

**Response to the 2021 Resolutions of the
Union of British Columbia Municipalities**

**ADDENDUM
September 2022**

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SR2 Forest Management in BC**UBCM Executive**

Whereas BC local governments have called for changes to forest management to: ensure the sustainability of the resource; protect old growth; provide for greater consultation and engagement on forest policy decisions; improve accountability in tenure management; strengthen compliance and enforcement; ensure that forest policy decisions are based on the best technical and scientific information available; and provide transition support for impacted forest workers and communities;

And whereas on June 1, 2021, the Province released its *Modernizing Forest Policy in BC* Intentions Paper recommending many of the forest policy changes sought by UBCM members; and, subsequent to the Independent Panel's Old Growth Strategic Review, the Province also announced on June 24, 2021 the establishment of an independent Old Growth Technical Advisory Panel to:

- improve public information around old growth;
- inform government-to-government decisions with First Nations on future deferrals; and
- provide recommendations and advice on priority areas for development of deferrals that will assist government-to-government engagement:

Therefore be it resolved that the Province engage and consult with local governments and Indigenous communities as it moves forward to implement recommendations within the *Modernizing Forest Policy in BC* Intentions Paper, including matters related to old growth designations and deferrals, recognizing that there will be implications and impacts for workers and communities that will require economic transition support.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Forests

Government seeks to engage local government leaders in the different components of modernizing forest policy as we move forward.

This is expected to include, but not be limited to: a similar format to the nine virtual engagement sessions held in July 2021 where we introduced the topics and had discussions on forest policy changes and sought input both in the session and after the session in writing. UBCM worked with the Province to host and deliver engagement sessions in October and November 2021.

Early policy ideas and options that were presented for initial discussion with local government leaders during the engagement sessions included:

Conservation related:	Management and forest sector related:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new biodiversity target framework • Setting ecosystem health as a management priority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advancing a process to minimize slash burning • Re-integrating prescribed fire

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transition planning for communities• More inclusive governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing a timber sales program for value added manufacturers• Strengthening compliance and enforcement in forestry• Revising area-based tenure-specific pricing policy• Evolving BCTS policy for maximum sales restrictions
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Transforming the forest sector and forest management in B.C. is complex and we look forward to the thoughtful ideas and input that local government leaders bring to this work.

EB2 WorkSafe BC Coverage for Local Elected Officials**NCLGA Executive**

Whereas elected officials are regularly exposed to health and safety risks, including COVID-19, in the course of serving their constituents;

And whereas WorkSafe BC regulations cover local government employees, but not elected officials:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM request the Province of BC amend the WorkSafe BC health, safety and COVID-19 regulations to provide coverage for local elected officials.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Labour

The Ministry of Labour (Ministry) is responsible for WorkSafeBC, the *Workers Compensation Act (Act)*, and regulations under that Act. The Province, the Ministry, and WorkSafeBC take the safety of all workers in British Columbia seriously and recognize the importance of the health and safety of all British Columbians who are active in both the private and public sectors of the economy.

Currently, elected officials (e.g., provincial/municipal government, school or library boards, etc.) are not considered workers or employers under the Act and, therefore, the Act does not apply to them in this capacity. While Personal Optional Protection is not available to these individuals, local governments have the option of purchasing insurance coverage for their elected officials from private sector insurance carriers. The Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) may wish to investigate this option further to determine insurance rates and options for group coverage.

UBCM and individual local governments may wish to raise this issue directly with WorkSafeBC to explore whether there are options under existing legislation.

**EB5 Timely Information to Local Governments During
Local/Provincial States of Emergencies**

NCLGA Executive

Whereas local governments in BC are orders of government that are the first to respond to questions/concerns, resulting from emergencies, whether natural disasters like wildfires and floods or pandemics like the current COVID-19 pandemic;

And whereas local governments require accurate and timely information that can be shared with their residents, both for safety purposes and to reduce anxiety of their residents;

And whereas the communication from local health authorities and the provincial government to local governments, although improving, has only reached the minimum acceptable standard of twice weekly updates once a local pandemic outbreak has been declared:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM lobby the BC Government to find ways/means to have accurate and more timely community-based information that can be shared with local governments and their residents during declared local and provincial states of emergency.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General – Emergency Management BC

Emergency Management BC (EMBC) and other provincial government entities including the BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs are always looking at ways of improving emergency communications. During large-scale emergencies, such as the wildfire seasons of 2017, 2018 and 2021, EMBC organized daily emergency coordination calls with all affected local and First Nation governments. These calls included operational updates from provincial agencies along with additional presentations on weather and wildfire status updates. The calls also provide an opportunity for communities to make specific information requests that EMBC staff can answer, including access to provincial funding and the frequency of emergency coordination calls to best support the information needs of the event. Emergency coordination calls are routinely organized at the request of a community's Emergency Program Coordinator (EPC), and feedback regarding how these calls can be improved for information sharing purposes is useful to EMBC.

EMBC and BCWS have a range of tools from which to share information with local authorities and the public including EmergencyInfoBC (emergencyinfobc.ca) which is B.C.'s online information hub during provincial scale emergencies and aggregates evacuation alerts and orders from all regions of the province. EmergencyInfoBC it is also a one-stop shop for evacuee information, travel advisories, donations, and recovery support, holds information on response and recovery for major events, and links to partner agencies like BCWS, the River Forecast Centre, and others. The hub is supported by the Twitter handle [@emergencyinfobchub](https://twitter.com/emergencyinfobchub).

BCWS has a range of tools available, from social media to the BCWS App, for local authorities and the public to access up-to-date information on current wildfire activity, which is informed by advanced predictive services. There is also up-to-date information on fire bans or restrictions, wildfires of note, and other related materials.

In spring 2022, EMBC expanded the use of Broadcast Intrusive Alerting, also known as Alert Ready, to include flood, wildfire, and extreme heat emergencies. This provides First Nations, local authorities, and the Province with another tool to use during emergencies.

Broadcast Intrusive Alerting is a tool that can protect public safety during emergencies. They are emergency alert messages that reach the public through wireless devices and by interrupting regular TV and radio programs. These messages are only sent when there is an immediate and life-threatening danger, through the national Alert Ready system.

Expanding the use of this tool has the potential to save lives and ensure B.C. is better able to respond to emergencies, as we see the severity and risks associated with emergency management hazards grow in our province.

In B.C., Broadcast Intrusive Alerts were already in use by EMBC for tsunami warnings, by the RCMP for Amber Alerts and civil emergencies, and by Environment and Climate Change Canada for extreme weather. The recent expansion of Broadcast Intrusive Alerts to these additional hazards builds on that foundation.

While B.C. has many efforts underway to continuously improve emergency communications, the Province encourages local authorities to provide their ideas on ways to build upon available tools to improve our communications.

EB12 Civil Forfeiture Proceeds**Chilliwack**

Whereas the provision of police services places a significant financial burden on local government;

And whereas the Civil Forfeiture Crime Prevention and Crime Remediation Grant Program fund community crime reduction and crime prevention activities, but does not address local government policing costs, including expenditures related to investigations and police work that results in seizures of proceeds of crime:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM respectfully request that the Province share seizures of proceeds of crime with local governments to help address protective services costs.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

Under the BC *Police Act*, a municipality is responsible for its police services when its population exceeds 5,000 persons. These municipalities may form their own municipal police department, contract with an existing municipal police department, or contract with the provincial government for RCMP municipal police services.

Under the Traffic Fine Revenue Sharing Transfers, the B.C. government transfers 100 percent of net revenues from traffic violations to municipalities that are directly responsible for paying for policing. This provides municipalities additional funds to support community safety and address local policing priorities. Transfer grant amounts are based on a municipality's policing costs relative to the total policing costs paid by all municipalities. Rural communities and municipalities with populations under 5,000 benefit by receiving a reduction in the police tax they pay.

