

News Release

Local government and business organizations refuse provincial non-disclosure agreement on Heritage Conservation Act

Concerns remain with proposed changes for the Heritage Conservation Act

VICTORIA, BC May 7, 2026 – Organizations representing local government and business in British Columbia are refusing to sign non-disclosure agreements related to the Province’s proposed changes to the *Heritage Conservation Act (HCA)*.

The Union of B.C. Municipalities (UBCM), Urban Development Institute (UDI), Association for Mineral Exploration (AME), Mining Association of BC (MABC), and the Independent Contractors Business Association (ICBA) share concerns that the Province continues to move towards introducing HCA legislation without properly considering feedback provided during its latest consultation period.

Only days after the consultation period closed on April 23, provincial officials offered to provide stakeholders access to a ‘three-column document’ describing intended legislative changes provided they sign a non-disclosure agreement. Typically, three-column documents are part of a formal request for legislation by a ministry.

Local government and business groups have consistently expressed concern that they were excluded from a two-year co-development process between provincial and First Nation representatives, noting significant technical gaps in the Province’s proposals. The Province has declined requests by UBCM and others to create a working group that includes all parties including First Nations.

The HCA establishes the framework for conserving cultural heritage in B.C., including protections for sites that indicate the potential of human habitation prior to 1846. The rules and procedures for archaeological sites are of particular concern as these often lead to extensive additional costs for home, infrastructure and industrial construction.

The most recent submissions on the Heritage Conservation Act from UBCM, UDI, AME, MABC and ICBA are available [here](#).

Quotes:

Councillor Cori Ramsay, UBCM president

“UBCM has asked the Province to bring First Nations, local governments and industry together to address the numerous shortcomings that have been identified in its most recent policy paper. Signing a non-disclosure agreement when the Province has already determined its course would only serve to silence UBCM and limit our ability to communicate with our members. This legislation has implications for all British

Columbians, and poses a significant risk to the provincial economy. It needs to be updated based on meaningful input from local governments and businesses, and done so in a way that is completely transparent.”

Todd Stone, CEO, Association for Mineral Exploration

"AME has serious concerns about the lack of transparency in the development and reform of this legislation. In Fall, 2025 we conducted town halls across the province with our membership and we heard serious concerns. It is unclear how these plans to reform the Heritage Conservation Act would speed up the process or reduce costs for our members. Additionally, the recent technical paper talks about issues we have raised, but ultimately leaves a backdoor open on many of those issues. AME has rejected the NDA requirement and will continue to call for a fair, transparent process."

Mike Drummond, Interim President & CEO, Urban Development Institute

"The government is contemplating significant changes to the Act with virtually no consultation with the people who will be most affected. That is not how consequential legislation gets made. We agree with the Premier that the underlying DRIPA issues are real and need to be resolved, which is exactly why rushing changes to the HCA before those issues are settled is the wrong approach. Uncertainty is the enemy of investment, and right now BC is manufacturing it. Builders, lenders, and investors need to know the rules before they commit capital. Before any amendments proceed, the government should commit to piloting these changes with willing partners. That is how you build confidence in consequential legislation, not by rushing it through."

Michael Goehring, President and CEO, Mining Association of BC

“Proposed changes to the Heritage Conservation Act are vitally important to our members, especially since we have a shared objective with the provincial and federal governments to expedite major mine development. Government should give due and proper consideration to submissions made by all stakeholders, including the mining industry. We refuse to be bound by a non-disclosure agreement and participate in a process that lacks transparency and prohibits us from communicating with our members and other interested parties.”

Chris Gardner, CEO and President, Independent Contractors of BC

“Within just a few days of the consultation closing, the Ministry was already shopping a document that accompanies a formal request for legislation to Cabinet. Nobody believes dozens of detailed submissions from local governments and business groups were read, synthesized, and reflected in a final policy in that timeframe — the decision was clearly made before consultation closed. This was not a serious or good faith engagement effort. Builders, property owners, and local governments deserve a heritage law that delivers a clear process, not a failed permitting system that’s been rebranded but not reformed.”

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