the forest industry, including local manufacturers, to enhance local economic development opportunities for the benefit of communities and the province as a whole.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Forests and Range and Minister Responsible for Housing

Value-added/Fibre Supply
The value-added sector is an important component of the Province of British Columbia’s forest industry, and the Ministry of Forests and Range (Ministry) and Minister Responsible for Housing is continuing to work on a value-added strategy that will help make operators more competitive. Small operators and independent mills continue to have access to public timber through BC Timber Sales (BCTS). Independent mills registered under Category 2 of BCTS can bid on a protected pool of timber. They also have the option of bidding on general BCTS licenses that are available to all interested enterprises. By creating BCTS, more wood is available to more people on the open market.

The Ministry of Forests and Range (Ministry) is exploring new types of tenure that will help create more opportunities for small companies and bridge the gap between small scale salvage and BCTS. This includes piloting intermediate salvage licenses in five forest districts that have been hit hard by the mountain pine beetle infestation. Fifty to sixty intermediate timber sale licenses will be offered through BC Timber Sales to help create more opportunities for smaller operators.

First Nations
Since 2002, the Province has signed forestry agreements with 116 First Nations, providing access to 20.8 million cubic metres of timber and $152.2 million in shared revenue. This includes recently signed forestry agreements with the Canoe Creek and Canim Lake Indian Bands. Together they will receive $2.9 million and access 315,000 cubic metres of timber.

The overarching goal of these agreements is to make First Nations full participants in the Province’s forest sector. First Nations are important partners in addressing the mountain
pine beetle infestation, particularly in helping recover economic value from attacked trees.

**Stumpage Revenue**
The Province uses stumpage revenue to provide vital public services, such as health care and education and is spending millions of dollars on supporting communities on interface fire issues. The Province is negotiating Forest and Range Opportunities Agreements and issuing community forest agreements expressly to support communities.
WHEREAS value-added mills can no longer get direct awards of timber from BC Timber Sales to supply their operations with fibre and have been in a steep decline over the past five years, in spite of the fact that such operations employ more people per cubic metre of wood than the new mega-mills;

AND WHEREAS the Forest Act changes have led to significant corporate concentration, which further limits opportunities for value-added operators to access timber that is being left in the bush or burned:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government reinstate the following timber programs:
• small business;
• small-scale salvage;
• agricultural sector woodlots; and
• direct award system to value-added mills,
to better utilize the available and salvageable fibre.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Forests and Range and Minister Responsible for Housing

The value-added sector is an important component of the Province of British Columbia’s (Province) forest industry. The Ministry of Forests and Range (Ministry) is continuing to work on a value-added strategy that will make operators more competitive.

Small operators and independent mills continue to have access to public timber through BC Timber Sales (BCTS). Independent mills registered under Category 2 of BCTS can bid on a protected pool of timber. They also have the option of bidding on general BCTS licenses that are available to all interested enterprises.

BCTS was created to support the Government of British Columbia’s new market-based pricing system through the competitive auction of Crown timber. By creating BCTS, more wood is made available to more people on the open market.

The small scale salvage program has not been cancelled. However, an expanded salvage harvest due to the mountain pine beetle infestation has raised concerns. The Ministry is refocusing the program to bring it back in line with its original intent – recovering individual trees or small patches of damaged trees.

New types of tenure are being explored that will help create more opportunities for small companies and bridge the gap between small scale salvage and BCTS. This includes piloting intermediate salvage licenses in five forest districts that have been hit hard by the mountain pine beetle infestation. Fifty to sixty intermediate timber sale licenses will be offered through BCTS to help create more opportunities for smaller operators.
Small scale salvage plays an important role in forestry; however, it is not the best program to address the mountain pine beetle infestation.
WHEREAS the Province has budgeted an additional $90 million over three years to address the increased log hauling impact on Ministry of Transportation roads in resource areas;

AND WHEREAS the Ministry of Forests has budgeted an additional $20.7 million over two years to address this impact on forest service roads:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government provide local government with significant additional financial resources to address the impact of this increased log and finished wood products’ hauling on municipal road infrastructure.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Forests and Range and Minister Responsible for Housing

Road systems across the Interior are seeing greater industrial use due to increased salvage harvesting of mountain pine beetle-attacked timber. The Province of British Columbia (Province) is investing more than $110 million in maintaining beetle-affected provincial highways and forest service roads. Municipal road infrastructure is the responsibility and jurisdiction of municipalities.

These funds will ensure the Province’s highways and forest service roads can stand up to the increased loads, and provide a safe and reliable surface for the traveling public. A key objective of the provincial Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan is maintaining and protecting worker and public health and safety.

The Government of British Columbia is firmly committed to safety in the woods, as well as to safety on our forest service roads and highways. To date, the Ministry of Transportation has upgraded 660 kilometres of roads and highways to help support increased harvesting of beetle wood. This year the Ministry of Forests and Range (Ministry) is making safety-related improvements and upgrades to 160 kilometres of forest service roads, including three bridges, this year.

The Ministry is also funding the maintenance of non-industrial roads that provide access to isolated year-round communities, or access to recreation sites.
WHEREAS the 2003 Community Charter was intended to be followed up with a Charter for regional districts;

AND WHEREAS regional districts now get their authority from the Local Government Act and portions of the Community Charter, which creates confusion:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities lobby the provincial government to clarify the manner in which regional districts are governed, with the intent of correcting the existing inequities between incorporated and unincorporated areas of the province, resulting in equality for all residents of British Columbia.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Community Services

The Ministry of Community Services (Ministry) appreciates the local government interest in a Community Charter for regional districts. However, it is important to note that the regional district legislative provisions were extensively revised with the adoption of the Local Government Act in 2000. Subsequently, the Community Charter was adopted, and through consequential amendments in Bill 76 of 2003, the regional district legislation was connected to the new legislative framework, including some of the innovations in the Community Charter.

Subsequently, the Ministry and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) agreed, given the extensive changes to the Community Charter and the Local Government Act relating to regional districts, that our efforts should be focused on making what we have work more effectively rather than introducing yet more new legislation. This in turn led to the well regarded Regional District Tool Kit.

The Ministry is always interested in ensuring that the local government legislative framework works effectively, while recognizing, however, that securing time on the legislative agenda is challenging, given competing demands. To be effective, legislative change needs to be based on a clear analysis of the issues or problems that it is meant to address and consensus on how to move forward. One step in that process was the regional district workshop at the 2006 UBCM Convention.

This provided an opportunity for discussion and responses to questions related to thinking regionally, building inter-jurisdictional relations, connecting regional districts and their members and providing assistance and advice. The information will be valuable in assisting the Ministry and the UBCM and choosing courses of action.
WHEREAS the BC Ambulance Service lists its mission as providing “high quality emergency medical services” and lists its goal as “providing high quality patient care”;

AND WHEREAS many small communities in British Columbia are considered “remote” and therefore standby ambulance attendants receive only $2.00 per hour as opposed to “rural” community ambulance attendants receiving $10.00 per hour:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that there be no distinction in the pay category of standby ambulance attendants in rural and remote communities, and that all areas of BC be entitled to equal service.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Health

The Province of British Columbia (Province) clearly recognizes the vital role paramedics play in ensuring patients throughout the Province receive timely and high quality care.

Compensation for paramedics is a negotiated item in the collective agreement between the Ambulance Paramedics of British Columbia (CUPE 873) and the Emergency Health Services Commission (Service). In the 1990’s, paramedics at remote stations received no compensation for being on-call. Now, they receive $2 an hour for carrying a pager and a minimum of four hours pay when they are sent out on a call.

A negotiated distinction in pay categories exists for paramedics based on the shift they are working, not on the geographical location of the work. Paramedics working on a stand-by shift are paid $10 per hour to remain at the station during their scheduled shift. Paramedics working a call out (pager) shift are paid $2 per hour and are not obligated to remain at the station during that time.

The Service is working with health authorities to see how they can integrate the day-to-day work of paramedics with other health care professionals to better serve communities and ensure meaningful work for paramedics. Additionally, local paramedics and management have been working together to attract qualified individuals to become paramedics in communities with staff shortages.

The British Columbia Ambulance Service is a provincially operated ambulance service under the direction of the Emergency Health Services Commission and provides integrated, expert emergency medical care province-wide.
WHEREAS local governments in British Columbia are contending with the increasing threat of the West Nile Virus, which can lead to serious health effects, including prolonged health problems and which, in severe cases, can be fatal;

AND WHEREAS the City of Coquitlam appreciates the importance of implementing a coordinated approach to local prevention and response measures, including health education, in the defence against West Nile Virus;

AND WHEREAS Health Authorities have the expertise to deal with health issues;

AND WHEREAS the health of British Columbians is the responsibility of the Province of British Columbia and the Government of Canada and should remain so;

AND WHEREAS funding grants available to local governments are not sufficient or guaranteed for the long term, to cover the costs needed to meet provincial expectations with respect to West Nile Virus preparedness;

AND WHEREAS local governments should recover 100% of their costs associated with health activities directed by a public health authority:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities encourage the provincial and federal governments to accept full responsibility, including funding, for all activities related to implementing local prevention and response measures, including public education, in the defence against West Nile Virus.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Health

The health of citizens is a responsibility shared among all jurisdictions, including local governments, health authorities, the Province of British Columbia (Province), First Nations and the federal government. A coordinated and cooperative approach among all governments to reduce the risk of outbreaks of West Nile virus disease is to the greatest benefit of the public.

To date, West Nile virus has not been found in the Province. However, the Province continues to take a precautionary approach to the threat of West Nile virus through a provincial strategy led by the BC Centre for Disease Control. This strategy includes public education, surveillance for mosquitoes, dead birds, and human infections, prevention through integrated pest management (i.e. mosquito larval control) and plans for response to a severe outbreak (i.e. adult mosquito control). As well, health authorities have developed local plans to address a potential finding of the virus.

Since 2004, the Province has provided over $9 million in funding to local governments, through the UBCM, for mosquito control programs. This funding is determined through
an annual review of the surveillance for, and potential threat of, West Nile virus in the Province. Funding for 2007 is currently under review.

With their responsibilities for public health, including emergency planning and response, local governments play an important role in responding to public health threats, supporting prevention activities, and protecting, promoting and supporting public health. The Ministry of Health looks forward to continuing to work cooperatively with local governments in preparation for, and response to, the threat of West Nile virus.
WHEREAS provincial government funding is necessary to support local community mental health and addiction services;

AND WHEREAS out-of-town professional services traveling to the community to provide mental health service are appreciated, but not cost effective or dependable;

AND WHEREAS rural and remote communities are under-serviced and existing services are being fully utilized;

AND WHEREAS mental health care is an integral part of health care, as well as a preventative health service:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that UBCM lobby the provincial government to fund existing mental health and addiction services through the current service providers, together with any other mental health and addiction services that would enhance services throughout the province;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that there be community involvement in decisions surrounding changes in service delivery of local mental health and addiction services.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health (Ministry) has made it a priority to build a comprehensive system of mental health and addictions services across the Province of British Columbia (Province). The Ministry provides over $1 billion a year for mental health and addictions supports, an increase of 20 per cent since 2001.

The Province has also fully funded the $125 million Mental Health Plan as well as $138 million in capital funding for mental health facilities that are now open or under construction in a number of communities, including Terrace, Smithers, Fort St. John, Prince George, Kamloops and Coquitlam.

Our partners in local government are also critical to the further success of community based facilities through, for example, solutions such as smaller lot sizes, higher density housing and faster rezoning laws.

Health authorities are implementing a full continuum of services including public awareness and school programs, supports for families, supported living and assisted living units, day programs, addictions programs, counseling and beds for adults and youth, residential safe housing, mental health beds, psychiatric outreach, tele-and-video-psychiatry, community mental health beds and more.
WHEREAS problematic drug use is a persistent and serious issue that local governments across British Columbia must continue to address;

AND WHEREAS responsibility for the implementation of mental health and addiction services lies with regional health authorities;

AND WHEREAS provincial mental health and addictions policy advocates partnerships with local governments:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities request that the provincial government, through the Ministry of Health, articulate a provincial Mental Health Plan and an Addictions Treatment Plan that addresses regional needs, outlines best practice in treatment interventions, addresses the need for expanded treatment capacity, particularly in the area of youth treatment and acknowledges local governments as key partners in the development and implementation of the treatment plan.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health (Ministry) is committed to continue moving forward to provide the best supports possible for people facing mental health and addiction challenges. Each year, the Ministry provides over $1 billion a year for mental health and addictions support – an increase of 20 per cent over the 2001 budget.

The Province of British Columbia (Province) has also fully funded the $125 million Mental Health Plan as well as $138 million in capital funding for mental health facilities that are now open or under construction in a number of communities, including Terrace, Smithers, Fort St. John, Prince George, Kamloops and Coquitlam.

Since 2001, the Ministry has expanded mental health and addictions services to include illnesses with the greatest burden of disease, including depression and anxiety disorders. To recognize the strong link between mental illness and addictions, mental health and addictions planning and service delivery have been integrated.

Prevention and treatment resources for children and youth have also been given a high priority. In 2005/06, the Ministry provided health authorities with an additional $6 million to develop more youth-specific addictions treatment services, and $2 million to develop targeted services for crystal meth users and their families.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development has implemented the first Child and Youth Mental Health Plan in Canada.
In 2004, the Ministry of Health released a provincial planning framework. This is being used by health authorities and their partners to direct the development of a collaborative model of response that involves partnerships across all levels of government and sectors, including municipal governments, to ensure a full range of services are available at the local level.

Health authorities are developing an evidence-based range of mental health and addictions services that are based on best practices, and includes health promotion, prevention, harm reduction, early identification, treatment, long-term rehabilitation and recovery and reintegration within their regions.
PROVINCE TO REQUIRE LICENSED
ESTABLISHMENTS TO POST FASD WARNINGS

WHEREAS fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) has proven to cost British Columbia taxpayers in special education services and social services;

AND WHEREAS some local governments have taken a leadership role in requiring licensed establishments to post warning signs in their place of business as to fetal alcohol spectrum disorder:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Province of British Columbia be requested to pass provincial laws requiring all licensed establishments and retail liquor outlets to post warning signs in their place of business, warning women of the dangers of consuming alcohol during pregnancy.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Health

The Government of British Columbia (Government) recognizes the use of alcohol in pregnancy may result in children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), a term used to describe the range of disorders that can occur when a woman drinks alcohol during pregnancy. Government supports cross-Ministry and community initiatives to prevent and manage FASD, including ActNow BC – Healthy Choices in Pregnancy, a goal of which is the development of regional FASD prevention plans in each Health Authority.

Through ActNow BC, the Liquor Distribution Branch, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General – in partnership with Ministry of Health, Ministry for Children and Family Development, BC Centre of Excellence for Women’s Health, Centre for Addictions Research of BC and Centre for Social Responsibility – developed signs targeted at increasing the public awareness message of “No Safe Time, No Safe Amount” in relation to alcohol use in pregnancy. These signs will be displayed year-round in government liquor stores and are available for voluntary use by licensed retailers.

The Province of British Columbia (Province) is developing a comprehensive response to the issue of FASD, which includes ongoing education, responsive public policy and availability of effective treatment services. This is consistent with the recommendations from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (2001)\(^1\) and the Centre for Addictions Research of BC (CARBC, 2006)\(^2\) identifying signage as a complementary component of a broader strategy.

\(^1\) http://www.caw.ca/whatwedo/substanceabuse/pdf/CAMHPositiononAlcoholWarningLabels.pdf#search=%22warning%20labels%20alcohol%22. Retrieved 06-09-12 @ 1600hrs.

Government will continue to strive to reduce the health, economic and social costs of FASD through ongoing investments, contributing to cross-ministry initiatives to improve prevention, as well as screening, diagnosis, assessment, intervention and support for children and youth with FASD.
WHEREAS British Columbia has the highest child poverty rate in Canada;

AND WHEREAS it is documented that northern rural communities experience a higher degree of violence and abuse;

AND WHEREAS women’s centers not only provide services to women and children, but they also advocate on behalf of their needs and rights:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government be requested to restore operational core funding levels to all Women’s Resource Centres in the Province of BC.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Community Services

The decision to discontinue provincial funding to women’s centres was not a reflection on the good work done by women’s centres, but rather recognition of the need to focus funding on services that are most critical to women living with, or at risk of, violence and abuse. Effective 2005/06, $12.5 million has been added to the annual program budget for women’s services, bringing the total program budget to $46.7 million annually. This is the most significant funding increase for these programs in over a decade.

This additional funding has allowed the Ministry of Community Services (Ministry) to enhance Stopping the Violence services for women and their children, which include transition houses, counseling programs, outreach services, and violence prevention initiatives.

In rural and remote areas, issues such as geographic location, isolation, transportation, access to services, and lack of anonymity present unique challenges for women experiencing violence. Since 2004, the Ministry has funded the Community Coordination for Women’s Safety (CCWS) project. Working primarily with rural, remote and isolated communities, CCWS collaborates with a variety of agencies including community-based victim services, transition houses, counseling programs, health, child welfare, and criminal and civil justice agencies, to ensure an effective, coordinated continuum of services is available to women.