The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General supports community-based crime prevention and remediation programming through the Civil Forfeiture Crime Prevention and Remediation Grant Program. This grant program provides one-time funding for crime prevention and remediation projects through the proceeds from the civil forfeiture process. Priority areas for grants are established on a year-by-year basis through consideration of government's current strategic priorities. Some of the funding streams from previous years include:

- Police Equipment and Training;
- Crime Prevention;
- Indigenous Healing;
- Gender-based Violence;
- Human Trafficking, Sexual Exploitation and Sex Worker Safety; and
- Restorative Justice.

Since 2011, government has invested approximately \$60 million in B.C. communities through this grant program, and over \$7 million has been provided to police agencies for equipment and training needs. A call for applications for the program typically occurs each fall.

EB14 Consultation by Ministry Prior to Undertaking Works on Highways**Gibsons**

Whereas the BC government has ownership of and jurisdiction over arterial provincial highways that are located in municipalities;

And whereas municipalities have authority under the *Community Charter* to manage and regulate highways such as streets, roads, lanes, bridges, viaducts, sidewalks and other ways open to public use;

And whereas municipalities require the approval of the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure before regulating or prohibiting traffic on arterial provincial highways;

And whereas municipalities experience economic, ecological and logistical impacts whenever the Ministry of Transportation undertakes works on any arterial provincial highway that intersects with any municipal ways open to the public:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM ask the Province to require the Ministry of Transportation, when working on arterial provincial highways, conduct meaningful consultation with local governments and residents of all municipalities located within the highway corridor throughout the planning stages of the project and before the work has commenced.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure recognizes that projects on provincial highways can have an impact on adjacent communities. For ministry-led rehabilitation and capital projects, the Ministry strives to communicate with all affected Indigenous Groups and stakeholders, including municipalities and regional districts.

On capital projects, the Ministry seeks feedback from stakeholders, and will conduct public consultations, during project development to ensure the project considers comments and concerns from all interested parties.

Rehabilitation projects often involve a like-for-like replacement of highway infrastructure. It is critical that these projects focus on the goal of improving the conditions, and prolonging the lifespan, of existing infrastructure. The Ministry will continue to communicate with stakeholders about such projects.

EB15 Provincial Maintenance of Arterial Roads Within Municipalities**Merritt**

Whereas the Provincial Ministry of Transportation (MOTI) is responsible for the clearing of snow off arterial highways across British Columbia, including within municipal boundaries;

And whereas the Provincial MOTI has signed contracts with external companies to fulfill this responsibility, each of which is to last for ten years from signing;

And whereas residents of municipalities expect their city authorities to promptly and appropriately deal with snow removal:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM ask the provincial government to work closely with municipalities to identify any flaws or deficiencies in snow-clearing on arterial routes, and to relay an expectation to their contractors that reasonable municipal requests be heeded through the duration of the contract;

And be it further resolved that the provincial government involve municipal authorities in setting standards for snow clearance when the contracts are renewed.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure staff and maintenance contractors have a history of working collaboratively with municipalities and stakeholders, and this relationship is key to the successful delivery of effective road maintenance along arterial roads.

Our Highway Maintenance Quality Plan includes the capture of stakeholder feedback regarding their experience on the roads and their interactions with the maintenance contractor in their local community. Local governments and stakeholders such as emergency services, school districts, and local industry or tourism, are regularly consulted by District staff to provide an assessment of the contractor's performance back to the ministry. Feedback received is shared with contractors to enhance their service delivery in a proactive manner, for the benefit of the public during the term of the maintenance contract, promoting positive and supportive relationships with local governments.

As we get closer to the next procurement cycle of maintenance contracts, we will ensure that local feedback from all our districts is considered whilst reviewing and updating maintenance standards.

EB28 Watershed Stewardship in British Columbia**Vanderhoof**

Whereas watershed management lacks provincial oversight and capacity resulting in inadequate watershed management and consideration in the landscape level planning within BC;

And whereas local governments and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) do not have the jurisdictional authority, capacity and resources needed to properly manage watersheds to ensure the long-term health and sustainability of watershed:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM lobby the Province of BC to work with local governments and NGOs to define the authorities and responsibilities while providing adequate resources needed to ensure proper watershed stewardship.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship

Sustainably managing our watersheds is one of the most important things we can do to create a healthier and more resilient future for people and communities across B.C. Developing a Watershed Security Strategy (Strategy) and Watershed Security Fund (Fund) is a mandate letter commitment for the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy with support from the Minister of State for Lands and Natural Resource Operations and the Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Aquaculture.

Government engaged on a discussion paper with local governments in the first part of 2022. Themes explored during engagement included watershed governance, reconciliation, climate change, ecosystems, drinking water, land use planning, community and economic stability, and education and knowledge.

We are looking forward to having discussions with local governments and external stakeholders to develop the Strategy. We anticipate further engagement on an intentions paper in Spring/Summer 2022, with a completed Strategy and Fund ready for in Spring 2023.

At the same time, government is working with Indigenous partners to jointly build an enduring engagement and collaboration process needed to ensure our success. The Strategy and Fund must also reflect the Province's commitment to true, lasting reconciliation and be consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.

Over the coming months the Province will explore a range of options for developing the Fund. Learnings from the \$27 million Healthy Watersheds Initiative, part of the B.C. Economic Recovery Plan, will inform development of the Watershed Security Fund.

**EB72 Enhanced Communications to Address Homelessness
Related Issues**

Courtenay

Whereas there has been limited communication with local governments regarding provincial COVID-19 response initiatives to ensure the health and safety of individuals experiencing homelessness and local governments play an integral ongoing role in supporting individuals experiencing homelessness through the support of non-profits, emergency response services, pursuing long-term affordable housing options, and formal communication between governments is vital to enhance homelessness response and support initiatives;

And whereas homelessness response actions undertaken by the provincial government have a direct impact on local government resources such as bylaw enforcement, policing, fire response, land use planning, and the maintenance of public space to ensure safe enjoyment:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM ask the provincial government to consult with local governments when planning new housing and facilities to support homeless people.

RESPONSE: Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing and Ministry of Municipal Affairs

Communities across the Province have seen an increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the concurrent toxic drug supply and affordable housing crises. Government is committed to helping people move into safe spaces indoors and to ensuring everyone has access to the housing, supports, and services they need to move forward in their lives.

Supporting people experiencing homelessness requires coordination, communication, and collaboration between community partners, organizations, Indigenous people and Nations, the public, all levels of government including local governments, and BC Housing. The Province recognizes the important role played by local governments in addressing homelessness and the impacts a lack of affordable housing and homelessness can have on local government resources, and on communities.

Consultation is a key principle of the relationship between the Province and local governments, enshrined through the *Community Charter* and the *Local Government Act* which recognize local governments as an order of government. The Province is committed to working collaboratively through consultation and communication with local governments, both formally and informally, on issues relating to housing and homelessness. Timely and effective consultation may look different depending on the circumstances and nature of the subject at hand, the impact on local government interests, the interests of stakeholders, and the Province's obligations and policy goals.

