

June 9, 2025

The Honourable Christopher E. Hinkson, K.C.
Commissioner
Commission of Inquiry into Community Events Safety
Email: CES-Inquiry@gov.bc.ca

Dear Commissioner Hinkson,

Re: Input from the Union of B.C. Municipalities

On behalf of the Union of B.C. Municipalities (UBCM), I would like to begin by acknowledging the tragic events that occurred during the City of Vancouver Lapu-Lapu Day Festival on April 26th. This tragedy has shaken communities across our province, and underscores the importance of prioritizing public safety. UBCM commends the Province of B.C. for establishing the Commission of Inquiry into Community Events Safety in British Columbia, and offers several issues for consideration as you develop your final report and recommendations.

UBCM supports a balanced approach to community events safety that ensures local governments have the financial means and flexibility to host events that meet local needs and circumstances. At a time when local governments are struggling to address a multitude of new and enhanced responsibilities, further budgetary impacts could cause some events to be cancelled.

Flexibility is also important given that local governments across B.C. have different resource and capacity levels. In smaller communities, there may be as few as one staff member in charge of overseeing community events as part of a wide-ranging portfolio of responsibilities. Any impact on policing resources would also come with a significant financial impact, as local governments pay the largest share of policing costs in B.C. As such, it is suggested that the Province refrain from a one-size-fits-all approach. UBCM appreciates that the Inquiry's Terms of Reference includes direction to consider the "capacity and resources of differently-sized communities."

It should not be overlooked that local governments understand local conditions. The needs of each community vary across the province. One of the key principles that we hope to see respected throughout this process is to allow for

local events to reflect local needs. This includes the latitude to determine and implement a high standard of safety. The approach preferred by UBCM is one of guidance as opposed to onerous regulations and strict requirements. Guidance and best practices can help inform, rather than direct, local governments as they consider decisions regarding licensing and permitting, funding and costs, and allocation of limited resources. It may also be appropriate for the Province to provide funding and resources for smaller communities, to ensure all local governments have a similar level of capacity to deliver community events.

UBCM has recently met with representatives from the Municipal Insurance Association of B.C. (MIABC) to discuss community events safety. It is our understanding that MIABC is developing resources for local governments, including a Risk Management Guide for Local Government Community Events. This work is supported by UBCM and reflects our preference for guidance materials and risk management tools to support local governments.

Lastly, I would like to raise the need for greater mental health support as part of our community events safety framework. UBCM's membership has endorsed resolutions seeking for greater provincial investment and support in addressing issues related to mental health, addictions and complex social issues. Greater provincial support towards these issues would provide an added layer of risk mitigation and help enhance community safety.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to meet and discuss these issues on June 3rd. I hope that UBCM's feedback will prove valuable, as you evaluate community events safety across our province.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mandewo', with a stylized flourish above the 'M'.

Councillor Trish Mandewo
UBCM President

cc: *Megan Chorlton, Chief Executive Officer, Municipal Insurance Association of B.C.*

Candace Witkowskyj, Executive Director, Local Government Management Association of B.C.