CCWS receives $300,000 annually to support local coordination committees in approximately 70 communities in the Province of British Columbia. In addition, 43 new outreach services, many of them in small rural communities, help link women to the services they need or, as necessary, provide transportation to the nearest service.
WHEREAS the Premier has made a commitment to strengthen the economy and connect rural BC;

AND WHEREAS many rural communities do not meet the criteria set by Network BC, and the program has been vastly over subscribed:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government be requested to engage the federal government, local government and industry in order to ensure that rural BC is connected with broadband internet service.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Labour and Citizens’ Services

There is considerable demand for broadband in rural areas not part of the Network BC program. This includes sparsely populated areas not involved in the Network BC project because they do not have a library, school or health care facility. Providing broadband Internet connections into those communities will enable citizens to obtain better access to health and education services as well as enhance regional economic development opportunities.

In the 2006 Throne Speech, the Government of the Province of British Columbia (Government) committed to work with the federal government to extend broadband access to rural and remote First Nations in the Province of British Columbia (Province). This responsibility was given to the Government Chief Information Office, whose creative approaches through Network BC to providing broadband to communities in the Province have won broad acclaim. Budget 2006 committed $15 million over two fiscal years to First Nations connectivity and capacity building, contingent upon matching federal funds which is being pursued.

Further, in a recent deferral account decision, the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) directed incumbent local exchange carriers such as TELUS to develop proposals to connect communities that do not have access to broadband Internet service. The total balance of the deferral account is approximately $650 million across Canada. This amounts to an investment of about $150 million in British Columbia and Alberta that can be made available for connectivity. The Province has collaborated with TELUS in the development of a strategy that will ensure that the deferral account funds are leveraged to the maximum degree possible with regard to the principles established by the CRTC and with regard to the Province’s priorities and objectives. TELUS filed its construction plans with the CRTC on September 1, 2006, and a decision by the CRTC is expected to be reached in early 2007. If the CRTC approves those plans, this will further contribute to the closure of the Province’s digital divide.
WHEREAS the Ministry of Education in its 2005/06 fiscal year began the implementation of its strategic plan for public libraries “Libraries without Walls”, by providing new direct and indirect funding programs exceeding $6 million to the benefit of BC’s public libraries;

AND WHEREAS these new funds have increased the benefits derived from local public library expenditures and enhanced library collaboration province-wide:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities thank the Minister of Education for the significant increase in financial support for BC’s public libraries and encourage the Minister to enhance this support in future years.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education (Ministry), through the Public Library Services Branch, provides support and leadership to public libraries. The Strategic Plan for Public Libraries, “Libraries Without Walls: The World Within Your Reach”, was created at the request of Premier Gordon Campbell and is the result of extensive consultation with public libraries in the Province of British Columbia (Province).

The implementation of the Strategic Plan has provided additional funding and program support to public libraries to enable them to improve and expand their services, and to assist them in their role as literacy partners. Other Strategic Plan programs, such as the province-wide Virtual Reference service, implementation of BC OneCard, support for library federations, consortial integrated library systems and the core suite of licensed electronic databases purchased by the Province for all public libraries, will allow libraries to expand their traditional services using new technology.

The Ministry acknowledges that these province-wide strategic initiatives require ongoing support and commends the investment in staff development and resources made by the library community through their municipal funding.
WHEREAS provincial funding for libraries has not risen sufficiently to keep abreast of increases in costs due to general inflation in British Columbia for a period of at least 10 years;

AND WHEREAS this has resulted in decreased provincial funding for libraries in real dollars and increased costs for municipalities and regional districts;

AND WHEREAS libraries play an important role in establishing social equity and providing equal opportunities for children from diverse backgrounds and economic strata:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of the Province of British Columbia be asked to provide increased funding for libraries at least equal to the increase in general inflation in British Columbia over the last 10 years.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Education

The Province of British Columbia (Province) has invested $12 million over three years, starting in April, 2005, to implement the public library strategic plan, Libraries Without Walls, which will bring broadband Internet to every branch, provide a virtual reference service and help set up the OneCard program.

The funding includes $1.8 million to support literacy programs in libraries and improve technology to help libraries participate in electronic opportunities in the future. The Province’s public libraries are a key component of the Government of British Columbia’s goal to make the Province the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent.
WHEREAS properties that should revert to the Crown under provisions of the *Escheat Act* remain in the name of the intestate owner or dissolved corporation and cannot be sold under tax sale;

AND WHEREAS local governments are required to remit levied taxes on these properties to other governments and agencies and are without means to recover these funds;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government make the necessary amendments to the *Escheat Act* to enable the transfer of properties to the Crown and make the necessary financial restitution to local governments for the remittance of taxes and other government levies on these properties.

**RESPONSE: Ministry of Finance**

The resolution raises an interesting issue. Government is looking at the idea and its’ implications and once that process is complete it will be considered for the next budget (2008).
WHEREAS a regional district is not able to recover costs associated with the processing of an application for a site-specific exemption to a floodplain bylaw adopted under Section 910 of the Local Government Act;

AND WHEREAS the Local Government Act does not include a provision for a regional district to charge a fee for processing an application for a site specific exemption to a floodplain bylaw:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities request that the provincial government amend the Local Government Act so that regional districts can charge a fee for processing an application for a site specific exemption to a floodplain bylaw.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Community Services

Section 363 of the Local Government Act (Act) provides regional districts with the general authority to charge fees in relation to a service. As land use planning is a regulatory service, the Act, section 363 would provide regional districts with the authority to charge an application fee in relation to applications for exemptions under section 910, unless another provision specifically authorizes the imposition of a fee.

Section 931 of the Act provides for the imposition of specific application fees under Division 7 of Part 26, but does not include a specific power to impose an application fee in respect of an exemption to a requirement in relation to flood plain areas contained in section 910. Section 4(2) of the Act clarifies that where a specific power is conferred on a regional district and that specific power can be read as coming within a general power conferred by the Act, “the general power must not be interpreted as being limited by that specific power, but that aspect of the general power that encompasses the specific power may only be exercised subject to any conditions and restrictions established in relation to the specific power”.

The lack of a specific power within section 931 to charge an application fee in respect of a section 910 exemption would not, in our view, limit a regional district from exercising its general fee setting authority provided under the Act, section 363. We believe this interpretation would be consistent with the overall spirit of the legislation.
NEGOTIATING RENEWAL OF MUNICIPAL POLICING AGREEMENT

WHEREAS the municipal policing agreement for BC expires March 31, 2012 and preliminary discussions between the Province and the federal government have already started;

AND WHEREAS the RCMP is the primary provider of police services in BC, with detachments in all but 12 BC municipalities;

AND WHEREAS municipalities are uniquely positioned to understand the impacts of policing in their communities, are held accountable for safety in their communities and are responsible for the costs of policing now (or soon will be through legislative changes to the *Police Act* requiring all municipalities, regardless of size, to pay a portion of policing costs);

AND WHEREAS municipalities in other provinces have the ability to negotiate directly with the federal government for renewal of their policing agreements:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities request that the provincial and federal governments develop and implement a process for negotiating the new policing agreement that includes full municipal participation.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

The Province of British Columbia (Province) and the other provinces, territories and federal government, are taking a proactive approach to RCMP contract renewal in order to bring certainty to all parties well before the expiry date in 2012.

The renewal process will provide an opportunity to craft new agreements that will be more effective and more supportive of the Province’s and communities’ vision for police services.

The Province will be engaging municipalities in discussions prior to and throughout the negotiation process.
WHEREAS municipal fire departments and some Search and Rescue units are called upon to respond to motor vehicle accidents for the purpose of using specialized equipment to extricate occupants of damaged vehicles;

AND WHEREAS municipal fire departments and some Search and Rescue units are not being reimbursed by insurance companies for the costs of providing this critical service, and the costs of providing this service should be borne by the automobile insurance carriers of the vehicles involved in such accidents:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities request that the provincial government amend the Insurance (Motor Vehicle) Act to include fire department and Search and Rescue unit charges for automobile occupant extrication services in the mandatory basic motor vehicle insurance coverage and that this funding be used to make reimbursements to fire departments and Search and Rescue units that are involved in providing this service.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

Fire department costs related to attending motor vehicle related incidents within the Province of British Columbia are core municipal services and the responsibility of the municipality, already supported by taxpayers. The resolution would only transfer costs from one entity to another with the ultimate cost being borne by the same ratepayers.

Currently, the Provincial Emergency Program funds and supports road rescue outside of municipal jurisdictions for emergency response. Some funding for equipment purchase such as “jaws of life” and rescue vehicles is available under the Joint Emergency Preparedness Program.

An inter-agency committee led by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General and including representatives from the Ministry of Transportation, the Fire Chiefs Association, the police, ambulance services, ICBC and others, is examining a variety of topics related to traffic collision response to identify problems and find creative solutions.
WHEREAS the Province of British Columbia has adopted legislation requiring that local governments assume responsibility for local emergency management;

AND WHEREAS many local government jurisdictions have limited financial resources and it would be valuable to have the Province sponsor a Joint Emergency Preparedness Program funding application on behalf of all BC local governments for certain basic supplies and materials for community Emergency Operations Centres:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities request that the Province of British Columbia supply all local governments with appropriate BC Emergency Response Management System supplies and materials, available through the Justice Institute of BC, for Emergency Management Centres.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

If an emergency event results in the activation of the BC Emergency Management Structure, many of the expenses sustained by the affected local authority are recoverable through the Province of British Columbia (Province).

The Financial Assistance Guidelines for Local Authorities and First Nations have been sent to all local governments and First Nations bands to assist officials with the policies and procedures regarding cost recovery of allowable expenses. Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) staff may contact the appropriate Provincial Emergency Program (PEP) regional office and/or Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre before incurring expenses to be certain that those expenses are eligible for recovery.

Local authorities may be provided funding for support of EOCs through the Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (JEPP) which is administered by PEP. JEPP funds are provided under a 50/50 cost share basis.

The Justice Institute of BC provides free training in EOC roles and responsibilities to local authorities.
WHEREAS the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General recognizes the importance of making available funding to assist local communities to address public safety concerns due to natural hazards and to reduce future infrastructure damage potential;

AND WHEREAS mitigating potential hazards is more cost effective than repairing and/or replacing damaged infrastructure:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UBCM encourage the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General to reinstate the Natural Hazards Mitigation Fund and to double the original funding of $3 million to $6 million for the 2006-2007 fiscal year.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

The Province of British Columbia (Province) recognizes the importance of assisting local communities to address public safety concerns from natural hazards and reduce the potential for infrastructure damage.

The Natural Hazards Mitigation Fund issued in 2005-06 and its predecessor funds were very successful and all were heavily subscribed to. Unfortunately, the Natural Hazard Mitigation Fund was not offered this year due to priority objectives elsewhere.

Mitigation remains a cornerstone to emergency management and the Province will be seeking cost shared funds in the future including participation with the federal government.
WHEREAS in the last two winters many Kootenay communities have faced risks of flooding from ice jams on rivers running through their communities;

AND WHEREAS municipalities receive support from provincial emergency experts in some planning and during emergencies;

AND WHEREAS the real need is to have a comprehensive program to correlate historical data, weather trends, ice floes and monitoring stages in the region to give early warning to possible events:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities petition the provincial government to allocate provincial resources for an early warning system for the protection of our communities from threats arising outside local government boundaries, such as the risk of flooding from ice jams.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

The Provincial Emergency Program (PEP) and the River Forecast Centre work collaboratively to assess conditions related to a number of water related hazards. This information is then provided to local communities. However, communities are in the best position to recognize any elevated risks they face. It is the local conditions, quite unique to each community, which dictate ice formation and releases.

Ice jams are a naturally occurring phenomenon and considered a natural hazard that may affect many communities across British Columbia. Each community must perform a Hazard Risk and Vulnerability Analysis to identify and address the potential hazards they face. There is a free tool kit available on the PEP Website (www.pep.bc.ca) that is internationally respected. Information from this analysis is fed into local planning processes which is the most appropriate mechanism for dealing with these hazards.
WHEREAS the provincial government has reorganized the operations of the Office of the Fire Commissioner, thereby reducing the availability of trained experienced staff to conduct fire investigations, provide regional support to the local and regional fire departments and provide cost effective training for appointed Local Assistants to the Fire Commissioner (LAFCs);

AND WHEREAS these staff reductions will greatly impact local fire departments and LAFCs’ ability to conduct appropriate levels of life safety and fire safety investigations, thereby significantly reducing the quality of fire prevention services provided by community Fire Chiefs and LAFCs:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities appeal to the provincial government to immediately restore the regional offices of the Fire Commissioner and Local Assistant to the Fire Commissioner services and training to the previous levels of services.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

The Province of British Columbia (Province) recognizes that the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) is a critical link between the Government of British Columbia and the Province’s four hundred fire departments. The OFC has been reorganized to enhance service delivery. Fire safety has not and will not be compromised in any way. In the past year the OFC has implemented a 1-800 number (1-888-988-9488) so that fire departments can call the OFC 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in the event that they need assistance on a fire investigation. That service has been used many times over the past year.

No communities have lost their OFC representation. The OFC is maintaining its regional presence in Prince George, Cranbrook, Kamloops, Victoria and Chilliwack. Additional Fire Service Advisors (a new title for Fire Safety Officers) have been added in the past year in Nelson and Campbell River. Advisors continue to assist fire departments by providing guidance and advice and assisting to coordinate and/or deliver training, fire investigation and inspection services.

Over the past two years the OFC has provided almost $500,000 in grants to directly support local fire departments. Funding goes towards specialized training for major wildfires and enhanced fire prevention and for public education.
WHEREAS local governments understand the need for community buy-in for fuel management on lands adjoining their communities, but have some concerns around taking the lead in such a project, as per the Operational Fuel Management Program;

AND WHEREAS the issue of the right to work on Crown land is questionable and municipal liability issues with regard to staff working outside of their boundary areas have not been resolved:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UBCM request that the provincial government fully research the implications of local government taking a lead role in fuel management on Crown land and find potential solutions to these concerns so that they can be incorporated into any strategic wildfire protection program activities.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Forests and Range and Minister Responsible for Housing

An independent review of fuel management initiatives is already under way through the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM). The consultant hired by the UBCM to conduct the review will look at all aspects of the program, including liability.

The Ministry of Forests and Range and Minister Responsible for Housing (Ministry) is continuing to work with communities when it comes to moving ahead with fuel management activities. Government is implementing all the recommendations of the Filmon review and the Auditor General on interface fire management. In Summer 2006, the Ministry introduced a new type of tenure to facilitate fuel management treatments.
WHEREAS motorcycle gangs involved in criminal activities have established bunkers in various communities in Canada in order to create a secure, impenetrable compound to resist authorized entry by police forces;

AND WHEREAS local governments have the land use development authority to pro-actively prohibit such structures;

AND WHEREAS member local governments individually crafting anti-bunker bylaws will produce inconsistent bylaws that would be open to individual legal challenges:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UBCM request that the provincial government adopt legislation similar to the Fortified Buildings Act in Manitoba, that would prevent the fortification of buildings that would prevent emergency response personnel and law enforcement officials from gaining access to those buildings in an emergency.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

The Province of British Columbia (Province) believes that local governments best know the needs of their community on public safety issues related to building construction. We will support local government if they decide to implement bylaws or zoning restrictions on the prohibition of certain aspects of a building construction and/or modification in the overall context of local government’s land use development authority.

The Province notes that any perceived shortcomings of implementation of such a bylaw by local governments could be overcome by the development of a model “anti-bunker bylaw” by the UBCM. Such a “model bylaw” could be used by an individual municipality or adopted by a number of municipalities on a regional basis.
WHEREAS all municipal police service dogs in the Province of British Columbia are certified under the British Columbia Police Service Dog Standards, which cover all facets of police dog training including tracking, criminal apprehension, area, building and evidence searches, obedience and agility;

AND WHEREAS to remain in service, police dogs must train on a regular basis and pass the British Columbia Police Service Dog Standards validations on an annual basis;

AND WHEREAS there are no similar formalized standards for the training, deployment and validation of security dogs in the Province of British Columbia, the capability, degree of force and obedience of security dogs may be called into question in the following instances:

• when security guard dogs and their handlers attend to police incidents requiring the possible deployment of police dogs;
• when the deployment of security guard dogs compromises public safety on both private and public property; and
• when the deployment of a security guard dog results in a court decision that may compromise existing provincial police dog training standards and deployment;

AND WHEREAS to resolve the problems with security guard dogs, formal province-wide training standards similar to those for police service dogs are required;

AND WHEREAS establishing such training standards for security dogs requires legislative action from the provincial government:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities urge the provincial government to act as quickly as possible to establish and enact appropriate guidelines, standards and validation processes for security guard dogs that will ensure all dogs used for security purposes have at least a standard basic level of training and that effective monitoring and enforcement measures are in place to ensure that these province-wide training standards are strictly adhered to by all licensed security companies in the province.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

The Private Investigators and Security Agencies Act enables the creation of regulations respecting the training and use of guard dogs.