To work on addressing issues of homelessness collaboratively, the Province will continue communication with local government partners, including through our ongoing work with UBCM to understand local government needs and concerns. Government has also made Housing Needs Reports mandatory for local governments, to help local governments and the B.C. government better understand and respond to housing needs in communities throughout B.C. The completed housing needs reports underline the range of housing-related needs and challenges in communities of all sizes across the province, including the extent to which many people are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The Province recognizes the important role of local governments in addressing affordable housing needs. In 2018, the Province launched the Development Approvals Process Review (DAPR) to address challenges and identify opportunities for improving development approvals processes, with the aim of accelerating the construction of the homes people need in their communities, including affordable housing. The 2019 DAPR consultation report includes informed ideas for improving the system. Early actions under DAPR include Fall 2021 legislative amendments that removed the default requirement for local governments to hold public hearings for zoning bylaw amendments that are consistent with the official community plan, and that enabled delegating decisions on minor development variance permits to staff. Further work under DAPR will seek to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the local government development approvals process, ultimately streamlining the movement of housing supply to the market. The Province will continue engagement and collaboration with local government partners and other stakeholders as further DAPR initiatives are rolled out.

To ensure communities have the resources they need to support those experiencing homelessness, the Province invested \$633 million in homelessness services and supports in Budget 2022 through the Provincial Homelessness Strategy, including launching a new \$600-a-month rent supplement program, increasing access to wrap around supports for those across the housing spectrum, expanding the Complex Care Housing model over the next 3 years, providing for further encampment supports, and launching a permanent housing plan for the 3,000 people who were temporarily housed in leased or purchased hotels and other spaces during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a key partner in addressing homelessness across B.C., BC Housing is committed to a comprehensive engagement process that informs local governments of projects supporting homeless community members, and to working with local governments to ensure responses and actions are clear and effective for each community. BC Housing will continue to actively participate in community meetings such as homeless coalitions and community advisory boards to stay apprised of community needs and to provide strategic solutions based on the specific needs of each community.

BC Housing also continues to work in partnership with the private and non-profit sectors, provincial health authorities and ministries, First Nations and other levels of government and community groups to identify opportunities for secure, safe, and affordable housing that consider access to the amenities needed by residents to maintain successful housing outcomes.

EB73 Extreme Weather Response Shelters**Oliver**

Whereas the Province, through BC Housing, supports emergency shelters and temporary winter shelters that are operational from November 1 to March 31, but not outside of that period:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM request the Province to re-establish extreme weather response shelters funding to enable local governments to open an extreme weather response shelter for homeless and vulnerable populations, when Environment Canada issues an extreme weather alert for any conditions including cold or heat.

RESPONSE: Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing

The Province's Extreme Weather Response (EWR) program is enabled through the *Assistance to Shelter Act* and administered by BC Housing in partnership with participant communities each year. The program is annually funded during the winter season, from November 1 to March 31.

EWR shelters are not open every night. Communities coordinate plans to open and operate emergency shelter beds activated during extreme weather conditions. Communities decide what weather conditions warrant an alert and how many spaces to activate on a given night, depending on the capacity of existing shelters and the estimated need. Shelters are activated when local communities issue an extreme weather alert or, in regions without a plan, by issuance of the Minister.

The EWR shelters supplement 2,250 year-round shelter spaces in B.C. There are also temporary shelters that operate seasonally, or longer, and are open on a nightly basis, or 24/7, and provide meals and health services. Capacity Expansion shelters are temporary shelters that have been extended or opened in order to provide shelter during the COVID-19 pandemic. As of March 31, 2022 there are 2,176 temporary or expansion capacity shelter spaces in 42 communities across B.C., with 45% located in the Lower Mainland (please note that temporary or EWR shelter spaces close on March 31st, however, individual shelters may remain open as community need dictates).

The EWR program has been impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic – in both the availability of shelter beds/spaces and the capacity of organizations which rely on volunteers and part-time staff to provide services.

In winter 2021/22, the Province provided nearly 360 extreme weather response shelter spaces to ensure people experiencing homelessness have a warm place to sleep and can get out of the cold and rain. The Province also provided non-profit groups access to funding as early as October 1st to allow shelters to open in communities already experiencing extreme weather.

British Columbia has experienced extreme weather events in the summer months as well, including heat and smoke, which can be dangerous for people at-risk of or experiencing homelessness. Government is working across ministries to address the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events. This includes working together to support the development of a heat response framework for B.C., including protocols to protect vulnerable populations.

Communities across B.C. have also started planning for year-round extreme weather responses through federal-provincial Safe Restart funding opportunities such as the \$100 million Strengthening Community

Services Fund, which provides for temporary expanded shelters and supports for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness and vulnerable populations impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

EB74 Unauthorized Camping Crisis**Alberni-Clayoquot RD**

Whereas unauthorized camping has affected in negative ways residents, businesses, the environment and, in many cases, those experiencing homelessness throughout the province;

And whereas the COVID-19 Pandemic has exacerbated the effects of, and very significantly increased the occurrences of, unauthorized camping:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM ask the Province to prioritize working with local governments in understanding the effects of unauthorized camping on all parties and actively participate in mitigating those that are deleterious to the health and welfare of people, to the environment and to business.

RESPONSE: Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing

Homelessness across British Columbia has been exacerbated by the dual public health emergencies of the COVID-19 pandemic and the toxic drug crisis, as well as an affordable housing crisis. This has led to an increase in unsheltered homelessness and encampments in both urban and rural communities.

Encampments are not a safe or suitable form of housing or shelter. People deserve real homes and stability. The Province is working in coordination with multiple ministries, all levels of government and partnering with communities to keep people safe, healthy and connected to services and housing supports.

In Spring 2020, the Province acted quickly to help 605 people move from unsafe encampments in Victoria and Vancouver into indoor spaces with health and well-being supports. 90 to 95 percent remain stably housed. In Spring 2021, the Province again worked with the cities of Victoria and Vancouver and non-profit service providers to close large and unsafe encampments in parks through access to indoor spaces and coordinated efforts to prevent new encampments from growing. In Victoria, 229 people moved from city parks into shelter and housing between December and May. In Vancouver, 296 people moved from a Strathcona Park encampment and into shelter and housing between December and May.

The Province takes a “Housing First” approach to homelessness and encampments, prioritizing outreach, access to shelter and housing, as well as health and social supports. This approach includes BC Housing’s work with local governments and local authorities to address encampments as they arise, ensuring people’s health, safety and access to housing supports. This includes working together to create suitable housing options with wraparound supports.

Communities across B.C. have also prepared responses for unsheltered people through the federal-provincial Safe Restart funding opportunities such as the \$100-million Strengthening Community Services Fund, which provides for temporary expanded shelters and supports for vulnerable populations impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic

The Ministry of Attorney General and Housing also leads the coordination of cross-ministry responses to homelessness and liaises with local governments to provide information and best practices resources. To better support local governments and community partners, the ministry is developing a Local Government Homeless Encampment Response Resource to provide guidance, best practices and key contacts and information on resources for people in encampments. This resource is currently in draft

form and will be finalized after the remaining community engagements take place in spring/summer 2022.

The ministry will continue to work with partners and communities to ensure people sheltering in encampments stay safe and are connected to the supports they need to exit homelessness. The most effective path to addressing encampments is through immediate and coordinated responses, access to stable and suitable housing, as well as health and social supports.

There is still much work to do to address homelessness and encampments across B.C. and local governments are a key partner in coordinating responses to protect the most vulnerable citizens and the community.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Forests

The Ministry of Forests provides for the opportunity to camp on Crown land for limited periods in limited locations as described in the Land Use Policy Permissions.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/natural-resource-use/land-water-use/crown-land/permissions.pdf>

Camping on Crown land for less than 14 days is permitted on Crown land outside of municipal boundaries as a bare licence. Camping on Crown land within municipal boundaries would require a Land Act authorization which may not be approved if the use under the authorization would contravene municipal by-laws. Questions about camping on Crown land can be directed to the local FrontCounter BC office. Problems with unauthorized camping on Crown land can be brought to the attention of Compliance and Enforcement.

