



News Release

UBCM Concerned About the Slow Pace of Infrastructure Funding

BC one of only two provinces that has not fully delivered Building Canada funds.

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Media Contact:

Paul Taylor (250) 356-2938

ptaylor@civicnet.bc.ca

(Victoria, BC) The window is closing on the new funding for community infrastructure outlined in the 2009 Federal Budget. Robert Hobson, President of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, came to this conclusion following a presentation by a senior official from Infrastructure Canada during a meeting of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities last week.

“BC communities have been waiting with their shovel ready projects for nearly eight months,” said Mr. Hobson. “If you look at what is happening in the other provinces, British Columbia is clearly falling behind in the delivery of Stimulus and Building Canada funding.”

The federal Budget 2009 included provisions to accelerate the Building Canada Communities Component (BC-CCF) program to deliver seven years of funding in two. Budget 2009 also provided a \$65 million top up to BC-CCF that was contingent upon matching funds from the Province of British Columbia. Eight of ten provinces have already disbursed 100% of the accelerated Building Canada funding and 100% of the top-up in their jurisdictions. British Columbia so far has committed only half of the accelerated funding and none of the \$65 million top-up.

Budget 2009 also introduced the Infrastructure Stimulus Fund, which will provide British Columbia an estimated \$1.04 billion in matched federal – provincial funding. UBCM estimates to date that less than 25% of the available funding has been committed for BC projects. In addition, most of the stimulus projects funded in BC thus far have flowed to provincial priorities. Nationally, about 60% of the funding approved has been for local projects.

“The funding which the federal government has made available to us will not be around indefinitely,” said President Hobson. “UBCM expects the province to keep pace with other jurisdictions so that local governments can access this funding for their communities. We have been told that the federal funds are ready to flow, but without matching provincial support, the money will go elsewhere.”