The Security Programs Division of the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General is working closely with Police Service Dog representatives to discuss the development of training standards for guard dogs used by licensed private security.
WHEREAS non-resident property electors may not have the means to attend a voting opportunity within the jurisdiction as resident electors do;

AND WHEREAS Section 100 of the Local Government Act allows mail ballots to those electors who have a physical disability, illness or injury that affects their ability to vote at another voting opportunity:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Local Government Act be amended to allow local governments the flexibility to provide local options for:
• additional opportunities to vote by mail ballot in elections or other voting opportunities; and/or
• alternative forms of voting.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Community Services

The Ministry of Community Services (Ministry) supports the proposal to amend the Local Government Act to give local governments the flexibility to decide whether they will allow electors, who will be absent during elections and voting, opportunities to vote by mail ballot voting.

The Ministry will consult with local government representative organizations about the proposal.
WHEREAS electoral reform is needed to improve democracy and decrease voter fraud in local elections:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that provincial legislation be amended to require electors to produce identification at voting stations, regardless of whether the elector is on the list of registered electors.

Response: Ministry of Community Services

The Ministry of Community Services has not been contacted by any local government with evidence that voter fraud is occurring.

The Local Government Act includes provisions to challenge a person’s entitlement to vote and to require identification that is satisfactory to the presiding election officer. If the person is unable to provide the necessary evidence, he or she may still be allowed to vote upon making a solemn declaration before the presiding election official.

A record of all challenges, and the manner in which they were resolved, is kept by the elections officials. If the outcome of the election is sufficiently close, the challenges may be considered by the courts in determining the validity of the election outcome.

Without evidence to the contrary, it appears the current provisions balance the legitimate right of electors to vote against the risk of voter fraud, if they are on the list of electors.
WHEREAS the Province is divided into various geographical boundaries for the purpose of determining insurance rates based upon vehicle driving habits and patterns;

AND WHEREAS these boundaries have not been reviewed and justified by ICBC since their inception in the 1970s, of which the financial impacts can significantly affect the communities and their citizens on either side of a boundary:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UBCM lobby the BC Utilities Commission to initiate a review of ICBC zones based upon scientific data that supports the boundary delineations and, subsequently, the rates that affect the users within those boundaries.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

Premiums are based on a number of factors including the claims history of the principal operator, rate group for the vehicle being insured, purpose for which the vehicle is being used, purchased coverage, and territory in which the vehicle is primarily being operated. Any time rating territories are changed, large numbers of policyholders are impacted. Some may have their premiums reduced, while others could experience increases.

Basic rate design, including territories, is now under the jurisdiction of the BC Utilities Commission (BCUC). The Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) is currently developing its rate design application anticipated to be filed with the BCUC in Spring 2007.

ICBC is seeking input from interested parties prior to filing its rate design application through a public pre-application consultation process. ICBC is aware of the UBCM’s concerns with respect to territories and is seeking further input from them. ICBC will be taking all interested parties’ input into account in developing its rate design application.
WHEREAS in the 1990s the government of the day downloaded the responsibility and cost for secondary roads onto municipalities;

AND WHEREAS the removal of Mountain Pine Beetle infested timber by increased truck traffic and lack of rail cars is severely impacting secondary road infrastructure:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government take back secondary roads and bridges from municipalities or subsidize the capital improvements of such roads and bridges.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Transportation

The Ministry of Transportation (Ministry) recognizes the need to maintain and rehabilitate the road and highway network to mitigate impacts the catastrophic Mountain Pine Beetle outbreak is having on the provincial road system. The Ministry is investing $90 million on provincial, over three years, to ensure that affected wood can be economically transported in an efficient and safe manner and help ensure that the goals and objectives of the Provincial Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan are met.

With respect to secondary highways, the former Highway Act was amended, effective April 1, 1997, to remove references to “secondary highway” and eliminate the authority for the Ministry to fund these highways and municipal bridges. This infrastructure is now considered a municipal responsibility as it serves a municipal, not provincial, network purpose.

For information, a distinction is made between “secondary roads” and “secondary highways”. A secondary road is an internal Ministry functional classification applicable only to roads administered by the Ministry. A secondary highway existed where a designation was placed on a municipal road, via an Order in Council, which would then allow for provincial funds to be spent on that highway.
WHEREAS the Government charges property purchase tax on all transfers, including local government;

AND WHEREAS local government housing corporations may purchase projects for affordable housing, including those held by other non profit societies:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that non profit housing entities be exempt from the property purchase tax in support of their role in providing affordable housing in BC communities.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Finance

The Province of British Columbia (Province), through BC Housing, supports the efforts of organizations that provide safe and affordable housing for British Columbians in need in a variety of ways including helping to arrange:

- financing;
- interim construction financing;
- development advice;
- one-time grants; and
- funding to bridge the gap between what residents can afford to pay and the operating costs of the non-profit and charitable housing providers.

On balance, the Government of British Columbia believes that its support of organizations that work to provide housing for those in need, through BC Housing, is the most effective approach.
WHEREAS the provincial government has not changed the amount of unconditional grants to local governments under 5,000 population since 1998 and the amount provided each year has been eroded by inflation;

AND WHEREAS the provincial government has pledged to increase the unconditional grant amounts in the next four years:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that, following the doubling of the small communities and regional district grants by 2009/10, the provincial government institute indexing of the unconditional grants to ensure that they increase each year to keep pace with increasing costs.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Community Services

Indexing of transfers to local governments was once a feature of the local government finance system in the Province of British Columbia (Province). It was found, however, that it is very difficult to devise an indexing formula that fairly represents the interests of both orders of government over the long term. Conditions change and evolve markedly over time and it is not possible to anticipate all eventualities. By the mid-1990’s, the Government of British Columbia (Government) concluded that indexing was unsustainable. This contributed to the abandonment of indexing in the mid-1990’s.

Since then, a different approach has been taken. Recognizing that the management of local government transfers is best accomplished through dialogue with local governments, provision has been made in legislation for annual consultation by the Minister of Community Services with the UBCM executive. As part of this dialogue, the issue of the adequacy of unconditional transfers can be addressed, given the economic and financial circumstances of the day.

This legislated consultation requirement is often fruitful. As an example, following interaction with the UBCM, the new formula for the Small Community Grant has been substantially revised. It contains such variables as a base amount, population and assessment. The goal is to distribute funds in a fair and transparent way, using a formula that is not static (like the old Small Community Protection Grant formula) but is responsive to factors like changing service demand and changing revenue potential. For larger municipalities, who benefit from Traffic Fine Revenue Sharing, the formula is responsive to both cost and revenue dynamics.
WHEREAS providing services for qualifying projects, under the Community Works Fund, such as community water and sewer systems, in rural areas is very costly due to the low number of potential users;

AND WHEREAS the Community Works Fund Agreement stipulates that any federal contributions under another infrastructure program, such as the Canada-British Columbia Infrastructure Program, cannot be increased by the use of Community Works Fund money where the total federal contribution would exceed 33%, and this condition limits the ability of local governments to provide affordable service in rural areas:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities petition the federal government to amend the Community Works Fund Agreement to allow for the use of Community Works Funds in conjunction with other federal funding programs such as the Canada-British Columbia Infrastructure Program.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Community Services

Local governments may use up to one-hundred percent of their Community Works Fund (CWF) allocation toward the eligible costs of an eligible project under the Gas Tax Agreement (GTA). However, the use of CWF funds is constrained if the eligible project is receiving federal funds under another infrastructure program. In that case, the rules respecting the maximum federal contribution limitations under that other infrastructure program apply.

Under the Canada-BC Infrastructure Program Agreement (CBCIP), the maximum federal contribution is limited to one third of eligible project costs. However, the CBCIP predates the GTA and all CBCIP funding has been awarded and the majority of projects completed. Looking forward, the recently negotiated Municipal Rural Infrastructure Funding Program Agreement (MRIF) will provide greater flexibility with respect to the maximum federal contribution limitations.

For example, MRIF will provide that the combined total of all funds from federal sources cannot exceed fifty percent of the total eligible costs of a project. This would provide the desired flexibility for local governments to be able to “top up” the one third federal contribution with CWF funds, up to fifty percent of eligible project costs and would support the provision of affordable local government services.
WHEREAS Canada, British Columbia and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities have entered into an agreement dated September 19, 2005 to provide for the transfer of a portion of federal gas tax revenues to municipalities and regional districts in British Columbia;

AND WHEREAS the purpose of the Agreement is to provide British Columbia local governments with stable, reliable and predictable funding for environmentally sustainable local infrastructure;

AND WHEREAS the Agreement restricts the use of gas tax funds so that they will be limited to infrastructure investments, owned by the local government, that achieve reduced greenhouse gas emissions, cleaner water or cleaner air;

AND WHEREAS the Agreement commits to a flexible approach in recognition of the diversity of Canadian communities;

AND WHEREAS the needs of regional district electoral areas and small communities are vastly different than the needs of larger cities;

AND WHEREAS local governments may wish to partner with neighbouring local governments, societies or individual residents for investments such as community hall furnace efficiency upgrades or residential woodstove exchange programs that, while achieving the over-arching objectives of the Agreement, may not necessarily result in the investment being owned by the local government:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities request that the Agreement be amended to recognize the unique needs of regional district electoral areas and small communities by providing for a more flexible approach to allow investments in projects that do not necessarily result in local government ownership.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Community Services

The issue of ownership requirements in relation to capital assets funded under the Gas Tax Agreement (GTA) was recently reviewed by the Partnership Committee (Committee) established under the GTA. It is accepted that the GTA is intended to allow funding for projects that may be owned outside the public sector, given the broad definition of “eligible recipient”.

However, because the Community Works Funds (CWF) must be directed to specified recipients (i.e., particular local governments according to a specified formula), this has created an unanticipated barrier that prevents local government from directing CWF funding to another entity for a project that is, or will be, owned by that other entity.
To overcome this barrier and ensure that the ownership requirements under the GTA support inter-jurisdictional projects and enable funding for capital assets that are used by the public but not owned by the local government, the Committee has agreed to amend the CWF Agreement template. CWF Agreements already in place may be amended on a case by case basis.

These amendments will provide the desired flexibility for communities to direct CWF funding toward eligible projects that do not necessarily result in local government ownership.
WHEREAS at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Conference held June 2005 in St. John’s, Newfoundland, the federal government promoted the Gas Tax Agreement and outlined eligible projects including public transit, roads, bridges, capacity building, and water and sewer utilities;

AND WHEREAS the Agreement between Canada, British Columbia and Union of British Columbia Municipalities on the Transfer of Federal Gas Tax Revenues Under the New Deal for Cities and Communities entered into on September 19, 2005 restricts the use of the funds to projects which contribute to reduced greenhouse gas emissions, clean water, or clean air;

AND WHEREAS this restriction causes financial hardship to municipalities that require gas tax revenues to maintain roads, streets and other infrastructure:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities request that the Gas Tax Agreement be amended to provide eligibility for capital projects contributing to environmental, economic, social or cultural sustainability and that the intended outcomes under the Agreement be expanded to encompass these four elements of sustainability.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Community Services

One of the choices made by the federal government in developing the framework for the transfer of federal gas tax revenues under the Gas Tax Agreement (GTA) was to ensure that municipal infrastructure investments in communities resulted in the achievement of the environmentally sustainable outcomes of reduced greenhouse gas emissions, cleaner air and cleaner water.

A National Evaluation of the GTA program will be conducted by March 31, 2009, and as part of the evaluation process it is important for the Province of British Columbia to be able to demonstrate that infrastructure investments under the GTA have contributed to the achievement of the desired environmental sustainability outcomes. A successful program evaluation is essential to support renewed funding.
WHEREAS municipalities have historically received grants-in-lieu funding from the senior levels of government;

AND WHEREAS negotiations with First Nations could result in provincial and/or federal lands being part of the negotiation process:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that, should any existing provincial or federal lands for which municipalities receive grants-in-lieu become part of any negotiated First Nations Agreement, senior governments should consider treaty adjustment funding and/or compensation for local government.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation

The Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation (Ministry) recognizes that local governments are concerned about this issue. However, local governments have the ability to generate revenue by providing First Nations with services like water, sewer and fire services.

To make these service arrangements successful, local governments and First Nations need to build trust and respect to make their relationships last. The Ministry will continue to be instrumental in supporting these relationships by funding treaty advisory committees and supporting local governments.

Around the Province of British Columbia there are many success stories among First Nations and local governments. One such example is among the Lheidli T’enneh First Nation, the City of Prince George and the Regional District of Fraser Fort George.
WHEREAS the process for BC Assessment Authority valuations and appeals for business, industrial and utility property classes can cause significant uncertainty for local government taxation, sometimes over several years;

AND WHEREAS recently, and in the past, the process has often limited the ability of communities and regions, particularly those in the resource-based, rural areas of the province, to develop reliable long-term financial plans and to project relatively accurate tax rates for all classes:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities establish a Task Force comprised of representatives from local government, the Province and the BC Assessment Authority to seek new legislative remedies to create greater certainty for business, industrial and utility property class assessments.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Small Business and Revenue

The Province of British Columbia (Province) is conducting a broad review of the BC Assessment Authority, focusing on governance, service quality to citizens, assessment methodology, and assessment policy. In the course of this review, the Province is looking at specific property types, such as ports and ski hills, to ensure the valuation methodology provides accurate and supportable assessments. One of the underlying goals of this review is to bring additional certainty to future assessments for these important industries.

In addition to examining specific valuation issues, the review will ensure that the appeal system is flexible, fair and equitable to the taxpayer, as well as effective, accessible and affordable. All property owners have the right to appeal their property assessment, and this contributes to the fairness, consistency and integrity of assessments in British Columbia. Overall, the complaints and appeals process has responded effectively to inquiries received each year.

Through consultations with industry stakeholders, the UBCM, and other government ministries and organizations, all interests are being taken into account in developing any proposals for changes to property valuation methodology and the assessment appeal system.
WHEREAS stability in property taxation is essential to local governments:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Province of British Columbia consult with affected local governments before considering statutory changes in relation to assessment and taxation of ferry terminals;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that local governments be consulted through the Union of British Columbia Municipalities in advance of any such legislative changes being brought forward for consideration.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Small Business and Revenue

No legislative changes were required to deal with assessment issues related to the British Columbia Ferry Services (BCFS).

BCFS was formed in 2004 as an independent authority and BCFS facilities must now be assessed and are subject to property taxes on most of their properties including the marine facilities (docks), terminals and maintenance depots. BC Ferry Services challenged the valuation of their properties and filed appeals to the Property Assessment Appeal Board for their 2004 and 2005 assessments, taking an initial position that restrictions in their leases with the Government of British Columbia (Government) make the properties valueless.

BCFS and BC Assessment (BCA) agreed to settle the appeals, resulting in reductions to the value of the marine facilities of about 42% for 2004 and 48% for 2005. The municipalities of West Vancouver, Port Hardy, North Saanich and Prince Rupert were interveners in the appeals, but did not challenge the agreement to settle. The Municipality of Delta separately appealed the BCFS assessments for 2006 to the Property Assessment Review Panel but was unsuccessful and did not pursue the appeal further.

BCFS will be paying about $5 million in annual property taxes. Previously when BC Ferries was a Crown Corporation, the Government paid grants in lieu of about $2 million to municipalities in which the ferry facilities were located.

If any need for legislative amendment is identified in the future, affected parties and the UBCM will be consulted as is the usual practice in developing new policies.
WHEREAS local governments strive to ensure the method of taxation applied to property owners matches the service provided, whether it is based on assessed value of land and/or improvements or parcel taxes;

AND WHEREAS the provisions of the Community Charter with respect to parcel taxes are limiting and do not provide the application of a fair and equitable tax in all cases:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UBCM petition the provincial government to amend Section 202 of the Community Charter to allow the use of assessment class as a limiting characteristic in the establishment of parcel taxes.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Community Services

The Ministry of Community Services (Ministry) is aware that local governments are striving to match the costs of delivering a service to the benefits received by property owners. In certain instances, when a service benefits individuals, rather than improves the utilization of land and improvements, applying a parcel tax results in an owner of multiple properties making multiple payments.

The Community Charter provides local governments with the opportunity to apply creative methods in determining classes of parcels to suit the characteristics of the service being offered. Previous legislation was based on narrower, prescriptive lists of characteristics. Section 202(2) of the Community Charter describes the three methods of applying a parcel tax (unit basis, frontage basis and/or area basis). When frontage and area are used, the differing physical characteristics of the parcels must be used to identify each class; fairness and equity amongst these classes is required.

Assessment classes, however, have little to do with the application of a parcel tax system. The eight assessment classes in British Columbia are designated by regulation (BC Reg 438/81) under the Assessment Act. Different assessment classes rely, to a lesser or greater extent, on different valuation methodology: (e.g. comparative sale information, income approach based on revenue generating potential of a property, historic cost approach, and prescribed valuation rates). Because of these different methods of valuation and the unique characteristics of land and improvements in different classes, the Province uses defined classes of property in applying a property value tax. The use of assessment classes does not readily reconcile with a parcel tax system because parcel taxes are not tied to the concept of property valuation.