EB77 Provincial Support for TRC, MMIWG2S and UNDRIP**Victoria**

Whereas local governments in British Columbia are integral for the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada Calls to Action, Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit People, (MMIWG2S) Calls for Justice, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), but have the least resources to do the work meaningfully;

And whereas local governments are committed to advancing truth, justice, and reconciliation, and understanding that each Indigenous community has different and diverse histories, making local context and consultation critical to meaningful action:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM call on the Province of British Columbia to provide support and equitable access to funding for trauma-informed, Indigenous-led education, training, and policy guidance for local governments and associated law enforcement and emergency services to implement local government-specific recommendations from the TRC, MMIWG2S, and UNDRIP.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Municipal Affairs

Our government is committed to true, lasting reconciliation with Indigenous people in British Columbia and recognizes the important role local governments play by building relationships with First Nations. The renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding, underscores our shared commitment to implementing the UN Declaration and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and acknowledges the work of the Union of BC Municipalities' and local governments in B.C. to advance reconciliation with First Nations and Indigenous peoples.

Significant work is going on at the local level to build relationships between local governments and First Nations, and all of us are committed to finding ways to work better together to make life better for people in Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

The Province is supporting this work through the Community-to-Community Forum program, which has helped local governments and First Nations connect at more than 600 community-to-community events in the past 22 years, fostering collaborative relationships and a wide range of service agreements and protocols on important matters including health and safety.

As well, the Urban Communities Partnering for Reconciliation project – funded a series of urban reconciliation dialogues between municipalities and urban Indigenous communities.

Along with these two initiatives, the 150 Time Immemorial program, announced on July 30, 2021, is a \$30-million grant program, through the First Peoples' Cultural Foundation and Heritage BC, that is funding projects to educate people about B.C.'s colonial past, advance reconciliation and promote inclusivity and diversity for the province's future.

Our government values our relationship with local government and recognizes the importance of having local government actively involved in the work of reconciliation and the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada Calls to Action, Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit People, (MMIWG2S) Calls for Justice, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

NR8 Invoicing for Required Officer Attendance at Hospitals**White Rock**

Whereas the RCMP are required under the *Mental Health Act* (MHA) to remain at the hospital with a person that has been apprehended under the MHA until they can be presented to a physician;

And whereas wait times can range from two and one-half (2.5) hours to six (6) hours during which time a person suffering from a mental health condition is in the custody of the police, contributing to further stigmatization, and preventing the police officer from taking any other emergency calls for the provision of their services:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM request that the Province implement a provision permitting local governments to invoice their local health authority for police officers that are required, under the *Mental Health Act*, to wait with hospital patients for more than 30 minutes, similar to the framework used for BC Ambulance Services.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Health and Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

Consistent with Section 28 of the BC *Mental Health Act*, a police officer or constable may apprehend a person who is acting in a manner likely to endanger that person's own safety or the safety of others and apparently has a mental disorder. Following apprehension, the police officer is required to take the person immediately to a physician for examination to determine whether the person meets the criteria under the BC *Mental Health Act* for involuntary admission and treatment in designated mental health facilities.

Consistent with the Legislation, the physician assessment and decision to involuntarily admit the person must be completed before police can leave. Provincially, the average hospital emergency department wait times for Section 28 clients range from 60 – 120 minutes based on municipal police data.

Hospital Emergency Department patients are assessed based on their level of acuity and triaged using the Canadian Triage and Acuity Scale (CTAS) which places clients detained under Section 28 of the *Mental Health Act* in the high priority 'emergent' category. Emergency departments try to expedite the patients as quickly as possible, for example, if there are long delays psychiatric registered nurses may complete an initial assessment then phone the physician to assess the patient in order to transfer responsibility from police to the health care facility.

In 2018, the Ministry of Health, in partnership with the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General and in consultation with stakeholders in health and police services, developed a provincial toolkit to guide health authorities and police agencies in the development of joint local protocols and agreements, including Section 28 apprehensions, see <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/managing-your-health/mental-health-substance-use/police-interface-report.pdf>. The provincial toolkit has resulted in the development of local protocols between health authorities and police departments and led to increased collaboration to minimize hospital emergency wait times, including productive reviews of the numerous variables that may impact wait times at the Hospital Emergency Departments.

Hospitals and police departments are encouraged to continue to collaborate and explore potential efficiencies and improvements to the overall emergency department admission process for mental

health clients. The Ministry of Health and health authorities overseeing the management of hospital emergency departments are committed to continuous quality improvement and finding ways to minimize emergency department wait times for police officers, as appropriate.

The Ministry of Health does not support the the request from UBCM to implement a provision permitting local governments to invoice their local health authority for police officers that are required, under the *Mental Health Act*, to wait with hospital patients for more than 30 minutes.

On April 13, 2021, the Legislative Assembly appointed a Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act (“Special Committee”) to examine, inquire into, and make recommendations to the Legislative Assembly related to the modernization and sustainability of policing. The Special Committee is mandated to examine the role of police with respect to complex social issues, including mental health and wellness, addictions, and harm reduction, and reforms related to police funding and service delivery, and may recommend changes to the *Mental Health Act*. Presenters to the Special Committee have commented and made recommendations on the role of police in mental health crisis response. These presentations will inform the Special Committee’s final report that is anticipated to be tabled by April 28, 2022.

The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General will work in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions in developing policy and legislative change in response to the Special Committee’s recommendations. Further information on the Special Committee can be found here: <https://www.leg.bc.ca/parliamentary-business/committees/42ndParliament-2ndSession-rpa>

NR9 Funding for Independent Fire Services**Cariboo RD**

Whereas many of our smaller and remote rural communities are served by independent fire services;

And whereas many local governments are receiving legal advice that offering funding or other supports to independent fire services can expose the local government to legal and financial risk:

Therefore, be it resolved that UBCM lobby the provincial government for specific legal and statutory measures designed to remove any and all legal or financial risk from local government for providing financial or other supports to independent fire services.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

The majority of fire suppression and prevention services are provided through local government services, and in that context the establishment of a local fire department is solely determined by the local government with the support of the residents who benefit from this important local government service.

The Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) is committed to continuing the provision of training supports to all firefighters and groups in the province in the effort to enhance community fire safety. Emergency Management BC (EMBC) and the OFC are continuing to work with the UBCM, the Local Government Management Association (LGMA), BC Wildfire Service (BCWS), and the Fire Chiefs' Association of BC (FCABC) on a variety of funding and training initiatives that can assist fire departments and local authorities that have less resources.

Proposals to protect local governments from risk of liability raise complex policy questions that affect many interests. There are, however, measures that local governments can put in place that may help reduce their risk of liability. For instance, where local governments make a financial contribution to the provision of a service by a third party, such as an independent fire service, the local government has the ability to set terms and conditions on its contribution aimed at managing its own liability.

NR41 Alternatives to Agricultural Burning**Chilliwack**

Whereas exposure to particulate matter in smoke can cause chronic and acute impacts to cardiovascular and respiratory systems;

And whereas open burning is a significant source of particulate matter emissions in BC, and is commonly used by the agriculture industry as a convenient and affordable way to dispose of unwanted vegetative debris;

And whereas the BC Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation requires people “to ensure that every reasonable alternative for reducing, reusing or recycling vegetative debris is used in order to minimize the amount of vegetative debris to be open burned”:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM requests that the Province develop and fund a program for the agriculture sector to support and incentivize the implementation of alternatives to the burning of agricultural vegetative debris and/or expand existing agricultural innovation funds to support such alternatives.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy and Ministry of Agriculture and Food

The Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation (OBSCR) sets out rules for open burning of vegetative debris that aim to minimize the impact of pollution from open burning. While the OBSCR covers burning of vegetative debris, certain agricultural activities such as the burning of leaves, foliage, weeds, crops and stubble are not regulated by the OBSCR, nor by other provincial environmental legislation. Neither the OBSCR, nor other environmental legislation require burning. In fact, agricultural producers are free to pursue alternative uses for agricultural debris. For instance, woody debris may be salvaged for firewood, chipped to produce mulch or animal bedding for on farm use or for sale, or used to produce compost following the rules of the Organic Matter Recycling Regulation.

