



NEWS RELEASE

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UBCM calls on Province to pause *Heritage Conservation Act* changes for proper consultation

Victoria, BC – The Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) is calling on the Province to pause progress on changes to the *Heritage Conservation Act* until meaningful consultation can be conducted with local governments.

“We want to be very clear, UBCM recognizes and supports the importance of archeological conservation, particularly as it relates to Indigenous values,” said UBCM President Trish Mandewo. “But while the Province took seriously its obligation to work with Indigenous groups in developing the legislation, engagement with local governments was largely disregarded.”

The Province’s engagement on the legislation with local governments consisted of a single, three-hour webinar in the middle of August. At the webinar, the Province only shared high-level information about the proposed changes to the *Heritage Conservation Act*.

The *Heritage Conservation Act* governs archeological assessment and permitting at all cultural heritage sites in B.C., 90% of which are Indigenous. Local governments in British Columbia have identified multiple concerns with the existing act and how it impacts the cost and length of the permitting process for residential home and infrastructure construction.

“To describe the Province’s effort to engage with local governments as woefully insufficient would be an understatement,” added Mandewo. “To take two years to develop the changes, and confine engagement with local governments to a single information sharing meeting in August is unfortunately the continuation of a concerning pattern when it comes to this government’s approach to working with local governments.”

Local governments have been raising concerns for years about development costs and delays driven by the current *Heritage Conservation Act*, especially as it relates to residential home construction and renovations.

“We support in principle the move to update the *Heritage Conservation Act* to address the many current challenges, but all British Columbians have an interest in ensuring this legislation gets done right,” added Mandewo. “British Columbians deserve to understand the province’s

intentions and to have an opportunity to provide input – doing the work behind closed doors in secrecy is not setting these important legislative changes up for success.”

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