The Ministry is prepared to take the issue raised in this resolution under advisement and look into the difficulties which arise when applying parcel taxes to certain services.
WHEREAS the provincial government has imposed water system facility classifications and operator certification requirements;

AND WHEREAS this requirement has resulted in small system classifications of Class 2 or higher that have onerous operator requirements weighted towards experience, which has resulted in many local governments not being in compliance with provincial requirements:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UBCM support a provincial government review of the operator experience requirement for water and wastewater treatment operators to shift the primary requirement to “training” as opposed to “experience” so that the capabilities of employees can be acknowledged over a shorter time period to minimize the instances of local government non-compliance.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Health

Beginning in 1966, with a small group of water treatment plant operators, the Environmental Operators Certification Program has grown to include over 3,000 operators in the Province of British Columbia (Province) and the Yukon.

The Environmental Operators Certification Program, which is responsible for the program, has been reviewing the classification and associated certification requirements for water supply systems in the Province. This review may resolve the issue stated in this resolution.
WHEREAS the provincial government, after completion of a review, enacted the current *Drinking Water Protection Act* (and regulations), which adopts some of the recommendations in the “Drinking Water Review Panel -Final Report” and moves responsibility and liability for safe drinking water to the purveyor;

AND WHEREAS the Interior Health Authority has implemented increased standards for treatment of potable water intended to reduce the level of risk associated with waterborne disease;

AND WHEREAS the recommendations in the “Drinking Water Review Panel - Final Report” on funding the infrastructure required to meet the new standards, was not adopted by the Province and the increased costs associated with meeting these standards are substantial and not financially viable for many communities:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Province of British Columbia, in consultation with the Union of BC Municipalities, immediately establish a mechanism to review and implement the funding recommendations contained in the “Drinking Water Review Panel -Final Report” to ensure that the infrastructure requirements needed to meet the increased standards for treatment of potable water are attainable.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Health

With the growth that the Province of British Columbia (Province) is experiencing, government needs to ensure water systems are sustainable. It is essential that the true cost of water for many water users is realized. The Action Plan for Safe Drinking Water in BC encourages all water systems – public or private, small or large – to become self-sufficient in terms of funding.

There are no proposals to impose any overall cost-sharing formula or any broad drinking water surcharge over water users, consumers, developers and resource industries at this time. This government does recognize funding is essential to the protection of drinking water in the Province. Several provincial ministries, including the Ministries of Health and Community Services, are addressing the funding recommendations in the “Drinking Water Review Panel – Final Report.”

Government has dedicated funds for operational activities under the *Drinking Water Protection Act* and related acts, and we continue to dedicate the resources toward drinking water assessments, as well as to refine the existing strategy for funding infrastructure improvements, working with both local and federal authorities.

The Ministry of Community Services also has numerous infrastructure grants accessible to water suppliers.
WHEREAS water suppliers must be permitted and regularly tested for safe drinking water under the Drinking Water Protection Act;

AND WHEREAS the Ministry of Health, through the regional health authorities, currently provides testing of drinking water at no cost to some suppliers in the province;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities lobby the provincial government to ensure that the testing of safe drinking water be maintained at no cost to water suppliers.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Health

One of the principles in the Government of British Columbia’s (Government) Action Plan for Safe Drinking Water states that water users should pay appropriate costs. Approximately half the population in the Province of British Columbia (Province) is currently paying for its water monitoring through its water rates. It would not be appropriate for these ratepayers to subsidize other water supply systems through their provincial taxes.

Water monitoring is key to ensuring water quality, and it encourages water suppliers to take ownership of their water quality when they are also responsible for the monitoring. This monitoring is part of operating a water supply system and is most appropriately undertaken by the supplier, with costs borne by water users.

Government recognizes, however, that it is expected that many suppliers will also be required to expand their monitoring programs to collect more water microbiology data and to capture real time data related to turbidity, chlorine residuals and treatment effectiveness monitoring. For this reason, health authorities will continue to provide some audit monitoring of water systems for the foreseeable future.
WHEREAS the Ministry of Environment has downloaded the water quality monitoring of rivers and streams within municipal boundaries to local governments, including the cost of regular testing;

AND WHEREAS laboratory examinations for water quality tests in rivers and streams can cost local governments thousands of dollars annually and the results of these laboratory tests are not required by local governments:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Province of British Columbia be petitioned to absorb the cost of water quality monitoring in rivers and streams.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Environment

The requirement for dischargers to monitor downstream impacts of their sewage discharges has been in place for several decades. Many larger regional districts, such as the Greater Vancouver Regional District, have been required to monitor downstream since the 1970’s.

The Ministry of Environment’s “shared stewardship” approach requires dischargers, including municipalities and regional districts, to participate in managing the impacts of their discharge activities on the environment. This includes incurring costs related to monitoring and testing for downstream environmental impacts, which is a key activity for ensuring public and environmental health and safety.
B99 PROVINCIAL INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE OF RIPARIAN AREAS

WHEREAS the banks and foreshore areas of rivers traversing through municipalities are the responsibility of the provincial government;

AND WHEREAS there are dangerous trees and other vegetation that pose risks to local residents and their property, as well as being a potential risk to municipal infrastructure and property:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Province of British Columbia be petitioned to ensure that regular inspections are carried out in riparian areas, and that trees and other vegetation that pose a risk of liability are dealt with in a timely manner.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Environment

Wildlife trees are an important stand level biodiversity element, due to the habitat value they provide to numerous species and ecosystems. They only become a hazard tree when someone proposes a land use activity that creates a risk from natural tree senescence. The Ministry of Environment provides guidelines to land use proponents on how to manage their risk from wildlife / hazard trees.

For those parts of the Province of British Columbia that the Riparian Areas Regulation (RAR) applies to, the maintenance of trees and other vegetation in riparian areas has been recognized as being useful for slope protection against land slip, as well as for erosion prevention and sediment control. In addition, many local governments have tree protection bylaws in place, including a permitting system, in recognition of the benefits of tree protection.

However, if hazardous trees are identified within riparian areas during the assessment of a development proposal by a qualified professional, then the RAR Assessment Methods describe the circumstances in which hazardous tree removal may proceed.
WHEREAS the rate of logging on the private forest lands within the E & N Land Grant on Vancouver Island has been dramatically accelerated, such that the current logging practices exceed the objectives established by the Private Managed Forest Land Council of British Columbia;

AND WHEREAS the current logging practices on these private forest lands are resulting in flooding of downstream lands, loss of spawning habitat, a reduction in water quality, and a reduction in the capacity of the land to sustain forestry operations for future generations;

AND WHEREAS access to safe, potable water is necessary for sustainable community development and the Beaver Creek Improvement District has its only source of potable water in the Beaufort Range where this logging is taking place and it has, for the first time ever, issued boil water advisory alerts:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities petition the provincial government to change the legislation and policies to enable a local government to establish a Community Watershed Bylaw that extends over any public or private lands within the watershed.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

The Private Managed Forest Land Act (Act) establishes the Private Managed Forest Land Council (Council) which consists of Government of British Columbia (Government) and landowner-appointed members. Anyone, including representatives from municipalities, regional districts and First Nations, can apply to become a Government-appointed member through a competitive process. The Council regulates forest practices on private managed forest land to ensure public values, such as the protection of drinking water, are upheld. The Act and Regulations protect water values and require the retention of sufficient streamside vegetation to maintain water quality.

The rate of harvest on private managed forest land is a function of the landowners’ business model, the availability of harvestable timber and the market for logs. Harvest rates are higher now than recent history due largely to the forests developing from an immature (too small to harvest) state into a mature state (appropriate size for current markets). In addition, markets for the type and size of the private land timber have been strong stimulating the harvest.

Neither the legislation nor the Council seeks to manage the rights of private land holders in respect of harvest rate, rather focus their attention on environmentally sound forest practices. The Council takes action to investigate complaints regarding these matters.
The Council investigates all formal complaints filed about forest practices on private managed forest land and has the authority to take appropriate action following the outcome of an investigation. The Council recently investigated a complaint that harvesting in the Beaufort Range impacted the local water supply. The investigation found harvesting had no significant impact on the Beaver Creek water supply.

Under the *Drinking Water Protection Act*, it is an offence to contaminate drinking water. Drinking water officers work throughout British Columbia to ensure risks to drinking water are minimized and can take legal action to protect drinking water. We encourage the UBCM membership to work with the Council to monitor the implementation of the Act and determine if there are any significant issues that need to be addressed.

This Government is committed to maintaining drinking water supplies so that British Columbians can enjoy good health and the best possible quality of life. Never before in the history of our Province has legislation to protect drinking water for future generations been so strong. Since 2001, in partnership with the federal and local governments, over $600 million has been invested in water-related projects. Our goals for the Province include leading the way in North America in healthy living and leading the world in sustainable environmental management with the best air and water quality, bar none.
WHEREAS used lead-acid batteries are an environmental hazard and pose a risk to human health, yet are accumulating in stockpiles at municipal landfill sites province wide;

AND WHEREAS the provincial government has established a Lead-Acid Battery Collection Program that is funded from revenue collected from a $5 consumer levy but has stopped providing transportation incentive payments to assist with the collection and transportation of used batteries to a processing facility, thus forcing brokers to collect at their own cost:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities urge the provincial government to immediately reinstate the payment of transportation incentives to assist with the collection and transportation of used batteries.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Environment

The Government of British Columbia (Government) continues to operate the BC Lead Acid Battery Collection Program (Program), started in 1991, to assist with the economic and safe collection of lead-acid batteries.

The Program offers lead-acid battery transportation incentives using a formula based on the world market price of lead and the distance to a processor. When the world market price of lead is high, as it has been for the last 2 years, the Government financed transportation incentive is low. The transportation incentive supplements the “gate” or market price paid to the transporter by the processor on delivery of the battery.

Since the battery program’s inception, the capture rate for lead acid batteries in the Province of British Columbia has averaged 96%.

The Ministry of Environment’s Industry Product Stewardship Business Plan (2002) stated that the current battery program was not consistent with the principles of product stewardship, and that the responsibility should be transferred to the battery brand-owners. As such, lead acid batteries are being considered for inclusion as a product category in the Recycling Regulation.
WHEREAS the Province collects a tire levy of $3.00 per tire, which generates revenue in excess of $5 million more than what is spent on the Financial Incentives for Recycling Scrap Tires (FIRST) program to collect and recycle tires throughout British Columbia;

AND WHEREAS the tire recycling program would be better served by an industry stewardship program where all the money collected is retained for the tire program, including much needed research into other recycling options, especially for the larger industrial tires which are now not included in the FIRST program:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities lobby the provincial government to immediately convert the Financial Incentives for Recycling Scrap Tires program into an industry stewardship program similar to what is done with bottles, paint, used oil, etc.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Environment

On March 30th, 2006, the Government of British Columbia (Government) approved an amendment to add tires to the Recycling Regulation. The regulation makes producers responsible for implementing a product stewardship program. In January, 2007, the current government-led Financial Incentives for Recycling Scrap Tires will have ceased and the industry program will have started.

Tire Stewardship BC (TSBC) represents many of the tire producers in the Province of British Columbia and has submitted a plan for a tire stewardship program to begin operation on January 1, 2007. On September 19th, 2006, their plan was approved, setting the stage for the transition to an industry operated program. [TSBC is comprised of the Rubber Association of Canada, the Retail Council of Canada, and Western Canada Tire Dealers Association.]
WHEREAS haulers and processors of scrap tires have indicated that they intend to impose a tipping and hauling fee on local government operators of landfills for the removal of tires marshalled at landfills, citing increased operational costs coupled with inadequate compensation from the Financial Incentives for Recycling Scrap Tires (FIRST) Program managed by the Province;

AND WHEREAS local government and landfill operators will be forced to pass these fees on to landfill users to cover these additional costs, resulting in “double taxation” (namely the Environmental Fee now imposed by the Province and the local government tipping fee);

AND WHEREAS the imposition of tipping fees may lead to a resurgence in illegal dumping of scrap tires:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities lobby the provincial government to increase compensation to haulers and processors of scrap tires so that they are able to remain financially viable leading up to the transition of a true Extended Producer Responsibility Program for scrap tires.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Environment

In 2004, the Government of British Columbia (Government) provided a 15% increase in the incentives provided through the Financial Incentives for Recycling Scrap Tires program. The Province of British Columbia (Province) is not considering a further increase in the incentive rates prior to transitioning the program to industry in January 2007.

On March 30th, 2006, the Province approved an amendment to add tires to the Recycling Regulation. The regulation makes producers responsible for implementing a product stewardship program, including the financing of a collection system.

When the tire producers implement their program they will have to ensure that the collection system is adequately funded and consumers have reasonable and free access to collection facilities.
WHEREAS the cost of fossil fuels continues to rise and, with many homeowners looking for economic alternative heating sources, the use of solid fuel burning appliances is increasing;

AND WHEREAS in many communities, poor air quality causes health problems for many residents due to smoke with particulates that are extremely detrimental to their health:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities appeal to the senior levels of government to immediately establish a province-wide rebate program to assist homeowners to replace non-compliant Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-rated solid fuel burning appliances with EPA-rated ones with controlled emissions.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Environment

The Province of British Columbia (Province) has worked on a number of initiatives to reduce emissions associated with residential fuel wood heating. In 1994, the Solid Fuel Burning Domestic Appliance regulation came into effect to require that all new wood burning appliances meet stringent United States EPA or equivalent Canadian emissions standards. While the regulation has had a positive effect, there are a significant number of old woodstoves remaining in use that emit much more smoke compared to newer units. Woodstoves have been known to last well over 30 years.

Survey results indicate that there are approximately 84,000 old woodstoves in the Province outside the Lower Fraser Valley (LFV). When the LFV is included, this figure jumps to 120,000. To address the issue of old woodstoves, rebate programs have been delivered throughout the Province. These have relied on partnerships between provincial and local government, and the hearth products industry, with the incentives provided by industry. To date, the rebate programs have had limited success: fifteen separate programs between 1995 and 2004 have resulted in the removal of 1,200 old woodstoves.

A community based social marketing (CBSM) approach is being tested within the Bulkley Valley Lakes District and Terrace area of the Province to determine how woodstove rebate programs can be improved. The Ministry of Environment is now in the process of evaluating public questionnaire and focus group information to set up a 2007 pilot program. The results of the pilot program will likely shape the future of woodstove exchange programs throughout the Province and for areas where excessive smoke can be attributed to old woodstoves.
WHEREAS Canada has agreed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions under the Kyoto Protocol;

AND WHEREAS air quality in most villages, towns and cities is regularly fair to poor due to increased particulate matter levels and pollution from fuel exhaust;

AND WHEREAS the Province of British Columbia through its ACT NOW program and the Government of Canada through the Olympic Live, Healthy Eating and Living Program and other programs, are promoting healthier lifestyles:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia include funding for commuter highways for non-greenhouse gas emitting transportation such as that used by cyclists, roller bladers, cross country skiers, pedestrians and other forms of clean, non-motorized transportation, in their annual budgets, operations plans and capital improvement plans.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Transportation

The Province of British Columbia does provide funding for non-greenhouse gas emitting transportation infrastructure. The Cycling Infrastructure Partnership Program assists local governments throughout the Province of British Columbia (Province) in the construction of new cycling infrastructure such as separated paths, shoulder bikeways, and bicycle lanes. Up to $2 million is made available for cost sharing annually. Since 2004, the program has created over 270 kilometers of cycling facilities and has invested over $4.8 million in the development of infrastructure for non-greenhouse gas emitting transportation. An example of the type of project cost-shared by this program is the 1.1 kilometer separated path that links the College Heights area to Prince George’s city centre. This path is used not only by cyclists but also by pedestrians, roller bladers and other non-greenhouse gas emitting forms of transportation.

At the 2006 Union of BC Municipalities Annual Convention, Premier Campbell responded to the municipalities call for vibrant and integrated communities. Premier Campbell shared a vision of vibrant communities that “are safe healthy places where people can chose to bike to work, where they can breathe clean air and have access to clean water and proper sewage treatment.” To assist local governments in developing these vibrant communities, the Province has launched the Green Communities Project, which includes four programs: LocalMotion, Spirit Squares, Towns for Tomorrow, and the Green Cities Awards program.

The Ministry of Transportation (Ministry), working in partnership with the Ministry of Community Services, is administering the LocalMotion program, which will provide $10 million per year for four years, for a total of $40 million, to cost share capital projects
with local governments directed at building bike paths, walkways, greenways, improving accessibility for people with disabilities and support programs to get kids playing in communities and parks. These projects will be cost shared on a 50-50 basis.