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy is working with several local governments through air quality roundtables on initiatives that involve improving local air quality by providing alternatives to burning for residents.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food is actively working with producers to reduce burning of agricultural vegetative debris and promote alternative management practices. Pruning crops, removing diseased plant materials and clearing land for crop production are all part of normal farming practices. The Environmental Farm Plan Program and associated Beneficial Management Plan (EFP/BMP) program are two key programs that provide education and incentives to improve disposal practices for agricultural wastes and wood residues. The BMP program provides on-farm cost-share incentives for farmers to improve debris management and adopt alternatives to burning, such as on-farm composting, mulching mowers, chippers, and forced air assistance burners.

In addition to the EFP/BMP program, the Ministry also supports the agricultural sector through education and guidance materials. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food is currently developing improved guidance materials that will better inform farmers on open burning rules and regulations and

alternatives that are available in their areas of the province. It is expected that the guidance materials will be available in Fall 2022.

NR42 Protection for Established Snowmobile Recreational Sites or Trails**Sicamous**

Whereas many local governments and communities rely on the \$299 million dollars the snowmobile industry provides to rural communities in British Columbia for economic stability and development;

And whereas, communities and snowmobile clubs care about maintaining existing meaningful Recreation Sites and Trails Partnership Agreements with the Province for respectful stewardship of the lands, and in particular BC Snowmobile Federation member Snowmobile Clubs are the largest partner of established Recreation Sites and Trails in BC;

And whereas, site level objectives under Section 56 of *Forest Range Practices Act* (FRPA) have not been established for snowmobile trails in B.C., resulting in a lack of communication or need to include consideration in Forest Stewardship Plans (FSP);

And whereas, only a BC government authorized designated decision maker can set Individual Recreation Objectives for an established recreation trail (site):

Therefore, be it resolved that UBCM ask the B.C. government to allocate the necessary resources to establish the following site level objectives on all new and existing established snowmobile sites under Section 56 of FRPA:

1. The alpine and coniferous forest features along recreation sites or trails will be retained to preserve the outdoor recreation experience and prevent early season melt on snowmobile trails.
2. Forest planning will include safety considerations for recreational access during the winter months and after harvesting is complete. This will include harvest planning consideration above and below a recreation site or trail to ensure that new exposures and avalanche paths are not created or that any new avalanche paths are mitigated by terrain modifications such as deflection berms.
3. This recreation site or trail is part of the working forest and as such, activities that are likely to impact access or the recreation experience need to be communicated with the Designated Partner on the trail (site), at least six months in advance.

And be it further resolved that UBCM ask the B.C. government to allocate the necessary resources to establish the following site level objective on all new and existing snowmobile sites that are established under Section 56 of FRPA and that are considered to be high value forest recreation sites and trails, by Recreation Sites and Trails B.C. branch or identified as an important recreational area by the FLNR Regional Executive Director:

1. Opportunities for snowmobiling, viewing and exploring must be provided on this designated snowmobile trail (site) during the snowmobile operating season of December 1 to March 31.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

Setting objectives for individual sites and trails in accordance with Section 56 of the *Forest and Range Practices Act* is a statutory decision that must consider the unique circumstances of each site or trail.

While, snowmobile trails offer valuable recreation and access opportunities, many are also designated resource roads. Effective management must balance both uses.

Recreation Sites and Trails branch will continue to work with the B.C. Snowmobile Federation to evaluate opportunities for recreation objectives on snowmobile trails on a case-by-case basis.

As updates to the *Forest and Range Practices Act* resulting from the passing of Bill 23-2021 are implemented, Recreation Sites and Trails will be working with Ministry of Forests staff to identify opportunities to incorporate recreation values into forest landscape planning including management of access opportunities for snowmobiling.

NR43 BC Hydro Universal Net Metering for Municipalities**Fort St. John**

Whereas most local governments in BC have accounts with BC Hydro with several meters and several locations, and they are invoiced for the aggregate consumption of electricity on those meters;

And whereas many local governments have undertaken power generation initiatives through BC Hydro's net metering program which limits reimbursement to only the connected meter and prohibits the application of any excess power generation capacity to the aggregate invoice;

And whereas the BCUC's June 23, 2020 decision on BC Hydro's application to amend Net Metering Service under Rate Schedule 1289 encouraged, but did not require BC Hydro to consider how virtual net metering might be achieved that would allow this transfer to take place:

Therefore be it resolved that the UBCM lobby the provincial government to enforce the BCUC's June 23, 2020 Decision on BC Hydro's application to amend Net Metering Service under Rate Schedule 1289 and direct BC Hydro to develop and implement virtual net metering.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation

As BC Hydro is expected to be in an energy surplus for the foreseeable future, BC Hydro does not need to purchase new renewable electricity, including through excess generation under the Net Metering program, to meet its customers' needs at this time. The BCUC's decision on BC Hydro's net metering program, including the treatment of excess generation, was within its mandate as the independent regulator of public utilities, including BC Hydro. BC Hydro expects to explore virtual net metering in a future net metering or rate design application proceeding once the new Net Metering rate is in place.

The Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon innovation encourages local governments who wish to pursue self-generation to participate in any BC Hydro public consultation processes around updates to net metering in the future, as well as to participate in the BCUC's proceeding on BC Hydro's Integrated Resource Plan.

NR44 Opioid Crisis**Capital RD**

Whereas it is understood that opioid addictions continue to cause an ever growing record number of heart breaking deaths and debilitations across the country;

And whereas while we understand the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia have recognized these impacts, it remains critically important to advocate for a national public health emergency through the municipal voices provided by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM):

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM requests the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia declare the overdose crisis a national public health emergency and develop appropriate comprehensive, holistic Pan-Canadian overdose action plans that include the legislative and funding frameworks for decriminalization, de-stigmatization, free and safe supply, suitable medical treatments and thereby function to holistically address the opioid crisis, mental health issues and their connections to homelessness and overdose deaths in local governments across Canada.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions

The Government of BC is working closely with the Government of Canada on a number of jurisdictional issues related to the federal Controlled Drugs and Substances Act to identify shared priorities and opportunities to collaboratively address the ongoing toxic drug crisis. BC's Provincial Health Officer declared a public health emergency in 2016 due to rising illicit drug toxicity deaths, and the Government of BC is supportive of all action at a federal level to continue to address toxic drug crisis in partnership.

The Province has moved away from urging the federal government to declare the toxic drug crisis a national public health emergency. The Emergencies Act – formerly known as the War Measures Act – and under which a national public health emergency would be declared, is intended to provide a short-term response and to provide authority and capacity to respond which is beyond that which the province has. The legislation is not set up for this type of long-term public health emergency and would offer us no advantages, such as new resources.

Since 2017, the Government of BC has accelerated its response to the toxic drug crisis by investing a total of \$938 million to expand existing services and add new resources across the full spectrum of substance use care.

A Pathway to Hope, released by the Government of BC in 2019, sets the 10-year vision for a new system of mental health and substance use care, with an emphasis on prevention, promotion, early intervention, and integrated services, that builds on existing initiatives and implements new, innovative approaches.

