



October 28, 2019

Dear mayors, councillors, board chairs, directors, chiefs and chief councillors:

I am pleased to advise that the discussion paper “*Modernizing BC’s Emergency Management Legislation*” has been released for a three-month online public consultation. This discussion paper has been developed in response to direction that Emergency Management BC has received to repeal and replace the current *Emergency Program Act* to support more effective emergency management in BC. As local authorities have a critical role in emergency management, your feedback is essential.

The discussion paper outlines government’s modernization proposals and reflects BC’s adoption of the *United Nations Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction*. BC is moving beyond its traditional focus on preparedness and response to provide greater support and consideration for the mitigation and recovery phases of emergency management.

Disaster risk reduction in the *Sendai Framework* is a broad concept that incorporates land-use planning, natural resource management, and cultural, social and psychological needs of communities and individual community members. With the adoption of the *Sendai Framework*, BC is moving to an “all-of-society” approach to emergency management that requires all partners to strengthen our efforts to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies.

I would like to acknowledge the contributions of UBCM’s Executive and the Flood and Wildfire Advisory Committee. The Committee in particular provided valuable insights and advice regarding emergency management issues facing local authorities and key considerations for any new emergency management legislation.

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The discussion paper is available online at:

<https://engage.gov.bc.ca/govtogetherbc/consultation/emergency-program-act-modernization>, and the feedback period is open until January 31, 2020. Emergency Management BC (EMBC) will engage with local governments during the comment period to ensure everyone with an interest in emergency management has an opportunity to have their perspectives on the proposed changes heard. All feedback will be considered by the team drafting the legislation and regulations, and a “What We Heard Report” will be publicly released in spring 2020, summarizing feedback received. I ask you to:

- read the discussion paper and submit your feedback online;
- support participation by emergency management practitioners as EMBC seeks their input; and
- share this information with your contacts in emergency management and encourage them to provide feedback through the online consultation.

It is anticipated that the proposed changes will provide BC and local authorities with a modernized legislative framework to better serve communities and the province. The government intends to introduce the legislation in fall 2020.

Successful emergency management relies on our shared efforts. We look forward to working with you on this key endeavour to strengthen BC’s approach and enhance the resilience of our people and communities.

Should you have any questions on the discussion paper or upcoming engagements, please contact my office.

Sincerely,



Mike Farnworth
Minister of Public Safety
and Solicitor General

pc: Lori Halls, Deputy Minister, EMBC