The Province also provides funding for non-greenhouse gas emitting transportation during capital projects. The Ministry’s cycling policy states that provisions will be made for cycling on all new and upgraded provincial highways. An excellent example of this is the Gateway Program, which will invest $50 million in cycling infrastructure as part of the program. This investment will include cycling and pedestrian access across the Port Mann and Pitt River Bridge, as well as cycling on both the South Fraser and North Fraser Perimeter Roads. An additional $10 million will be invested through cost sharing with local governments for the construction of facilities that link to the provincial infrastructure.
WHEREAS Canada is a signatory to the Kyoto Accord, and is carrying out a number of initiatives and incentives to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions and promote energy conservation;

AND WHEREAS energy efficient housing construction would be a significant contributor to energy conservation at relatively low cost, and the R-2000 construction standard has been developed as a voluntary program to improve energy efficiency in housing construction;

AND WHEREAS the Province is developing a new British Columbia Building Code based on the new 2005 National Building Code:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities and the provincial government engage the Home Builders Association in discussions to include the R-2000 construction standard as an option in the proposed new British Columbia Building Code.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Forests and Range and Minister Responsible for Housing

The Ministry of Forests and Range has regular meetings with key stakeholders, including the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) and the Canadian Home Builders Association (CHBA), on building policy issues. These issues include the impact of a range of conservation-related initiatives that influence safety in the design, construction and occupancy of buildings. Energy efficiency proposals, such as insulation of residential buildings, are commonly discussed at these meetings. In addition, the Ministry Responsible for Housing is working with colleagues in the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources on potential initiatives that could help the Province of British Columbia (Province) reach goals identified in the Government of British Columbia's Energy Plan. Again, this includes discussion on issues encapsulated by the R2000 program.

It is our understanding that Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) delegates also endorsed Resolution A1, Liability Limitation Period, which has a significant impact on local government building departments. This resolution was raised at the Building Policy Advisory Committee by the UBCM representative. While this is directly under the mandate of the Ministry of Attorney General (MAG), liability and risk is a key part of the Modernization Strategy being led by the Office of Housing and Construction Standards (OHCS). Discussions continue in both the MAG and OHCS arenas.
WHEREAS many communities in all areas of British Columbia contain land that is subject to land slippage or movement and local governments in many of these communities have experienced, or are experiencing, problems caused by land slippage or potential for land slippage;

AND WHEREAS land slippage issues are a threat to transportation, utilities, municipal infrastructure, and public safety, and impact property values as well as the local government tax base;

AND WHEREAS the costs for mapping, investigation and remediation of land slippage areas and potential land slippage areas is frequently beyond the financial ability of local government taxpayers;

AND WHEREAS the Province of BC has provided technical and financial assistance to a number of communities on an ad hoc basis for addressing land slippage issues and has ensured financial support after disasters occur:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that UBCM lobby the provincial government to allocate funding in the Ministry of Community Services base budget to assist local government to address land slippage issues and that such funding be available to local governments for mapping, investigation and, where practical, remediation of land slippage;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that UBCM lobby the provincial government to assist local governments and property owners with the cost of repairs to buildings and infrastructure damaged by land slippage.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Community Services

Although the Ministry of Community Services (Ministry) does not have a fund specifically earmarked to address land slippage issues, it has a range of funding programs that might assist in mapping, investigation and where practical, remediation of land slippage. As such, a number of funding sources from the Ministry could address land slippage, albeit indirectly.

The Infrastructure Planning Grant Program (IPGP), administered by the Ministry, has funded many projects that address land slippage, primarily due to its impact on groundwater. The IPGP has a funding ceiling of $10,000 and helps communities plan in the development of sustainable infrastructure that will improve public health and safety, protect the natural environment and strengthen local and regional economies. The fund provides communities with financial support that might address issues of land slippage, due to the role slippage issues might have in projects which are eligible for funding.
Besides the IPGP, the Ministry administers the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (MRIF). This fund was launched in the fall of 2006, with $102 million committed to infrastructure projects across the Province of British Columbia. Although the MRIF is not specifically designed to address land slippage, it may do so through its funding of other eligible projects; for example, where land slippage impacts drinking water quality or waste water infrastructure.

The Provincial Emergency Program (PEP) might provide funds when there is an imminent risk pertaining to land slippage. However, PEP does not have a current fund designed to proactively address land slippage. This being said, PEP may assist with land slippage and its impact on infrastructure, after the slip has occurred.
WHEREAS there is growing demand by residents and visitors for public recreational access to foreshore in unincorporated areas by means of foreshore access lands presently vested in the Province under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Transportation;

AND WHEREAS these foreshore access lands are acquired by the Ministry of Transportation pursuant to Section 75 of the *Land Title Act* with no associated obligation to develop and maintain them for public use, whereas regional districts are vested with responsibility for provision of local parks and recreational amenities in unincorporated areas:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Ministry of Transportation establish policies and procedures for the purpose of transferring to local governments such public foreshore access lands as may be identified by such local governments as being desirable for public recreational foreshore access;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that such transfers be by means of free Crown grant, conversion to park dedication or alternative secure tenure option.

**RESPONSE: Ministry of Transportation**

The above referenced “foreshore access lands” are road rights of way administered by the Ministry of Transportation (Ministry). Much as with other rights of way, these may be used for a wide range of purposes: pedestrian or vehicle access, utilities, emergency response, access to land parcels. The Province of British Columbia (Province) also has interests in the overall development of the road network and in ensuring access to all parcels of land and bodies of water.

The Ministry has a policy to retain these accesses to water for public use. This does not preclude development of the right of way by the Ministry or others for enhanced use.

The Ministry welcomes local input into management plans for situations where there is local interest. In some cases management agreements have been established between local governments or organizations and the Ministry. This serves to meet the administrative responsibilities of the Ministry while accommodating specific interests in use of the roads by others.
WHEREAS Section 941 of the Local Government Act requires owners of land being subdivided, at their option, to dedicate parkland not exceeding 5% or cash-in-lieu of land;

AND WHEREAS the demands for public park space are increasing and municipalities’ abilities to acquire parkland are diminished by the impacts of failing infrastructure, future transfer of provincial services and increasing land values:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities support a change to the legislation contained within the Local Government Act to allow local governments the option of either requiring cash-in-lieu for parks or the dedication of land;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the park dedication be increased to an amount not exceeding 10% of the land being subdivided or cash-in-lieu for parkland.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Community Services

Changing the parkland dedication requirement to 10% would be a significant consideration for local government, the Province of British Columbia (Province) and the development community. Proposed amendments to legislation are considered in consultation with the Development Finance Review Committee (DFRC). DFRC is an advisory committee chaired by the Ministry of Community Services (Ministry) with members from local government, the Province and the development community.

The Ministry will consult with the DFRC regarding increasing parkland dedication to 10%. However, local government has a number of other financial tools available to acquire parkland that can also be considered. Development Cost Charges (DCCs) can be used to acquire parkland or parkland improvements. Density bonusing can be used to secure natural areas, environmentally sensitive areas or other forms of public open space.

Local government has the ability to determine when an owner must provide parkland dedication or cash. Under s. 941(2) of the Local Government Act, if the official community plan contains policies and designations respecting the location and type of future parks, local government determines whether the owner will provide land or cash. The Ministry’s “Parkland Acquisition Best Practices” document (available online) includes considerations for collecting parkland through dedication and DCCs, and information on land versus cash-in-lieu.
WHEREAS pursuant to Section 941 of the Local Government Act, municipalities are given the authority to accept cash-in-lieu of parkland when processing subdivision applications;

AND WHEREAS Section 941(6) (a) states the following: “the average market value of all the land in the proposed subdivision calculated as that value would be on either
i) the date of preliminary approval of the subdivision, or
ii) if no preliminary approval is given, a date within 90 days before the final approval of the subdivision, as though
iii) the land is zoned to permit the proposed use, and
iv) any works and services necessary to the subdivision have not been installed”;

AND WHEREAS the cash-in-lieu value is based on undeveloped land, (in order to purchase parkland the municipality could be paying full market value of developed land);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities request that the provincial government review Section 941 of the Local Government Act in order to provide a more favourable way for local governments to determine the value of land for cash-in-lieu purposes.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Community Services

Section 941 of the Local Government Act, regarding the provision of parkland, is intended to provide a balance between ensuring that subdivided land has an adequate supply of parkland while accounting for circumstances where this is not practical or desirable. Changing the legislation so that a land owner is responsible for the cost of serviced, developed, or other forms of off-site land that local government intends to purchase would create considerable equity concerns between subdivisions that provide land versus those that provide cash.

Local government can collect parkland Development Cost Charges (DCCs) which can assist with the purchase of parkland and can also mitigate the risk of having to accept cash-in-lieu by having an Official Community Plan that contains polices and designations respecting the location and type of future parkland. The Ministry of Community Services has published online the “Parkland Acquisition Best Practices” document, which includes considerations for collecting parkland through dedication and DCCs, and information on land versus cash-in-lieu.
WHEREAS a local government can accept cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication when a property owner subdivides;

AND WHEREAS a local government can use that cash to acquire parkland and for no other purpose:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities urge the Province of BC to amend the legislation to permit funds collected in lieu of parkland dedication to be used on parkland development in addition to parkland acquisition.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Community Services

The 5% provision of parkland is intended to ensure that subdivided land has an adequate supply of parkland. Development Cost Charges (DCCs) can be used to fund park improvements including: fencing, landscaping, drainage and irrigation, trails, restrooms, changing rooms, playground and playing equipment.

The Ministry of Community Services’ Parkland Acquisition Best Practices recommends that a local government consider clear guidelines when using DCCs and parkland acquisition to avoid double charging. The best practices guide is available on the Ministry’s website.
WHEREAS BC Assessment’s position regarding Section 220(1) of the *Community Charter* holds that property leased by a municipality for park purposes is not exempt from taxation;

AND WHEREAS the exemption of such lands from taxation is clearly within the intent and spirit of the legislation:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Section 220(1) of the *Community Charter* be revised to clearly exempt from taxation land vested in, leased, occupied, held, and used for park purposes by a local government.

**RESPONSE: Ministry of Community Services**

The *Community Charter* provisions provide two categories of property tax exemptions; statutory exemptions which are mandatory and permissive exemptions which only apply at the discretion of a municipality.

Statutory exemptions are principally intended to exempt from taxation those interests in property that are held by local authorities, the Province of British Columbia (Province), and other specified persons, through fee simple ownership. It is not intended to exempt land and improvements where the fee simple interest is held by a private person (i.e., a taxable owner) and the property is leased to another person. Extending statutory or mandatory exemptions to taxable owners if they lease property to “exempt occupiers” (persons who would be exempt if they held the fee simple interest) could potentially result in a significant loss of tax base for local governments and for the Province. Such an expansion of mandatory taxation exemptions would remove significant autonomy from local governments, who currently have some discretion to determine such exemptions. Additionally, any such mandatory contraction of the tax base could see tax shifts within communities resulting in other taxpayers having to shoulder the forgone tax revenue from those properties.

Municipalities currently have the ability to exempt *permissively* land owned by a taxable owner which is leased by a municipality (or other local government) and which is used for a park or other “use” council considers “a purpose of the local government”. This provides local governments with the flexibility to determine the appropriateness of the expansion of taxation exemptions (and the concomitant contraction of the tax base and potential tax shifts) based on their own local circumstances and the desires of their community.
WHEREAS pursuant to Division 10, the Development Costs Recovery part of the *Local Government Act* and, more specifically, in respect of Section 933(12), granting authority whereby a local government may provide assistance by waiving or reducing a charge under this section for not for profit rental housing, including supportive living housing;

AND WHEREAS innovative development standards, such as “green” infrastructure and buildings can result in lower impact solutions to the economic, social and ecological impacts of buildings and infrastructure that cost municipalities, residents, and businesses much less over the long term:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Section 933(12) of the *Local Government Act* be expanded to provide for the waiving or reducing of a charge in support of building construction incorporating LEED Canada NC Rating System or acceptable equivalent that might apply to single family development.

**RESPONSE: Ministry of Community Services**

Local governments have the ability to vary Development Cost Charge (DCCs) rates for “green” development assuming there is a different capital cost burden imposed by this type of development. Section 934 of the *Local Government Act* authorises local government to vary development cost charges for different classes of development with different capital costs. Waiving DCCs for green development is not specifically provided for in the legislation.

The Ministry of Community Services (Ministry) is currently reviewing how existing development finance tools, including DCCs, can be used to facilitate the development of sustainable infrastructure and buildings. The best practices developed as a result of this review will be incorporated into the Development Finance Choices Guide and the Development Cost Charge Best Practices Guide. As part of its review, the Ministry is looking at how enhanced development standards contribute to reducing infrastructure costs. Any changes to local government development finance best practices, policy or legislation is developed in consultation with the Development Finance Review Committee chaired by the Ministry.
WHEREAS pursuant to Division 10, the Development Costs Recovery part of the Local Government Act and, more specifically, in respect of Section 933(12), granting authority whereby a local government may provide assistance by waiving or reducing a charge under this section for not for profit rental housing, including supportive living housing:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Section 933(12) of the Local Government Act be expanded to provide for the waiving or reducing of a charge in support of residential building construction incorporating adaptable housing standards.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Community Services

Development Cost Charges (DCCs) are monies collected from land developers by local governments to recover some of the infrastructure costs associated with new development. The Ministry of Community Services (Ministry) will consult with the Development Finance Review Committee (DFRC) to determine if DCCs or any other development finance tool would be an appropriate method for encouraging building construction incorporating Adaptable Housing Standards. The DFRC is an advisory committee chaired by the Ministry with members from local government, the Province of British Columbia (Province) and the development community.

The issue of building regulations for adaptable housing standards will be examined by the Adaptable Housing Working Group (AHWG), composed of members from the Province, local government and the development community. The purpose of the AHWG is to develop specific recommendations on how provincial building regulations could accommodate local government desires for adaptable housing standards.
WHEREAS recent changes in meat inspection regulations, to manage BSE and other health concerns, have created hardship for small meat processors and the ranchers that rely on them to sell their produce;

AND WHEREAS there is a general lack of qualified meat inspectors to help ensure that small meat processors are able to meet the current requirements, and continue to offer the important service they do:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities request that the federal and provincial governments amend the meat inspection regulations to allow local licensed veterinarians to serve as meat inspectors.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Health

The Meat Inspection Regulation was introduced in 2004 to provide consistent province-wide standards for inspection and processing of all animals slaughtered for sale. As part of the Food Safety Act, the regulation protects public health and fosters ongoing public confidence in food safety and the food supply. The previous system allowed for different meat inspection standards in different parts of the Province of British Columbia (Province). The new regulation requires that all meat offered for sale is inspected according to consistent standards to ensure it is safe.

For the most part, Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) inspectors have historically carried out the inspections of licensed facilities in the Province. However, under the governing legislation, the Minister of Health has the authority to appoint whomever he considers appropriate to be an inspector, including veterinarians.

Veterinarians have been used as meat inspectors in the Province in the past, and one is currently under contract to provide meat inspection services at an abattoir in Port Alberni. This option will continue to be available in areas where CFIA inspectors may not be available to carry out inspections.

The date the regulation will take effect was extended to September of 2007 to provide new and existing slaughter facilities time to upgrade.
WHEREAS the line item for electricity on a municipality’s operating budget is often one of its larger expenditures;

AND WHEREAS energy costs are expected to increase over the next decade, and it is important for municipalities and senior levels of government to work to find innovative ways to reduce this cost and find alternate sources of energy;

AND WHEREAS BC Hydro has a system in place, identified as “Net Metering”, which requires the power generated at point “A” to be used at point “A” with only the excess power being sold to BC Hydro;

AND WHEREAS such a system is desirable only if electrical loads are located at the same site at which the power is generated;

AND WHEREAS there is no system in place that allows power to be produced at point “A” and used at point “B” by paying a rental or user fee to the power grid;

AND WHEREAS a local government is disadvantaged in this system since power is used at multiple sites but cannot practically be generated at each location:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities lobby the provincial government to direct BC Hydro and other power producers to negotiate agreements with local governments that would allow for the utilization by the local government of self-generated power through the BC Hydro distribution grid.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources

The Province will soon be releasing a new energy plan. At that time, a response to this resolution will be available.
WHEREAS health is a provincial responsibility and the delivery of health services, including the promotion of healthy living and chronic disease prevention, are responsibilities delegated by the Province to Regional Health Authorities;

AND WHEREAS the Province created the Community Health Promotion Fund to support health promotion programs and activities in communities focusing on healthy living and chronic disease prevention:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Minister of Health be encouraged to provide sustainable financial support to Health Authorities in increasing their efforts to promote healthy living and chronic disease prevention.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Health

The Province of British Columbia recognizes the value of population health promotion and disease prevention to the quality of life of individuals and the sustainability of the health care system. The Government of British Columbia (Government) has earmarked more than $100 million over the next three years for public health initiatives, including ActNow BC. ActNow BC is Government’s disease prevention and health promotion platform, designed to encourage healthy living choices to reduce chronic disease through cross-sector and whole-of-government long-term involvement in healthy public policy.

The health authorities have a critical role in coordinating engagement of regional partners across the spectrum of society to create policies, programs and services that motivate British Columbians to:
• Eat a healthier diet;
• Become more physically active;
• Maintain a healthy weight;
• Reduce, quit or avoid tobacco use; and
• Make healthy choices in pregnancy.