B.C. is the first province in Canada to offer prescribed safe supply. People have been accessing prescribed safe supply since March 2020, when the Province introduced the first phase of the program. From March 2020 to December 2021, more than 12,000 people were dispensed prescribed safer supply through Risk Mitigation Guidance and, of those, more than 7,000 (58%) were prescribed an opioid. The second phase of prescribed safer supply is being implemented in health authorities and federally funded SAFER programs settings.

Government is investing \$22.6 million over the next three years to support health authorities in implementing prescribed safer supply. Funding will support expansion of existing and creation of new programs, increasing staffing capacity through hiring new full-time-equivalent positions, and robust monitoring and evaluation of this policy.

BC is the first jurisdiction in Canada to receive an exemption from the federal government to remove criminal penalties for possession of small amounts of illicit substances for personal use.

Decriminalization will come into effect on January 31, 2023. BC's decriminalization proposal was developed with input from a range of stakeholders, including representatives from UBCM, as well as Indigenous partners, people with lived experience, law enforcement agencies, and health experts.

Additionally, the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions held a townhall with local governments to discuss decriminalization and presented to the UBCM Health and Social Development Committee on the topic. The Ministry has valued the perspectives of local governments in the planning phase and looks forward to further engagement as we implement this important change. This work will include the development of a robust monitoring and evaluation framework. The Government of BC looks forward to continued collaboration with the Government of Canada to advance initiatives such as the decriminalization of drug possession and others that require bilateral collaboration.

NR45 Inclusion of Allied Health Workers to Help Combat the Opioid Crisis**New Westminster,
Victoria**

Whereas the opioid crisis and mental health challenges affect at least 1 in 5 BC residents and has been compounded by the COVID-19;

And whereas evidence shows that access to upstream services such as counselling related specialties and physical/occupational therapy decreases opioid use and/or provides better health intervention outcomes, but these are not accessible to many residents as they are not covered and are much too expensive through fee for services;

And whereas communities are currently struggling to meet the needs of our residents, between funding of community programs and increased mental health calls for first responders, which already comprise between 20-30 percent of local government expenditures and are not often the most appropriate service to support people in crisis:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM request that the Province expand access to and funding for allied health professionals, particularly mental health counselling specialties and physical/occupational therapy related specialties, through expansion of team-based care through not-for-profit delivery including community health centres, available to all BC residents regardless of their immigration status and income, throughout the province;

And be it further resolved that the Province increase support and funding for Peer Navigators as part of the BC Mental Health and Addictions Strategy.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions

Government recognizes the immense tragedy of the toxic illicit drug supply that affects so many people around the province. Working across government, the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions continues to respond with diverse and innovative approaches, recognizing that no one solution will end the crisis.

Budget 2022 provides \$144.5 million over the fiscal plan to provide a full spectrum of substance-use treatment and recovery services, including new and enhanced withdrawal management services, transition and assessment services, treatment and recovery services and aftercare throughout the province. This includes 195 new substance use beds, to help more people get on a path to recovery. This investment enhances and expands the adult treatment and recovery substance use system of care through investments in withdrawal management, transition and assessment, treatment and recovery and aftercare services. It includes investments focused on employing and building capacity among people with lived and living experience (PWLLE), such as adding more peer support workers at St. Paul's Hospital and in Richmond to ensure people are more easily connected to services and experience more coordinated and seamless transitions as well as a new peer-led, trauma-informed education program for people with lived and living experience of addiction in the Vancouver Coastal Health Region. Details of additional investment, including new peer-support initiatives, will continue to be announced across the province, as they come on-line over the next three years.

In the 2021/22 fiscal year, a total of \$1.583M was provided from the Ministry's Community Crisis Innovation Fund to support a network of organizations led by people with lived and living experience of substance use. This Provincial Peer Network strengthens collaboration and information sharing between peer-led organizations through regional and provincial capacity building, and helps ensure that the provincial response to the drug toxicity emergency is effective in saving lives and connecting people to services that meet their identified needs.

These services build on previous work to support system navigation such as the investment in 16 (7 new and 9 expanded) Substance Use Integrated Teams funded through Budget 2019 which proactively connect people who are suffering with substance use to services, and the new investment in Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams announced last year, which provide in-reach services to support transitions between services/settings for individuals with moderate to complex mental health issues.

In addition to urgent measures to keep people alive, ministry staff and partner organizations are actively working on upstream interventions to prevent addiction and support individuals who may face barriers to accessing traditional care. For youth ages 12-24 (and their families), Foundry centres provide access to primary care, mental health and substance use services, peer support, groups, and social services – all under one roof. Foundry Virtual is available province-wide for young people and families unable to access Foundry centres due to physical distancing, location, stigma, and/or preference.

Since 2019, Government has provided almost \$15 million in grants to 49 counselling agencies (through the Community Action Initiative). The grants are designed to increase access to underserved or hard to reach populations who do not typically have access to other counselling opportunities. To date, approximately 150,000 individual, couples and family counselling sessions have been delivered at low- or no-cost.

NR46 Health Records Sharing for Allied Health Professionals**Williams Lake**

Whereas there is lack of reasonable online access to health records such as x-rays and other diagnostics to allied health professionals, which includes, but is not limited to: physiotherapists, occupational therapists, medical imaging, psychologists, recreational therapists, respiratory therapists, social workers, speech language pathologists and audiologists, dietitians, perfusionists, nurse practitioners and chiropractors;

And whereas access to health history is important in providing quality health care for British Columbians:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM lobby the provincial government to urge all the health authorities in the province to grant online access to health records for allied health professionals in BC, pending patient approval to share their private health records.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health's Digital Health Initiative supports the priority mandate to enable longitudinal team-based primary care and improving health outcomes by better sharing of patient health information.

The shift to a digital and virtual environment has changed how health care professionals access and exchange the information they require to safely perform professional duties and provide appropriate care. As COVID-19 has accelerated the adoption and normalized the use of virtual care solutions, health care team members' ability to access information digitally is even more essential.

As part of the COVID-19 response, the Ministry of Health (HLTH) has approved funding to expand access and deploy BC's Provincial eHealth Viewer, CareConnect, to up to 10,000 community-based healthcare professionals. Close to 3,000 community-based providers now have access to CareConnect.

CareConnect provides a secure, view-only access to patient-centric clinical information from all of BC's Health Authorities and HLTH to support health care providers in their delivery of patient care 24/7. CareConnect is widely used within all Health Authorities, with over 86,000 health care professionals enrolled.

To support such access for community-based providers, HLTH has:

1. Established a governance framework to prioritize and approve user access to ensure that legislative obligations are met and the right information is accessed by the right providers. This work is all part of HLTH's commitment to ensuring the protection of personal information and ensuring that Allied Health Professionals have access to the patient records that are relevant to their scope of practice. This process will be continually monitored to ensure both access and protections are appropriate.
2. Made CareConnect accessible over the public internet in any geographic region in a secure manner, and leverages the BC Services Card to confirm identity as part of the security features in place to ensure appropriate user access.

These two actions have created the foundation upon which the request for access by Allied Health Professionals can be reviewed, approved and deployed. Currently, select roles within this group are being evaluated.

Once CareConnect is available to these user groups, health care professionals will benefit from improved efficiencies and value from increased access to a significant amount of clinical information enabling them to share clinical documentation with other care teams. This aligns with HLTH's Primary Care Strategy and further enables team-based care.

Individual users who are part of a group that has been approved (ie: Physicians) can request access by visiting <http://www.vch.ca/for-health-professionals/resources-updates/careconnect/request-access-to-careconnect>

For User groups who wish to inquire about getting access for their stakeholders (ie: Allied Health Associations or Colleges), they can email: Private.Careconnect@phsa.ca

NR47 Long Term Care Homes – COVID-19**Oliver**

Whereas long-term care services are for people who can no longer be cared for in their own homes or in an assisted living residence in a protective and supportive environment.

