

## UBCM Special Committee on Climate Action Terms of Reference

### Background

Local governments have an extensive history of leadership in tackling climate change within their communities. Incorporating climate action into their core operations and services, they have invested significant financial and human capital into mitigating, and adapting to, the effects of climate change. Local governments have also supported strong provincial and federal leadership on climate change, recognizing that other orders of government have jurisdictional control over the significant sources of emissions, and that they can provide the tools and resources for action at the local level. As an organization, UBCM has long standing practice of supporting climate action through the creation of the Climate Action Charter; the development of capacity building tools and sharing of best practices through the joint UBCM-Provincial Green Communities Committee; and advocating for frameworks, tools and funding for local action through provincial advocacy initiatives.

The 2018 release of the Province's climate change strategy, *CleanBC*, affords a unique opportunity to foster dialogue on climate change and prioritize climate action at all levels of government. Climate change is increasingly at the forefront of civic agendas, with the UBCM membership considering a range of climate change resolutions each year. The provincial commitment to consult on other sectors of a climate change strategy, as well as the creation of a new adaptation strategy, provides a window of opportunity for advocating member positions to the Province. Provincial efforts to prioritize climate action also afford the chance to share local government best practices amongst the membership.

At the same time, strong and potentially divisive voices have emerged amongst local governments around the best climate action approaches. As a body representing all local governments, UBCM has traditionally sought to pursue a middle ground that supports voluntary actions sensitive to local conditions. This approach for climate action should create a widely supported pathway forward that reduces GHG emissions while creating weather resilient communities.

In light of the above, the UBCM Executive endorsed the creation of a terms of reference for a Special Committee on Climate Action at the February 2019 Executive meeting.

### Purpose

The purpose of the Special Committee on Climate Action is to generate new ideas, explore opportunities for voluntary local government climate action, and identify avenues for further work with other levels of government in mitigating, and adapting to, the effects of

climate change. In identifying means of taking climate action to the next level, the Committee will consider:

### **The State of Climate Action**

An overview of the current context of climate action at all levels of government, including existing legislation, regulations, policies, strategies, partnerships and transnational agreements. This contextual framework will inform the scope of action that can be taken locally, provincially and federally.

### **Local Government Approaches & Best Practices**

The Special Committee will examine current member positions on climate change as well as local government best practices in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and creating weather resilient communities. It will highlight actions taken in land-use planning, transportation, buildings, clean energy, waste, and carbon sequestration. Best practices will be selected that demonstrate a range of locally developed solutions reflective of community size and regional conditions.

### **Roles & Responsibilities**

Recognizing that a concerted effort amongst all governments is required to combat climate change, the Committee will explore the roles and responsibilities of each order of government and their respective jurisdictional control over emissions. It will also contemplate the role that external stakeholders, such as industry and environmental non-governmental organizations, can play in supporting local mitigation and adaptation actions.

### **Opportunities for Advancing Climate Action**

The Committee will consider innovative approaches that would offer local governments additional options for mitigating, and adapting to, climate change. It will review opportunities for, and barriers to, taking climate action to the next level, and propose options that are sensitive to local conditions, autonomy and resources.

In exploring these issues, the Special Committee will undertake a review of existing research, examine best practices and approaches, consult with external stakeholders including the Province, and perform any other work necessary to fulfill its mandate.

### **Composition**

The UBCM Executive will appoint up to twelve (12) Committee members comprised of:

- At least one (1) member from the UBCM Executive;
- At least seven (7) members from amongst local government elected officials and senior staff, who may or may not be members of the UBCM Executive;
- At least three (3) members who are partners with local government in climate action, or who possess relevant expertise, including representatives from academia, industry and/or environmental non-governmental organizations; and
- One (1) provincial staff representative that will serve in an ex-officio capacity.

The UBCM Executive will appoint the Committee Chair.

### **Support to the Committee**

UBCM staff and an external advisor with unique expertise in policy development, intergovernmental relations, and cross-sectoral collaboration will support the Committee. UBCM will provide secretariat services to the Special Committee, including setting meeting dates, co-ordinating agendas, arranging meeting venues, and tracking action items.

The Committee may contract with any other person within its budget allocation, and subject to approval by UBCM's Executive Director.

### **Reporting Relationship**

The Committee reports to the UBCM Executive.

### **Decision-Making**

Members will seek to reach consensus wherever possible.

### **Term**

The Special Committee will meet from June 2019 through to May 31<sup>st</sup> 2020, at the call of the Chair. The Executive retains the ability to extend this term as needed.

### **Deliverables**

The Committee will generate a report of its findings for the UBCM Executive. Unless the term of the Committee is extended, the final report will be provided by May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020. If the term of the Committee is extended, then an interim report will be provided to the Executive by May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

### **Expenses**

UBCM will cover the costs of the Special Committee, up to the maximum budget allocation, including:

- Meeting and other operating expenses of the Committee;
- Consultant fees and expenses; and
- Any other expenses specifically approved, in advance, by the Executive Director.

### **Meetings**

The Committee will meet monthly, or at the call of the Chair. Meetings may occur in-person or through teleconference.

### **Confidentiality**

Members are expected to be open and candid in discussing items before the table. For this reason it is important to maintain confidentiality. Members are committed to respecting the personal privacy of the Committee participants and agree not to disclose personal

information or views expressed during meetings. Deliberations may be shared within the various stakeholders represented by the Committee but should remain publicly confidential until there is general agreement and consensus to make them public.

### **Transparency & Communication**

Members will determine, at the first Committee meeting, whether regular communications about the progress of Special Committee should be a priority. Efforts to communicate the progress of the Committee could include updates at regional workshops, conferences, forums, and through electronic communication mediums.

### **Delegations**

The Committee may, from time to time, require delegations from external stakeholders to present to the Committee because of their subject matter expertise. The Committee will agree to such invitations in advance.