The Ministry of Health provided approximately $6.8 billion to the health authorities to implement health services, including broad-based public health prevention functions in 2006/2007, an increase of over 21 per cent since 2001/02.
WHEREAS the Province has traditionally provided the capital funding for long term care beds other than “Extended Care” services;

AND WHEREAS the Province is now requesting some percentage towards capital costs for these facilities from Regional Hospital Districts:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Province be requested to revert to the funding process for capital costs for long-term care services, where the Province fully funds all capital costs, except for those services traditionally funded on a shared basis with Regional Hospital Districts and which were previously known as “Extended Care”.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Health

Since 2001, much of the renewal of residential care facilities has been undertaken through public-private partnership agreements between health authorities and individual care providers. Those agreements typically involve a care provider constructing and operating a facility, with the health authority reimbursing the care provider for the operating cost of the beds contracted by the health authority at that facility. This procurement method has been used in the long-term care sector since the 1980’s, and is being adopted in the assisted living sector as well.

Health authorities are responsible for managing relationships with their respective regional hospital districts. In some instances, a health authority may request a local regional hospital district to cost share in a residential care project. In those cases, it would be a matter between the health authority and the regional hospital district to negotiate the specifics of the request and to clarify any community benefits of regional hospital district cost-sharing.

Regional hospital districts have commonly cost shared in residential care facilities administered by health authorities or similar non-profit organizations. In general, it has always been the case that if a facility was considered eligible for regional hospital district cost sharing under the Hospital District Act, the regional hospital district has been asked to cost share.
WHEREAS the current federal legislation governing the telecommunications industry and, in particular, the use of local government and provincial lands and streets, is complex and results in a subsidy to telecommunications companies from local government and provincial taxpayers;

AND WHEREAS the recent report from the Telecommunications Policy Review Panel established by the federal Minister of Industry has recommended significant changes to the *Telecommunications Act*, which will increase the level of regulation imposed upon local governments in dealing with the use of public lands by telecommunication companies:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Office of the Premier and the Minister of State for Intergovernmental Affairs be invited to join with the UBCM and ask the federal Minister of Industry to consult with local governments and provinces on contemplated changes to the federal *Telecommunications Act* in order to restore the ability for local governments and provinces to adequately manage telecommunication companies’ use of public lands.

**RESPONSE: Ministry of Labour and Citizens’ Services**

The Province of British Columbia (Province) supports the Telecommunications Policy Review Panel’s recommendation that the federal government issue a policy statement detailing the steps it intends to take as it proceeds with the reform of the Canadian telecommunications industry.

The Province has requested that, before the federal government initiates any reforms that may have a direct impact on the Provinces or municipalities (including changes to the *Telecommunications Act*), it first consult with them and address their concerns.
WHEREAS there are a number of building movers throughout the province who do not have liability insurance, which may create potential exposure to local governments should an accident occur;

AND WHEREAS various jurisdictions have different avenues to deal with this issue, from ignoring the concern to requiring 2 million dollars liability insurance saving the local government harmless prior to a business licence or moving permit being issued:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that UBCM support a uniform means of dealing with non-insured building moving companies moving buildings within the province.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Community Services

The Ministry of Community Services (Ministry) has not previously been made aware of concerns regarding municipal liability arising out of accidents incurred by non-insured building movers. However, it appears to be entirely appropriate that additional information be gathered to determine effective methods local governments might employ in dealing with such moving companies in the Province of British Columbia (Province).

Therefore, the Ministry would recommend that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities initially consult with the Municipal Insurance Association of British Columbia (MIA BC) on appropriate risk management procedures which might be put in place by local governments to mitigate their concerns. This information could be instrumental in developing best practices and lead to municipalities following more uniform practices throughout the Province.
WHEREAS accessibility and inclusion are fundamental factors in empowering people with disabilities to fully participate in and contribute to society and the City of Vancouver strives to take a leadership role in increasing accessibility and inclusion both within and outside its own city limits;

AND WHEREAS the City has partnered with 2010 Legacies Now and the provincial and federal governments to produce “Measuring Up”, a comprehensive, step-by-step guide that enables communities to assess and remedy their accessibility and inclusion barriers:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities endorse “Measuring Up” as a resource for communities throughout British Columbia as they work to improve accessibility and inclusion;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities request that every BC local government adopt “Measuring Up” as its guide to accessibility and inclusion;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities formally request that the provincial and federal governments allocate infrastructure funding to support accessibility and inclusion initiatives in communities throughout BC.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Community Services

Local governments have indicated an interest in developing accessible and inclusive cities and communities. “Measuring Up”, a key component of the Accessible and Inclusive Cities and Communities Initiative, supports the Province of British Columbia’s (Province) strategic goal of building the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities and special needs. The Province, through partnerships with 2010 Legacies Now and the Vancouver Agreement, has provided funding for the development of “Measuring Up”, a tool and guide designed to assist the Province’s communities to assess the degree to which their citizens with disabilities are active participants in community life.

In addition, the Province is actively working with the Vancouver Olympic Committee and Vancouver Agreement partners to create and sustain further opportunities for inclusion of all citizens within Vancouver inner city communities through the realization of the 2010 Winter Games Inner-City Inclusive Commitment Statement.
WHEREAS school district boards are selling properties that are often situated in prime locations and important to communities in a variety of ways;

AND WHEREAS the provincial government requires that these properties can only be disposed of at “fair market value”;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities be requested to work with the provincial government to establish policy that will permit school boards to give adequate time and opportunity to local governments and other public bodies to acquire such properties at less than “fair market value” for “civic purposes”.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Education

Under the Disposal of Land or Improvements Order, which came into effect January 17, 2003, school boards are required to develop and implement policies and procedures respecting disposals. The disposal policies must include consideration of the future educational needs of the district, disposition through a public process, and disposition at fair market value. The order requires that boards confirm, in their disposal bylaw, that the property will not be required for future educational uses. The order also requires boards to inform the minister of the disposal, and provide notification of the disposition and allocation of any proceeds as required under section 100 (2) of the School Act.

The School Community Connections Program, established in April 2004, is jointly managed by the BC School Trustees Association and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, on behalf of the Ministry of Education (Ministry). This program, developed to encourage partnerships between school boards and local governments, provides for the revitalization and expanded utilization of schools as centres for community learning and activity.

The Ministry is certainly interested in the best use of capital assets that are taxpayer funded. We are currently looking at the capital process to see if we are making the highest and best use of these investments.
WHEREAS residents of British Columbia have expressed their desire to revisit the manner in which we elect representatives to the British Columbia Legislative Assembly, as witnessed by the results of the referendum on electoral reform held in conjunction with our last provincial election;

AND WHEREAS the rural regions of the province are proud of the significant contribution they play in the economy of British Columbia through agriculture, natural resource development, tourism and industry and rural residents want to ensure they have a say in how regional resources are used for the greater good of the province as a whole and what the regional impact of that may be, and note with alarm the increasing disparity which is occurring as services are being reduced to resource contributing rural areas and the ever increasing urbanization and growing divide which separates urban and rural communities in our province:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Province of British Columbia be requested to reconsider the BC Constitution Act to enshrine principles which would give consideration to population and square area being represented as a balance for selecting representatives for the British Columbia Legislative Assembly, and thereafter amend the Election Act and Electoral Boundaries Commission Act to comply.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Attorney General

The Electoral Boundaries Commission Act (Act) requires commissions constituted under the Act to consider a variety of factors in determining electoral boundaries for British Columbia. These factors are:

- that the principle of representation by population be achieved, recognizing the imperatives imposed by geographical and demographic realities, the legacy of our history and the need to balance the community interests of the people of British Columbia;
- to achieve that principle, the commission be permitted to deviate from a common statistical Provincial electoral quota by no more than 25%, plus or minus; and
- the commission be permitted to exceed the 25% deviation principle where it considers that very special circumstances exist.

The interests of rural areas are addressed by the requirement to consider geography and community interests, along with the ability to deviate by up to 25% above or below the average population per electoral district.

Commissions also may recommend boundaries that deviate by more than that amount in
special circumstances. The previous 1998 commission did that, recommending five rural northern districts that were up to 36% below the provincial average.

The *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act* was amended to allow the Electoral Boundaries Commission to recommend up to 85 electoral districts for British Columbia, an increase of six districts. This amendment acted on a commitment announced in the 2005 Throne Speech and is intended to protect northern representation in the Legislature.
WHEREAS there have been a number of truck accidents resulting in serious injury and damage due to faulty brake systems;

AND WHEREAS there is no provincial program for annual safety inspections of commercial vehicles:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government establish a program requiring an annual safety inspection for all commercial vehicles with a gross vehicle weight of more than 4,500 kg.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Transportation

The Province of British Columbia recognizes the importance of commercial vehicle safety. All commercial vehicles with a licensed gross vehicle weight greater than 8,200 kg are required to have either semi-annual or annual vehicle inspections. The regular vehicle inspection programs are delivered through authorized inspectors at provincially-designated inspection facilities. There were approximately 170,000 commercial vehicle inspections carried out in 2005 by authorized inspectors at designated inspection facilities under the requirements of the Commercial Vehicle Inspection Program.

Commercial vehicles having a gross vehicle weight less than 8,200 kg are not included in regular inspection programs. However, commercial vehicles between 5,000 kg and 8,200 kg are required to have safety plans and are carefully monitored through the National Safety Code.

All commercial vehicles, regardless of weight, are subject to random roadside inspections by commercial vehicle inspectors. In 2005, there were almost 19,000 commercial vehicles inspected through this program. This flexible and random approach ensures that industry maintains its commitment to safety at all times.
WHEREAS many of the highways in British Columbia are located in mountain pass areas or follow irregular lakeshore or coastal lines providing limited opportunities for motorists to pass in safety;

AND WHEREAS in areas of the province such as the Sunshine Coast and the Kootenays, highway traffic is further congested due to tourist and/or ferry traffic often resulting in long lines of slow moving motor vehicles:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Province of British Columbia be requested to develop legislation and signage to mandate that slow moving vehicles be required to pull over to the side of the highway when five or more vehicles are following so that the faster traffic can pass when safe or permitted to do so, thus avoiding long lines of motor vehicle traffic and reducing the likelihood of dangerous passing;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Province provide for the complementary construction of adequate pull-out lanes to enable slow-moving vehicles to pull over safely in order to allow faster traffic to pass.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Transportation

The Motor Vehicle Act provides that slow driving, relative to the existing normal and reasonable movement of traffic, is an offence and carries a fine of $105 and 3 driver penalty points:

145 (1) A person must not drive a motor vehicle at so slow a speed as to impede or block the normal and reasonable movement of traffic, except when reduced speed is necessary for safe operation or in compliance with law.

In some cases, for example on Highway 4 west of Port Alberni, the Ministry of Transportation (Ministry) has constructed pull-outs to allow vehicles to pull over in a safe manner and allow other vehicles to pass. The need for pull-outs must first be determined, on a case-by-case basis, and then assessed against other Ministry funding priorities. It is worth noting that most professional truckers operate their vehicles in a courteous manner by driving in or moving to the right lane wherever possible.
WHEREAS bicycle lanes are essential to the safety of all those traveling on roadways;

AND WHEREAS cycling is an environmentally friendly and healthy form of transportation as well as an increasingly popular pastime;

AND WHEREAS the Ministry of Transportation Cycling Policy includes provisions for cyclists on all new and upgraded provincial highways:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities urge the Ministry of Transportation to amend the Cycling Policy to provide for the construction of bicycle lanes or other provisions for bicycle traffic whenever works compatible with such construction are taking place adjacent to roadways.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Transportation

The Ministry of Transportation (Ministry) realizes the need for cycling infrastructure and does its best to provide cycling improvements whenever it is feasible. Pat Bay highway resurfacing included the expansion of the shoulder to better accommodate cyclists.

However, there are circumstances that prevent the Ministry from providing cycling infrastructure during a project. These include safety, if the cost is excessively disproportionate to the need, a provincial act or municipal bylaw prohibits cycling, or cycling is not in the greater public interest.

The proposed inclusion to the Ministry’s cycling policy would create a situation where the Ministry would be required to justify its actions for not including cycling infrastructure on every minor project it undertakes throughout the Province of British Columbia. This would create a large burden in terms of staff time. That is why the ministry has limited its policy to the larger projects that include new and upgraded highways.
WHEREAS all communities represented by the North Central Municipal Association are reliant upon or affected by transportation provided by the northern ferry service and this service has been severely impacted by the sinking of the Queen of the North;

AND WHEREAS northern tourism, economic development, the environment and many isolated communities have been devastated by this tragedy:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that UBCM lobby the Province of British Columbia to address the environmental impacts caused by the sinking of the Queen of the North in order to minimize the effects on the marine environment.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Environment

At this time, the Ministry of Environment’s (Ministry) Skeena regional office is actively involved in the ongoing monitoring of the situation, overseeing the BC Ferries’ environmental impact assessment work, and advising on any future remediation activities that may be required.

BC Ferries is currently working on a plan to safely address the issue of diesel fuel and oil believed to be still onboard the sunken ferry.

The Ministry, along with other federal agencies and stakeholders, will be involved in assessing BC Ferries’ future plans for the sunken vessel and ensuring the environment is adequately protected.
WHEREAS Dual Fuel Coal Biomass Generation energy plants have not been established to date in the Province of British Columbia and applications to establish this type of energy source have been made through the provincial government;

AND WHEREAS the impact from Dual Fuel Coal Biomass Generation plant emissions has the potential to severely impair quality of life, the environment, health and tourism throughout the province:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UBCM lobby the provincial government to place a moratorium on Dual Fuel Coal Biomass Generation energy plants, such that the Province can investigate industries that will have the least amount of impact on the environment and quality of life by applying the most advanced technology.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the UBCM lobby the provincial government to require an Environmental Assessment when requested by the local government for any proposed Independent Power Project under the current threshold of 50MW.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Environment

The Environmental Assessment Act (Act) provides for proposed Independent Power Projects (IPPs) to enter the environmental assessment (EA) process under three scenarios:

- Under section 10, if it is a power plant with a rated name plate capacity of 50 MW or greater and the Executive Director considers that the project may have significant adverse environmental, economic, social, heritage or health effects;
- Under section 7, if the proponent requests to opt in to the EA process and the Executive Director grants the application by designating the project as reviewable; and,
- Under section 6, if the minister is satisfied that the project may have a significant adverse effect and the designation is in the public interest.

In 2002/03, a major review of the 50 MW threshold for power plants was undertaken by the Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) as a result of some key stakeholders wanting the threshold increased. UBCM was consulted and supported EAO’s conclusion that the threshold remain at 50 MW.

If the intent of the above resolution is to amend the legislation to require an EA whenever requested by local government, this is not a recommended solution. This could have significant economic implications for future investors and not only for Independent Power Projects, but also for other sectors (e.g. mining, oil and gas). Local government are advised they already have the ability to request an EA for Independent Power Projects below the 50 MW threshold. As long as the minister is satisfied that there may be a significant adverse effect, and that the designation is in the public interest, the minister can order the project reviewable.
WHEREAS the forestry industry remains the primary economic driver in many small communities in BC;

AND WHEREAS the ability for small communities to rebound from downturns in the forest economy depends upon having a remnant qualified forest sector labour force;

AND WHEREAS extreme unemployment in communities burdened by a prolonged downturn in the forestry industry results in the out-migration of experienced logging contractors:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government amend the Forest Act to provide BC Timber Sales with the authority to take other factors into consideration (e.g., unemployment levels) when evaluating local and non-local bids for licenses that are located nearby a forest-dependent local government.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Forests and Range and Minister Responsible for Housing

The Ministry of Forests and Range (Ministry) understands the desire of local governments to support local forest industry jobs. However, BC Timber Sales (BCTS) was specifically created to support government’s new market-based pricing system through the competitive auction of Crown timber.

By creating BCTS, more wood is made available to more people on the open market. BCTS is not the only option for local operators. Other opportunities exist, such as partnering with holders of non-replaceable forest licences and community forest agreements.