And whereas the significant coronavirus death rate of long-term care residents is attributed to residing in facilities with shared rooms/spaces, inadequate ventilation systems, limited access to isolation rooms, and limited supports for residents with dementia or complex cognitive and physical needs at the expense of their health safety, privacy and dignity in their end-of-life care:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM request the Government of BC build all new long term care facilities with single room options, which will support and care for residents to ensure that the spread of COVID-19, flu like viruses and other diseases are minimized;

And be it further resolved that current long term care facilities be renovated to accommodate patient care in single rooms.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Health

Ministry of Health standards for the development of subsidized long-term care homes outlines the requirement for a private room and private bathroom for each resident, and the ability to provide 5% of the beds as suitable for a couple accommodation. Long-term care homes entering a redevelopment process are required to meet this standard. Long-term care homes entering a major renovation process are required to maximize the availability of private rooms and private bathrooms as part of the renovation process. Any long-term care homes currently in development will meet this standard. Ministry of Health reviews schematics and architectural drawings for new developments to ensure these and other design standards are met.

As part of a long-term care renewal and expansion initiative, health authorities are developing business plans for their highest priority capital projects to replace facilities that do not meet the single bedroom and single bathroom standards and to increase the long-term care capacity in the province.

NR49 Internet Access in Health Care**qathet RD**

Whereas reliable, accessible high speed internet access has been determined as essential for a basic quality of life in our society;

And whereas internet access can be unreliable or inaccessible for citizens confined to a health care facility which often leaves them disconnected from their loved ones and their community:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM should advocate for the provincial government to ensure that all communities in BC be provided with reasonable, reliable and accessible high speed internet access, including for patients who wish to remain connected with their loved ones and community when confined to health care facilities across the province.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Citizens' Services

Access to reliable high-speed internet and cellular connectivity is more important than ever before. Internet access is a vital part of our daily lives from health, education and public safety to being foundational for economic growth and recovery and reconciliation with First Nations. While most British Columbians live in urban centres where internet coverage is well established, many smaller, less densely populated rural and Indigenous communities, that are major contributors to our economy and food production, do not have access to basic high-speed internet as defined by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).

The BC Government works to expand connectivity for rural and First Nations communities through funding programs such as the [Connecting British Columbia program](#) and the new program, Connecting Communities BC, which will open in the summer of 2022.

On March 8, 2022, the Governments of British Columbia and Canada announced a [partnership to invest up to \\$830 million](#) to support connectivity infrastructure projects. This funding will support connecting the remaining underserved rural and First Nations communities in the province. Connecting all First Nations communities is a commitment in Action 4.36 in the Declaration Act Action Plan.

The goal for this funding is to support the expansion of high-speed internet services to all households by 2027. This will ensure reliable and robust high-speed internet services are available to British Columbians in all areas of the province to support access to online healthcare, as well as other essential services.

NR53 Transfer of a Portion of Speculation and Vacancy Tax Revenue to Local Governments

Burnaby

Whereas the Speculation and Vacancy Tax generated an estimated \$81 million in revenue for the Province during the 2019/2020 fiscal year to be directed towards affordable housing initiatives;

And whereas local governments are taking on a greater role in addressing affordable housing needs in their communities:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM request the provincial government to distribute directly back to each municipality a portion of the revenue collected, up to the amount collected from each local government, under the Speculation and Vacancy Tax to further affordable housing initiatives within those jurisdictions.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Finance

The *Speculation and Vacancy Tax Act* and the *Special Accounts Appropriation and Control Act* require the revenue from the Speculation and Vacancy Tax (SVT) to be spent in the regional district where it is collected. The province took a regional approach with respect to the SVT revenue spending because housing unaffordability does not affect one municipality in isolation. What is occurring in one municipality affects an entire region. Requiring the funds to be spent in the regional district ensures that the money will be spent quickly and efficiently on affordability issues affecting the entire region.

The province understands that municipalities would like to see net new social housing units being constructed in their municipality. The revenues from the SVT can be used for new housing initiatives, but funds may also be used to support existing housing, rental, or shelter programs, as outlined in the legislation. Our government is making the biggest investment in housing affordability in BC history with 30,000 homes already completed or underway throughout the province. Over the next three years, the Province plans to invest \$3.4 billion in housing and homeless support.

Revenues generated by the SVT only account for a small fraction of the Province's \$1.1 billion housing operations budget. For the 2020 fiscal year, the SVT is expected to raise \$81 million, bringing the three-year total revenue to \$231 million. At the same time, the Province has invested approximately \$2.8 billion in housing in the five regions covered by the SVT as part of the 10-year housing plan *Homes for B.C.*

The province has also introduced new legislation, that took effect in April 2019, that requires local governments to collect data, analyze trends and present housing needs reports every five years that describe current and anticipated housing needs. Housing needs reports help ensure that local governments have up-to-date information about current housing gaps to help us work together to proactively address future challenges.

Local governments are encouraged to work with BC Housing to discuss the housing priorities in their communities, which may include options for affordable housing.

NR54 Acquisition of Apartment Buildings for Affordable Housing**Victoria**

Whereas communities face acute challenges around housing affordability and housing availability, undermining the wellbeing of individuals, families and communities;

And whereas purpose-built rental apartment buildings from previous decades are an essential component of the current rental housing supply, meaning that future renewal of these properties poses substantial opportunities and risks to current occupants as well as local communities:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM request the Province of British Columbia to work with interested local communities, the not-for-profit sector and other partners on a program of land banking purpose-built rental apartment buildings, to preserve and renew this essential component of the affordable rental housing supply.

RESPONSE: Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing

The Province recognizes the important role of the rental housing market. The Attorney General and Ministry responsible for Housing is leading the province in efforts to explore partnerships with non-profit and co-op housing providers to acquire and preserve existing rental housing.

As part of *Homes for BC – A 30-Point Plan for Housing Affordability in British Columbia*, the B.C. government announced an historic \$7 billion investment over 10 years to create affordable housing across the province, including 14,350 rental units for low-to-middle income families and individuals.

To help local governments create and protect rental housing, the Province introduced new rental zoning authority in 2018. Rental zoning can be used to require development of purpose-built rental housing, especially close to current and future transit lines and other amenities, and to prevent land speculation for condominium development.

The Province has also worked to remove barriers to the creation of secondary suites, which are a large component of B.C.'s overall rental stock. Previously, secondary suites could only be built in single detached homes and could not exceed a certain size. Effective December 12, 2019, the BC Building Code now allows for the construction of secondary suites for more types of homes, such as duplexes and row housing. Size restrictions for secondary suites have also been removed.

We are dedicated to preserving and increasing the availability of affordable rental housing across B.C.

NR56 Funding for Regional Housing**Nelson**

Whereas effectively addressing housing on a regional scale requires a collaborative effort between regional municipalities and regional districts;

And whereas since the provincial government mandated regional housing assessments must be completed every 5 years it is more important than ever that local governments are supported financially so they can implement these mandates:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM petition the Province to work with UBCM and local governments to develop and implement a consistent and sustainable funding model for municipalities and regional districts for the implementation of findings of regional housing assessments, so as to increase housing availability across BC in both municipalities and regional districts.

RESPONSE: Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing

The Province is committed to supporting municipalities in their efforts to bring affordable housing to their communities and address their long-term housing needs. As part of *Homes for BC – A 30-Point Plan for Housing Affordability in British Columbia*, the Province is making an historic \$7 billion investment in homes people need. The B.C. government is working in partnership with non-profits, municipalities, First Nations, Indigenous housing organizations and the private sector to deliver 114,000 affordable homes that cover the full spectrum of housing needs for British Columbians by 2028.

