

To: The Honourable Kelly Greene
Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

CC: The Honourable Brittny Anderson
Minister of State for Local Governments and Rural Communities
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

**Re: Request for Clarity on Local Government Roles and Responsibilities
for Disaster Assistance and Property Buyouts**

June 23, 2025

Dear Minister Greene,

On behalf of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM), I am writing to request clarification on the Province's position on the roles and responsibilities of local government regarding financial assistance and property buyouts for homes deemed unsafe due to disaster risk.

Recent media reporting has drawn attention to the plight of six homeowners in the Fraser Valley Regional District whose properties were assessed as unsafe following the 2021 atmospheric river. Although these homes were not physically damaged, subsequent geotechnical assessments found a significant and ongoing risk of landslides. As a result, these homeowners were advised to vacate, and later informed that the Province would not be providing any financial assistance. Instead, according to Ministry staff cited in these reports, responsibility for any potential property buyout was attributed to local governments.

These statements raise important questions for local governments regarding the consistency, transparency, and legislative basis of the Province's approach to disaster risk mitigation. As climate change accelerates and hazard mapping and risk assessments become more detailed under the Province's new legislative framework, we can expect a growing number of properties to be identified as unsafe due to disaster risk – even in the absence of structural damage.

In such circumstances, local governments must understand what role, if any, they are expected to play. Without clear policy guidance or financial support from the Province, most local governments – especially smaller municipalities and regional districts – do not have the resources or service structures necessary to undertake

complex property acquisition or managed retreat initiatives. It is unclear how regional districts, in particular, could carry out property acquisitions without a defined service, as required by provincial legislation.

In light of these developments, UBCM requests clarity on the following:

1. What is the Province's current policy regarding financial assistance or buyouts for homes deemed unsafe due to disaster-related hazards?

UBCM seeks clarity on the Province's position regarding the roles or responsibilities of local governments – and regional districts, in particular – for financial assistance or buyouts, and the legislative, regulatory and policy basis for this position.

2. Does the Province intend to publicly release an updated policy framework outlining the roles and responsibilities of provincial and local governments?

We understand that legal guidance was received by the Province in 2022, and that new federal Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA) guidelines came into effect on April 1, 2025. UBCM would like to know whether, and how, Provincial disaster financial assistance policies have been updated considering these developments.

UBCM strongly maintains that buyout programs are not the responsibility of local governments. The suggestion that local governments should unilaterally assume this role is inconsistent with past Provincial practice and has no grounding in the financial realities or service structures of our members. Furthermore, current legislation limits the ability of regional districts to authorize expenditures unless they are directed through an established service approved by the Province.

As the federal and provincial governments develop new programs to support climate adaptation and disaster resilience, extreme risk to life – before homes are damaged or destroyed – should be explicitly addressed. The potential for a provincially supported buyout program should be part of that conversation.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your response. UBCM remains committed to working collaboratively with your Ministry to ensure that British Columbians can rely on consistent, fair, and transparent disaster recovery and risk reduction policies.

Sincerely,



Councillor Trish Mandewo
UBCM President