The Ministry is exploring new types of tenure that will help create more opportunities for small companies, and bridge the gap between small scale salvage and BCTS.
WHEREAS the water flowing through riverside communities is inextricably linked to the economic, social and environmental well-being of those communities;

AND WHEREAS communities in the same watershed share the benefits of healthy water resources and of the migratory species, such as salmon, that depend on clean water;

AND WHEREAS the impact of development activities such as coalbed methane extraction can have significant effects on far flung communities sharing a watershed:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government be requested to coordinate a community meeting process for all local governments in a watershed potentially affected by coal-bed methane development where a balance of government agencies, industry, community groups and environmental organizations make presentations so residents have the variety of viewpoints they need to make a knowledgeable decision about such development.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources

The Province will soon be releasing a new energy plan. At that time, a response to this resolution will be available.
WHEREAS the province is rich in mineral wealth, including uranium, which has been the foundation of the economy of our province;

AND WHEREAS recent uranium exploration in the province has raised the concerns of the public, who are worried about pollution, groundwater contamination, and the ruination of a pristine wilderness area:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities request that the provincial government introduce a moratorium on exploration for uranium to allow for effective and meaningful public consultation and a “cradle to grave” management strategy.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources

The Province will soon be releasing a new energy plan. At that time, a response to this resolution will be available.
WHEREAS viable wild salmon stocks are a vital component for the economic, cultural and social health of many communities in BC;

AND WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly appointed a Special Committee on Sustainable Aquaculture on Feb. 20, 2006 to examine, inquire into and make recommendations with respect to sustainable aquaculture in BC, including the environmental impacts of the aquaculture industry in the province, and to also solicit and consider written and oral submissions from any interested person or organization;

AND WHEREAS examining the economic and environmental impacts of open-net fish farms on wild salmon stocks, the marine environment and BC’s coastal and isolated communities is part of the Special Committee considerations;

AND WHEREAS the provincial government approved a new open-net fish farm in April 2006 while the Special Committee was in the midst of making its examination and inquiry that will lead to recommendations in its final report:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government be requested to place a moratorium on any expansion of open-net fish farming on the BC coast until the Special Committee on Sustainable Aquaculture reports to the House no later than May 31, 2007.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

The Special Legislative Committee on Sustainable Aquaculture (Committee) was formed earlier in 2006 to focus on salmon farming and work with the Pacific Salmon Forum and others to identify viable improvements to our aquaculture industries that balance economic goals with environmental imperatives. The Committee is to report to the Legislature no later than May 31, 2007. The Province of British Columbia (Province) is proceeding with caution and looks forward to receiving the recommendations of the Committee so that the Ministry can continue to improve our approach to having both farmed and wild salmon for the benefit of all British Columbians.

The Province of British Columbia’s (Province) approach to aquaculture is a precautionary one based on the best science and the public’s expectation that the Province’s aquaculture industry be managed in a sustainable fashion with wild stocks and the environment protected. On August 3, 2006, the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands released its 2004/05 Compliance and Enforcement report; it showed very high compliance within the industry, in the 90-100 per cent range. On December 6, 2006, the Ministry released its 2003-2005 Fish Health Report. It is the most comprehensive farmed fish health report ever done in North America and it shows the Province’s results-based regulatory regime is working.
With further improvements each year, and a commitment to innovation, the Province will reach its goal of leading the world in sustainable environmental management, with the best air and water quality and the best fisheries management, bar none.
WHEREAS the Ministry of Education does not directly provide funding to school districts for playground equipment;

AND WHEREAS there have been a number of studies indicating that many students are obese and physically unfit;

AND WHEREAS many schools have changed the food and beverages being offered in school cafeterias to help combat the situation:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government be requested to provide specific funding for playground equipment to school districts aimed at improving the overall health and well-being of our students.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education (Ministry) recognizes that health-promoting actions have educational benefits. Good health narrows the opportunity gap and has positive effects on personal, social and educational achievements. Investing in physical activity equipment will enhance the capacity of elementary schools to improve student health through enhanced physical activity. Children who have healthy weights and who lead physically active lives are less likely to be overweight adults reducing the development of preventable chronic diseases such as type two diabetes, heart disease, joint replacement and some cancers. Reducing preventable illness leads to reduced health care costs.

ActNow BC is central to accomplishing the Province's goal to lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness. ActNow BC is a program to improve the health of every British Columbian. As part of ActNow BC, we have developed a comprehensive plan for improving student health that focuses on three priority areas: increased physical activity through Action Schools!BC, clear physical education standards and provided $1.3 million for public schools to purchase new physical activity equipment; increased healthy eating through new school food sales guidelines; and reduced tobacco use by helping students make responsible healthy choices. We know that students are best poised for success when they are physically and emotionally healthy.

As part of an approved new Ministry capital project (new school and addition), school boards may also use site development and equipment allowance funding from the approved project budget for school playgrounds. School boards may also use Annual Facility Grant funding to upgrade playgrounds at existing schools. As well, the Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch of the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General provides Parent Advisory Councils (PACs) an annual direct access grant that may be used towards eligible capital projects, such as a school playground. PACs can also use funding provided from the bingo affiliation grant program or licensed gaming events to fund school playgrounds.
BE IT RESOLVED that the Ministries of Education, Health and Children and Family Development work together to develop integrated identification, diagnosis and mental health management services for children and youth in local schools, along the lines of the Community Based Mental Health Pilot Projects proposed by the Capital Regional District Family Court and Youth Justice Committee.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Children and Family Development

The Province of British Columbia (Province) is committed to improving mental health outcomes for children and youth and has identified this issue as a strategic priority in the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) service plan. In 2003, MCFD launched a five-year Child and Youth Mental Health Plan, the first of its kind in Canada. Nearly $44M in new funding is being invested in four main strategies: reducing risk, building capacity, improving support and treatment, and improving performance. Over 90% of new funding is allocated to the five MCFD regions to support and enhance programs and services identified through local and regional planning and prioritization.

This specific resolution addresses the efforts of the Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee (Committee), a committee mandated by the Province and funded through the Capital Regional District. The Committee established a Youth Mental Health Task Group to respond to the needs of children in custody and/or involved in the court system who have co-occurring health issues including mental health issues. The proposed task group, chaired by Esquimalt City Councillor, Dr. Basil Boulton, has proposed two school-based mental health projects – one at Belmont Secondary School in school district #62, which has already planned to open a medical clinic on site, and one at Rockheights Middle School in district #61. At this time, funding for these pilot projects has not been secured. The MCFD Vancouver Island Regional Transition Manager, along with numerous other community partners, has been involved in discussions concerning the projects.

At a provincial level, MCFD has identified schools as an important venue for intervening with children and youth. To date, the emphasis has been in the area of risk reduction through the school-based FRIENDS anxiety prevention program. The FRIENDS program, funded by MCFD, is delivered in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and has now reached approximately 47,000 grade four and five students in the Province. In addition, child and youth mental health clinicians throughout the Province routinely collaborate with schools to meet the needs of individual children and youth and in the last two years, some CYMH teams have established new school liaison and outreach positions.
MINOR OPERATING PROCEDURES – RURAL HOSPITALS

WHEREAS there has been a reduction of services offered in small rural hospitals, including the withdrawal of minor operating procedures, which also places an added burden on regional hospitals;

AND WHEREAS there are many isolated, rural communities in British Columbia where severe winter road conditions are often encountered and can impede travel to regional hospitals:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government allocate the required resources and permit local physicians to perform minor operating procedures in remote rural hospitals.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Health

Regionalizing specialty services ensures patients receive the highest quality of health care. In fact, the move to regionalize was endorsed by the organization that represents doctors in British Columbia, the BC Medical Association, in its report “Turning the Tide.” The report’s many recommendations included decisive support for regionalizing specialty services in regional referral hospitals.

Across Canada, there has been a move toward regionalizing specialty services in larger hospitals that serve a broad population.

Within the context of a world-wide shortage of specialists, having doctors practice together in groups at a larger hospital means they can guarantee 24/7 coverage without burning out single doctors. In addition, better care for patients occurs in hospitals where there is a full range of services. A patient requiring a critical life-saving surgery needs not only the surgeon, but also anesthetists, radiologists, internists, specialized nursing, or other clinicians – many of which are also in short supply. Given these factors, it is not possible to provide all services in all sites, so the best option is to consolidate services to a single regional referral centre.

With a critical mass of general practitioners, specialists, nursing staff and others, there is justification for significant investment in the physical plant and equipment at a regional referral hospital. Regional referral hospitals are located in Cranbrook, Kelowna, Kamloops, Trail, Prince George, Nanaimo, Victoria, North Vancouver, Vancouver, New Westminster, Surrey, Burnaby and Richmond.
WHEREAS Interior Health Authority has recently made further cuts to the Home Support Services for Seniors in our region, eliminating all services to any senior who is considered to be an Intermediate Level 1 client;

AND WHEREAS there are now seniors who had been receiving up to three baths per week but no longer qualify for any bathing assistance unless they have special issues such as incontinence and then they would now only qualify for one bath per week;

AND WHEREAS this action will not only impact negatively on the health of the affected seniors and will eventually result in increased acute care costs, but this is an unacceptable humiliation to individuals who may require additional bathing for personal conditions such as incontinence:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities appeal to the provincial government to have Interior Health Authority immediately amend its current bathing policy to adequately accommodate those seniors who require assistance with bathing;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, given that the provincial government’s goal was to have seniors age in their own surroundings and remain in their homes for as long as possible, they must then implement and retain those services to ensure that seniors remain safe and healthy and, in doing so, are treated with the respect and dignity that they deserve.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Health

The Government of British Columbia (Government) is committed to ensuring seniors have the necessary supports to allow them to remain in their homes for as long as possible. Health authorities provide home care nursing, community rehabilitation services, home support services, adult day services, meal programs, caregiver relief and respite, and end-of-life care, to enable British Columbians to live independently.

In 2006/07, the Province of British Columbia (Province) is expected to spend more than $500 million dollars in home care and home support services for the Province’s seniors. This is a 26-per-cent increase in funding since 2001. The average number of hours per home support client per year has increased by 23 per cent from 2000/01 to 2004/05 and the number of clients has increased by eight per cent since 2001. Approximately 73 per cent of home support clients receive assistance at no cost to themselves. There is absolutely no charge for home care, which includes nursing and community rehabilitation services, regardless of income.
Home support services are designed to help clients remain independent and in their own home as long as possible, providing personal assistance with daily activities, such as bathing, dressing, grooming and light household tasks that help to maintain a safe and supportive home.

Health authorities provide home support services based on an individualized assessment of client needs. Client service plans are regularly reviewed and modified in response to clients’ changing needs, including the need for personal assistance.

Health authorities, including Interior Health, are actively working to enhance home support and other community-based service options to address client needs, focusing on those individuals with the highest care needs.
WHEREAS the Province’s Health Connections Program offers discounted travel subsidies, administered by Health Authorities, to help defray costs for rural residents who must travel significant distances for medical care outside their home communities;

AND WHEREAS community perception of “significant distances” may vary depending on factors such as the availability of subsidized public transit and the availability of services in “home communities”;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Province be requested to extend the Health Connections Program to subsidize travel for medical care for any rural residents outside their home community, regardless of distance.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Health

The Government of British Columbia (Government) recognizes the challenges that face British Columbians who live in rural and remote areas in accessing health care services. In 2005, the Province of British Columbia invested $6 million in 2005 in the four health authorities with the largest rural and remote areas to establish locally developed travel assistance programs. Programs such as Health Connections in Northern Health are assisting patients in rural areas who must travel out of their home communities for medical services.

Northern Health, Interior Health, Vancouver Island Health and Vancouver Coastal Health have developed programs with and for the communities they serve, focusing on areas of greatest need within their own regions. Health authority partnerships primarily involve new and expanded local ground transportation services through grants and contracts with private providers, regional districts and community organizations. Patients are eligible when traveling to larger centers to access physician-referred, non-emergency medical care unavailable in their home communities.

Government’s objective is to deliver a cost-effective and sustainable program that provides transportation options to those patients in greatest need. While it is not feasible to cover all medically related travel costs, health authorities have established programs and services that meet the priority medical transportation needs in the region. Health authorities have put in place programs that support as many people as possible who are compromised in their ability to easily access the medical services they need.
WHEREAS subsequent to a sad event which involved the transfer of an elderly and very ill patient out of the community it became clear that several families had been faced with a choice to accept a similar transfer or to return a patient in need of a long-term care bed to the home;

AND WHEREAS universal health care is a Canadian value and it is unfair that a patient who has been assessed as eligible for long-term care and listed for the “first available bed” will receive a truly appropriate level of care only if they have the ability to pay for private service:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that a person who has been assessed as meeting the standard for long-term care in a public bed, but for whom no public bed is available, shall be provided government-funded care either in a private facility bed or through home support services sufficient to provide a satisfactory level of care.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Health

The Government of British Columbia (Government) considers caring for British Columbia’s seniors a major priority.

The first available bed policy is designed to meet the needs of the Province of British Columbia (Province) residents, by ensuring clients get the level of care they need as quickly as possible. Until a bed is available, Health Authorities provide appropriate supports for the individual in the community. Once an individual has accepted the first bed, they can still request to be moved to their preferred facility, if they choose.

Health Authorities’ average wait times have been reduced significantly since 2001, from over a year to between one and three months in 2005/2006. Individuals are assessed by a health care professional and their admission to residential care is based on need, rather than chronologically.

The Government is working to reduce pressures on residential care beds with a commitment to build 5,000 new beds by December 2008. Between June 2001 and December 2006, the Province has built approximately 7,200 new and replacement beds and units, including more than 2,500 net-new residential care beds, assisted living units and supportive housing with home support.
WHEREAS changes in the delivery of health care in the province have resulted in the closure of long-term care facilities for the elderly and sick;

AND WHEREAS the closure of these facilities has created hardship among our seniors and has impacted their ability to obtain adequate care when needed;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities request that the Province immediately restore long-term care facilities throughout the province, sufficient to meet the needs of citizens in their communities;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that these facilities be publicly funded and publicly administered.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Health

One of the Government of British Columbia’s (Government) commitments is to build 5,000 new residential care beds, assisted living units and supportive housing with home support by December 2008. That goal is on target with approximately 7,200 new and replacement beds and units already built, including more than 2,500 net-new residential care beds, assisted living units and supportive housing with home support.

In 2001, many beds did not meet modern care standards. At that time, approximately ten per cent of the total residential care inventory was unsalvageable and required outright replacement and 40 per cent of care facilities required upgrading. Replacing those beds is a priority to ensure seniors with complex health conditions have homes where they can receive a high level of professional nursing care. As new facilities are built, some existing beds are decommissioned and transferred to the new facilities.

The Government, through the Health Authorities, is replacing aging residential care beds with private, spacious rooms, modern amenities, proper security and new care equipment.
WHEREAS second hand smoke is known to cause lung cancer, heart disease, sudden infant death syndrome, and many other diseases that are preventable; AND

WHEREAS provincial governments in Ontario, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories protect their citizens from exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke in public places:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the BC Government take responsibility for the health of its citizens and implement legislation to achieve 100 percent smoke-free environments in all indoor public and work places with no provision for designated smoking rooms, and also examine the options to make outdoor public places smoke-free, such as entranceways to buildings, outdoor patios, sports fields and grandstands.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Health

The Government of British Columbia is committed to reducing tobacco use and recognizes second-hand smoke is harmful and has a significant impact on the health of all British Columbians.

Premier Campbell recently announced a ban of smoking on all school property across British Columbia, both public and private, for school opening in September of 2007 and for all indoor public places by 2008.

Under the Community Charter, which came into effect in January 2004, municipalities have broad powers to regulate activities by bylaw within their communities, including those addressing public health. Government supports development of municipal or regional smoking control bylaws, which could cover outdoor public places. This approach acknowledges the importance of community readiness and encourages the development and implementation of public policy while at the same time allowing communities to extend the level of protection as public support increases.
WHEREAS the infestation of bedbugs is a serious problem, specifically in the low-income housing stock in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver and possibly in other types of housing and hotel accommodation across the city and in other BC local governments;

AND WHEREAS bedbugs are impacting not only the health of tenants, but also the livability and economic viability of the rental housing;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities request that the provincial government acknowledge that the infestation of bedbugs in Vancouver and other BC municipalities poses a health and social risk and that the provincial Ministry of Health be directed to convene a task force to work with local health authorities and local governments to:
• Provide financial resources to develop innovative programs to control bedbugs;
• Further research the impact of bedbugs on individuals with a compromised immune system; and
• Increase public awareness and education about controlling and preventing the spread of bedbugs.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Health

The Province of British Columbia’s health authorities have been working with tourism and hotel operators to increase awareness about bedbugs. Health Authorities, the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance, BC Housing, the hotel industry, the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users and the Downtown Eastside Residents Association have been working on strategies to address awareness, education and prevention programs.

Much work has been done specifically in the City of Vancouver, where partners have been working to educate tenants and landlords about their individual responsibilities and in developing protocols for prevention in low-income housing and BC Housing developments.
WHEREAS there are no coordinated seniors’ advocacy services funded by any level of government;

AND WHEREAS the seniors’ population is increasing dramatically at the same time that government funding cutbacks are severely impacting seniors;

AND WHEREAS this gap in social policy is leading to potential abuse of seniors, causes unnecessary anxiety to seniors and their families, and places additional stress on municipalities;

AND WHEREAS several BC local governments have previously expressed concerns to the Province regarding legislation such as the Community Care and Assisted Living Act - specifically with respect to the legislation’s narrowness of application and lack of provisions for accountability and monitoring for facilities supplying housing, care or services to seniors:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities support, in principle, the establishment of Regional Seniors’ Advocacy Offices, as proposed by the Seniors’ Advocacy Steering Committee, as a means of providing security and protection to seniors by ensuring they have an independent voice to advocate for seniors’ rights in accordance with federal, provincial and local government legislation;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be forwarded to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and to the provincial and federal governments requesting support and full provincial and federal funding for such an initiative.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Community Services

The Ministry of Community Services (Ministry) acknowledges the continuing work of the Seniors’ Advocacy Steering Committee and its work with the UBCM on local seniors’ issues. This resolution speaks to the creation of a new structure and funding to support seniors’ advocacy across the Province of British Columbia.