Regarding funding opportunities, local governments are encouraged to partner with BC Housing to create more innovative and sustainable housing solutions through the Building BC funding streams, including the Community Housing Fund, the Indigenous Housing Fund, and the Supportive and Women's Transition Housing Fund.

The Provincially funded Housing Needs Reports will strengthen the ability of regional and local governments to understand what kinds of housing are most needed in their communities, and help inform local plans, policies, and development decisions. In 2018, the Province committed \$5 million over three years (2019-21) to help local governments collect and analyze housing-related data from their communities.

In 2020, the Province expanded the Housing Needs Report Program eligibility to B.C.'s eight Treaty First Nations and in 2021 invested \$1 million to help 26 communities assess and report on local housing needs. More than 75% of local governments have already successfully applied for a housing needs report grant or developed housing needs reports without provincial funding. These reports are another tool to help the Province work with local governments and other partners to build 114,000 new affordable homes throughout B.C. by 2028.

NR59 Residential Tenancy Act – Landlord Protection**Oliver**

Whereas the *Residential Tenancy Act* is intended to establish and protect the rights of landlords and tenants from unwarranted eviction;

And whereas a landlord may seek early termination of a tenancy agreement for cause and the protections contained within the Act enable the occupant to refuse vacating the premises, which have been enhanced due to COVID-19:

Therefore, be it resolved that UBCM ask the Province of British Columbia to undertake a broad review of landlord protections to increase confidence in entering the rental market to grow the number of rental properties.

RESPONSE: Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing

The *Residential Tenancy Act* is intended to provide a fair balance between a tenant's right to safe and secure affordable housing and a landlord's right to maintain their property and realize a return on investment. The ministry continues to look for ways to incentivize landlords to rent their property and protect them from tenants who do not follow the law. It is important small landlords feel supported and continue to provide their rentals, especially with the current low vacancy rate.

In response to COVID-19, the Province brought in an eviction ban when thousands of people were losing their jobs and things were much more uncertain. The ban on evictions for non-payment of rent began March 30th, 2020 and ended September 1st 2020. However, landlords were able to serve notices of eviction for reasons other than unpaid rent starting again on July 1st, 2020. Early on, very little was known about the virus and how to keep people safe and it was critically important to keep citizens housed during the public health emergency. Today, as businesses across B.C. have implemented safety plans, employment rates are returning to pre-pandemic levels, and the economy continues to recover, the province is not considering reinstating the eviction moratorium.

Recent legislative changes allow an arbitrator to award unpaid rent when a tenant is evicted for non-payment. Previously, landlords would have to file separately for an additional hearing to recover their rent, but now unpaid rent can be awarded in an eviction hearing. In addition to this, as the Rental Housing Task Force identified in their report, many of the issues could be solved through a better understanding of one's rights and responsibilities under the Act.

The Province continues to actively explore the policy implications of the recommendations made by the Rental Housing Task Force to create a better balance of fairness for landlords and tenants in British Columbia.

LR5 Implementing No Barrier Housing**Prince George**

Whereas BC Housing works in partnership with private and non-profit sectors, provincial health authorities and ministries, other levels of government and community groups to implement the BC Housing Action Plan to develop a range of housing options for individuals and families;

And whereas the 2019/20 to 201/22 Action Plan identifies reasons for the loss of housing being illness or medical conditions, addictions or substance use, lack of affordability or job loss and intimate partner conflict or abuse;

And whereas operational rules with low and high-barrier options may prevent the receipt of shelter and support services for some homeless and/or hard-to-house individuals due to prohibitions and restrictions on drug or alcohol use on the premises;

And whereas the current BC Housing Action Plan does not identify no-barrier housing which would provide shelter and support services with as few barriers as possible to allow more people to safely access housing services:

Therefore, be it resolved that UBCM petition the provincial government and BC Housing to ensure that the provision of a range of housing options for homeless individuals including no barrier housing options and services.

RESPONSE: Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing

The Province takes a Housing First approach to homelessness, which means that providing people with access to safe shelter and housing is a priority so they can then better access health, social and income supports to become stably housed. This approach includes providing access to low or minimal barrier shelters and housing, which follow a harm reduction policy. People are not expected to abstain from using substances or engaging in street activities so long as they do so in private and in a manner deemed safe and respectful of other tenants and staff. BC Housing's operating agreements for shelter providers require that all shelters need to meet the minimal shelter standards, including the provision of harm reduction supports and providing shelter services to clients experiencing substance use.

BC Housing is the crown agency under the Ministry of Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Housing responsible for a spectrum of shelter and housing services, which provide emergency, interim and long term accommodation as well as the provision of nutritious food; office and meeting spaces to enable case planning and programming for clients; where possible, space for primary health provision; and provision of accommodation with as few barriers as possible to allow more people access to services. BC Housing also provides design considerations to make shelters more inclusive and accessible for distinct needs groups, such as women-only spaces, specified areas where women and children are accommodated, accessibility for people with physical disabilities and impairments, inclusive signage and spaces for LGBTQIA2S+ and welcoming spaces for Indigenous people.

In 2022/23, the Province, through BC Housing, will provide a total of approximately \$764.9 million to respond to homelessness, including through:

- 2,200 shelter spaces to serve individuals experiencing homelessness;

- 15,000 individuals in supportive housing;
- Rent supplements and supports to 3,800 individuals experiencing homelessness.

Specifically, BC Housing addresses homelessness through a variety of programs and services across the continuum of need, including:

- Year-round homeless shelter spaces (see below for more detail);
- Additional seasonal shelter spaces through the Winter Response Shelters, Temporary Shelters and Extreme Weather Response Shelters;
- Homeless Outreach Program;
- Supportive housing (see below for more detail);
- Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotels; and
- Rent supplements.

Shelter Spaces:

Shelters are temporary but immediate places to stay for anyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness. Emergency shelter includes a bed with linens, hot meals, showers, laundry, and support services. It may range from one night to longer depending on an individual's need.

People who stay at emergency shelters can be diverse, with a range of needs and abilities. Staff require appropriate behaviour, but each shelter's requirements can be different. All shelters reduce barriers to ensure the most vulnerable people are brought inside and connected to support services.

Supportive Housing:

Supportive housing provides a range of on-site, non-clinical supports such as: life skills training, connections to health care, mental health, or substance-use services. Staff are on-site 24/7 to provide support.

Homelessness Strategy:

In 2020, the Minister of Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing was given the mandate to lead the development and implementation of a Provincial Homelessness Strategy. Through Budget 2022, the Province is investing \$633 million into priority actions of the Provincial homelessness strategy. This new province-wide strategy will help government address the root causes that lead to homelessness and provide additional supports for people who are currently experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Early priority actions of the Provincial homelessness strategy include investments in complex care housing, permanent housing with supports for people in temporary spaces, and supported rent supplements.

Complex Care Housing:

Complex care housing is a new approach to addressing the needs of people who have significant mental health and substance use challenges, often with other complex challenges such as developmental disability or brain injury who aren't adequately served in supportive housing. Complex care housing

seeks to provide robust health, housing, social and cultural services that are integrated into the larger health system to ensure seamless care and support over the long term.

Budget 2022 included \$164 million over three years to expand the complex care housing model to at least 20 projects, with plans to support approximately 500 people across BC by the end of 2022/23, through the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions.

Permanent Housing Plan:

Through Budget 2022, the Province has committed \$264 million to establish a permanent housing plan. This plan will ensure that people living in 3,000 temporary shelter spaces established during the pandemic do not return to homelessness.

Supported Rent Supplements:

Budget 2022 also included the introduction of a supported rent supplement program. This program will provide more than 3,000 people over the next three years with integrated wraparound health and social supports as well as up to \$600-a-month rent supplements.