Over the past year (2006) the Premier’s Council on Aging and Seniors Issues (Council) reviewed various issues related to supporting seniors’ independence, quality of life, and ongoing participation in society. The Council presented its report and recommendations to Premier Campbell on December 1, 2006.

The UBCM endorsement of this resolution will be considered alongside the Councils’ report in formulating a provincial response.
WHEREAS schools are a fundamental component of a healthy, vibrant community and vital to a community’s future well-being;

AND WHEREAS the Ministry of Education funds students in rural and remote schools according to a formula that recognizes Unique Geographic Factors, such as weather, transportation and distance;

AND WHEREAS many of the funding factors have been frozen for years:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that UBCM lobby the provincial government to review the current school funding formula so that it better reflects the needs of students in remote and rural communities.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Education

A Technical Review Committee is appointed every fall to review various features of the funding formula and recommend improvements to the Minister of Education. This committee consists of representatives from the BC School District Secretary-Treasurers’ Association, the BC Superintendents’ Association and the Ministry of Education. The committee regularly examines geographic and transportation funding. As well, the committee considers the issues related to funding for small, rural districts and will continue to do so when the committee reconvenes during the 2006/07 school year.

A number of changes to the Funding Allocation System were implemented in 2006/07 specifically for the benefit of small and rural districts. The Funding Protection Supplement, which limits year-to-year declines in operating grant funding to a maximum of 1 percent, assists districts that would otherwise experience large funding declines resulting from considerable enrolment declines. Additionally, the threshold for eligibility for the Supplement for Significant Cumulative Enrolment Decline was lowered, allowing more districts to qualify for this supplement.
WHEREAS online tutoring has been successful in the promotion of literacy;

AND WHEREAS Premier Campbell has publicly declared that British Columbia has a goal to become the most literate province in our country by 2010:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities petition the Minister of Education to fund online tutoring in British Columbia.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Education

The 2006 Speech from the Throne announced a new project whereby all secondary students will have access to free online tutoring. The first offerings were exam preparation tutorials offered online last school year to more than 15,000 students.

Phase one of LearnNow BC was launched in October, 2006 with the online tutoring service available to distributed learning students taking Math 10 or Science 10. In order to help students prepare for exams in January and June, the service was expanded and improved in January 2007 to include all British Columbia students taking Essentials of Math 10, Principles of Math 10, Science 10 and Social Studies 11. LearnNow BC and the expanded online tutoring fulfils Government's 2006 throne speech commitment to provide British Columbia students with new options for learning and to ensure successful completion of their studies.
WHEREAS the Ministry of Education funds school districts primarily on a pupil basis and a funding formula that recognizes and considers the unique needs of different communities and school districts;

AND WHEREAS the Ministry of Education has identified special needs education as a critical component of the education system that requires additional funding and enhancement:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Minister of Education be requested to increase the funding associated with special needs education to ensure school districts are provided the funds necessary to reflect the actual costs incurred in the education and mainstreaming of students with special needs.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Education

There are no plans at this time to change the approach to funding. The current funding system is designed to assist school districts in fulfilling their responsibilities for equitable access to educational programs for students with special needs.

The Level 1, 2 and 3 funding recognizes there is a range of students identified within each level and provides school boards with the flexibility to determine the level of support provided.

The Province of British Columbia (Province) provides more than a half a billion dollars each year in funding for students with special needs. The Province increased funding for levels 1, 2 and 3 special needs students in 2005/2006 by $2,000, $1,000 and $2,000, respectively. As a result of that increase, school districts received an estimated $270 million in 2005/06 for students with special needs - an increase of $28 million over 2004/05.
WHEREAS there is a shortage of Early Childhood Educators (ECE) with a license to practice in Northern BC and, due to different legislation between provinces, there is no recognition within the province of BC for those ECE Educators certified out of province;

AND WHEREAS since the Community Care Facilities Branch in BC does not carry out academic assessments for applicants who have completed their post secondary training outside of BC, these Early Childhood Educators are required to do one or both of the following: A) Submit transcripts to a recognized BC college for evaluation toward advanced credit and to determine those courses that are transferable; B) Make application through the International Credential Evaluation Service for a fee, to determine equivalents for Early Childhood Educator’s certification in British Columbia;(It should be noted that in either case there is no guarantee that courses or certification will be recognized in British Columbia.);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities lobby the provincial government to work with other orders of government to ensure the transferability of Early Childhood Education accreditation across the provinces.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Advanced Education

The Government of British Columbia (Government) is currently working on two initiatives to reduce barriers to labour mobility for Early Childhood Educators:

1. The Early Childhood Educator Registry, with the Ministry of Children and Family Development, has initiated a one year pilot project (which began in June 2006) to expedite the recognition of credentials of those trained and licensed in Alberta.

2. The governments of British Columbia and Alberta signed a most significant economic agreement in April 2006, known as the Alberta-BC Trade, Investment, and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA). Early Childhood Educators is one of the occupations to which attention has been drawn, that does have barriers and needs to be added to the TILMA transitions list of occupations that require further work toward reconciliation of standards.
WHEREAS the federal government had previously committed to funding and establishing a national childcare program, providing approximately five billion dollars over five years;

AND WHEREAS the federal government has now decided to replace the program with individual taxable payments to families, which does nothing to develop facilities for younger children:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities correspond with the federal government, urging it to maintain the earlier commitment to the Federal Early Learning and Childcare Program;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities correspond with the provincial government, urging it to take a strong position with the federal government in maintaining the earlier commitment to the childcare program.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Children and Family Development

The Government of British Columbia remains committed to giving our children the strongest start possible and recognizes the importance of the early years in a child's healthy development.

We will continue to support a wide range of early learning and child care options to ensure that all children are healthy - physically and emotionally - safe and secure, successful at learning, socially engaged and responsible.
WHEREAS schools contribute to the fibre and sustainability of their respective communities;

AND WHEREAS major School District policy decisions such as school closures, sale and/or lease of property have a profound and lasting effect on communities;

AND WHEREAS there is no formal requirement or process to involve and engage residents and local government officials in such decisions:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Ministry of Education not require the sale or lease of school properties that could serve another community use.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Education

Under the School Opening and Closure Order, which came into effect October 24, 2002, school boards must develop and implement a policy that includes a public consultation process with respect to permanent school closures and this policy must be made available to the public.

In addition, the School Community Connections Program, established in April 2004, is jointly managed by the BC School Trustees Association and the Union of BC Municipalities, on behalf of the Ministry of Education (Ministry). This program, developed to encourage partnerships between school boards and local governments, provides for the revitalization and expanded utilization of schools as centres for community learning and activity.

The three components of the program include: assisting potential partners in exploring ways to collaborate on projects; facilitating planning activities for the identified project; and assisting communities in taking their concept from planning to reality. There are already a number of innovative partnerships underway in the province.

The Ministry is certainly interested in the best use of capital assets that are taxpayer funded. We are currently looking at the capital process to see if we are making the highest and best use of these investments.
WHEREAS British Columbia is the only province in Canada that doesn’t allow people without disabilities who are receiving income assistance to keep any income they earn;

AND WHEREAS earnings exemptions allow business and non profit employers to hire low income people for part time jobs:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government be urged to allow all people on income assistance to keep as much earned income as people with disabilities who are receiving income assistance.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance (Ministry) has conducted numerous evaluations of the impact of changes to earnings exemptions, plus many observational studies. The Ministry has found that while earnings exemptions do encourage employable clients to work, they also discourage clients from working enough to become independent. Research has shown that earnings exemptions encourage clients to combine part-time work with income assistance on an ongoing basis rather than gaining full-time employment. Most of these clients would have worked even in the absence of the earnings exemption, and would likely have been independent of assistance.

The Ministry, through research and evaluation has concluded that, instead of helping employable clients become independent, earnings exemptions increase dependency, making it harder for people to leave income assistance in the future. The Ministry believes that the best way to help employable clients is to get them quickly into paid employment, through ministry programs. A single person working full-time will have at least double the net income of a person on income assistance.

Exemptions are provided to clients with the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) designation and those who receive assistance in the Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers to Employment (PPMB) category because we know that they face severe barriers to employment and, as a group, are less likely to become independent. For these clients, combining part-time employment with income assistance is a desired goal, and earnings exemptions help these clients with the higher costs of employment.
WHEREAS the lack of telephone cell service in rural areas of the province causes travelers on the TransCanada Highway and other major highways in British Columbia to be at risk in case of an emergency or breakdown on those highways:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government be requested to install emergency phones at the side of major highways in isolated/rural areas of the province where no cellular telephone coverage exists.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Transportation

The Province of British Columbia (Province) is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and reliable highway system. In remote locations, along rural highways, it is onerous to install communications infrastructure and currently the Ministry of Transportation (Ministry) does not support increasing communication devices such as emergency call boxes. In addition, the expansion of cellular coverage within the Province will make emergency call boxes obsolete but no timeframe is available to the Ministry.

The Government of British Columbia values public safety and therefore currently has maintenance crews that regularly patrol highways and assist travelers in emergency situations. Highway patrols are increased during adverse weather and during the winter months. Furthermore, emergency call boxes may expose the public to additional loss by promoting them to leave the relative safety of their vehicle and make pedestrian movements along the highway shoulder.
WHEREAS the provincial government recently issued a Request for Proposals without public consultation for new fixed roofed accommodations of up to 100 beds or more, including resorts and lodges, in 12 provincial parks;

AND WHEREAS this privatization initiative lacks tools to limit future facility expansion, encourages helicopter and float plane traffic, permits foreign multinational financing ownership, requires parking lots, staff housing, logging for fire breaks, sewage and electricity – all at a time when preservation of wilderness is considered BC parks’ most important asset;

AND WHEREAS these facilities would best benefit local municipalities if they were appropriately situated in our communities where tourists and visitors would most actively support and enrich local economies, and where they would not unfairly compete with our existing tourism, hotel and restaurant services:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities advise the provincial government that it supports environmentally sustainable eco-tourism resort/lodge/motel accommodation outside provincial park boundaries and opposes new private, for-profit roofed accommodations inside provincial parks.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Environment

There are currently 160 existing fixed-roof accommodation facilities in BC Parks. In the past, decisions regarding fixed-roof accommodation facilities were made without the benefit of a comprehensive policy. In July 2006, Government of British Columbia (Government) approved the new Fixed-Roof Accommodation Policy to clarify the type and scale of fixed-roof accommodation that will be considered in provincial parks and protected areas.

BC Parks’ staff has identified 10 sites in which new facilities would be appropriate. In addition, there are two parks (Elk Lakes and Mount Assiniboine) where new operating tenures for existing facilities, and potential improvements to those facilities, are being sought.

As with the development of any facility in a park, any proposal for fixed-roof accommodation will have to consider the park’s recreational and conservation values and objectives. That means any new development will have to complement the natural BC Parks experience - not detract from it. Further, any new development must be consistent with park management plans, will be encouraged to incorporate green technologies and will be subject to impact assessments, including local government, First Nations and public consultation. The recent request for proposals for the 10 new development
opportunities will be subject to this review and consultation process as part of the development decision.

This is not a privatization initiative, nor is it an initiative that lacks tools to protect and preserve the parks’ ecological, recreation, conservation and wilderness values. These remain of paramount importance. Fixed-roof facilities provide park visitors an alternate type of accommodation within our provincial park system and are to be constructed and operated in a manner that is consistent with the park’s values and management objectives. Providing different kinds of accommodation options in parks will help to attract new visitors, as well as contribute to the development of the tourism economy in nearby communities.
WHEREAS on August 5, 2005 a Canadian National Railway train derailed in Squamish, resulting in 40,000 litres of Sodium Hydroxide being spilled in the Cheakamus River and Squamish River systems, with the provincial Ministry of Environment responding as the government having jurisdiction;

AND WHEREAS on August 4, 2006 a ship (the Westwood Anette) became damaged while leaving port, resulting in 29,000 litres of bunker oil spilled in the Squamish Harbour, causing substantial environmental damage within the Squamish Estuary and land areas within the Squamish Harbour, with the provincial Ministry of Environment and the Canadian Coast Guard responding as the governments having jurisdiction;

AND WHEREAS although the governments having jurisdiction respond on the basis of their policies, pursuant to statute and regulation, with immediate cleanups and remediation, local governments remain the recipient of long-term socio-economic and environmental impacts of the incidents that occur within their areas:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UBCM and FCM petition the federal and provincial governments to recognize local governments within environmental emergency response protocols as active participants, where there is meaningful consultation with local governments and compensation for any local resources utilized during the response and restoration period.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Environment

The Ministry of Environment’s (Ministry) policy is to actively involve all impacted local governments and other stakeholders in its emergency response activities related to the spill of hazardous materials. This is typically achieved through the use of the Incident Command System and Unified Command to manage the incident.

The Ministry has recently completed a review of its existing environmental emergency legislation. The Ministry is now in the process of organizing a working group to review the findings and identify possible future changes that might include expanding the scope of our existing spill cost recovery regulation.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

The British Columbia Emergency Management Structure supports an integrated response to emergencies. The Province of British Columbia, along with federal agencies, work closely with local authorities to determine any risk to the public.
The Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation provides the mechanism to compensate local authorities for operational expenditures.
WHEREAS gas station attendants working after dark are at risk from customers who drive their vehicles away without paying for gas they have received at fuel pumps;

AND WHEREAS gas station attendants must activate fuel pumps without safely ensuring that customers will pay for their gas before they drive their vehicles away;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities ask the provincial government to enact legislation requiring customers to pay for their gas before fuel pumps are activated after dark.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Labour and Citizens’ Services

In October 2006 the Honourable Olga Ilich, Minister of Labour and Citizens’ Services, joined the DePatie and Crellin families to announce “Grant’s Law” – a mandatory pre-payment system at service stations in urban areas that will be implemented to help protect employees who work at night.

Government has called upon WorkSafeBC to address this issue through regulation and also accelerate plans for regulations that specifically address the orientation and training needs of new workers, including those at service stations.

Government is constantly striving to ensure safe workplaces for all workers and this pre-payment law, combined with new training and education for service station workers, is a positive step toward that goal.
WHEREAS from the 1960s to the early 1980s the BC provincial government made significant investments in the creation of large-scale hydroelectric power projects, creating an abundance of clean, non-greenhouse gas producing energy, to the extent that surpluses were sold to other markets outside the province (Decades of energy abundance has distorted public perception toward today’s true costs of creating new energy, as well as promoting excessive consumption patterns while discouraging investment in new green energy production.);

AND WHEREAS in March of this year, BC Hydro made public a new reality – that our province is no longer energy self-sufficient, with a 12% present shortfall projected to potentially grow to more than 45%, based on current provincial consumption trends (This shortfall has caused BC to move from being a net exporter of green hydro-electric power to importing our shortfalls through the purchase of brown-power from coal burning sources such as Alberta.);

AND WHEREAS in its 2006 Energy Plan, BC Hydro has stated it is “depending” upon the purchase of locally-produced green, renewable energy from independently-produced sources of run-of-river small-scale hydropower, solar, wind and biomass projects over the next two decades while it plans and builds new large-scale power system sources;

AND WHEREAS the importance of unimpeded development of new green, renewable power is reinforced by the recent introduction of Bill 30 as our province needs to move towards new, alternate and more expensive sources of energy:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities support the concept that British Columbia should once again become energy self-sufficient, to the extent that local governments be given the opportunity to participate in the creation of new green, renewable energy projects;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities request that the BC provincial government establish legislation that makes it mandatory for BC Hydro to purchase power created by BC local government-supported, green, renewable power projects.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources

The Province will soon be releasing a new energy plan. At that time, a response to this resolution will be available.
WHEREAS it is in the public interest to ensure the safety of buildings after they have been used for the growing or production of controlled substances;

AND WHEREAS regional districts do not have the same legislative authority as municipalities to enact controlled substance property bylaws (grow-op) within their jurisdictions, even though regional districts experience many of the same issues as municipalities in dealing with properties that have been used for the growing or production of controlled substances;

AND WHEREAS the Thompson-Nicola Regional District believes that regional districts should possess the same legislative authority as municipalities to adopt a controlled substance property bylaw within their respective electoral areas, for the purposes of protecting the health and welfare of citizens and taking any necessary remedial works that may be required to improve impacted structures:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities lobby the provincial government to permit regional districts to adopt controlled substance property bylaws.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Community Services

Regional districts generally do not have the same scope of bylaw powers that municipalities have, especially in regulatory matters. This has been based on the premise that rural areas do not typically have the same need to regulate on the range of issues that more densely populated municipalities must deal with. Another issue has been whether regional districts have the infrastructure in place to give effect to such bylaws, such as enforcement mechanisms.

The Government of British Columbia recognizes that there may be some special circumstances in some cases. This is usually done by way of a pilot project which can be evaluated. If a regional district wishes to implement drug control bylaws comparable to those in municipalities and considers that it can demonstrate the real need and capacity for special authority, the regional district should contact the Ministry of Community Services to discuss the possibility of custom designed regulatory authority to address the particular needs of the regional district.