

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
AGENDA**

Thursday, February 10, 2022

<u>PAGE NO.</u>		<u>ACTION</u>
	<u>First Nations Acknowledgement</u>	
	<u>AGENDA- February 10, 2022</u>	Approve
	<u>Supplementary Agenda</u>	Receive
	<u>MINUTES</u>	
2-4	Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes - January 13, 2022	Approve
	<u>REPORTS</u>	
5-6	Jason Blackwell, Regional Fire Chief - Bulkley Nechako Emergency and Public Alerts Breakdown	Receive
7	Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services - North Central Local Government Association Resolutions Submission Guidelines and Deadlines	Receive
8-9	Nellie Davis, Manager of Regional Economic Development – Regional Business Liaison Update	Receive
10-22	Nellie Davis, Manager of Regional Economic Development – Draft Regional Economic Development Strategy	Discussion/ Receive
23-24	Taddea Kunkel, First Nations Liaison – Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action	Discussion/ Receive
25-49	Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning - Watershed Security Strategy and Fund Discussion Paper	Receive
	<u>CORRESPONDENCE</u>	
50-52	Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions - Union of B.C. Municipalities Convention Follow Up	Receive
	<u>SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA</u>	
	<u>NEW BUSINESS</u>	
	<u>ADJOURNMENT</u>	

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING****Thursday, January 13, 2022**

PRESENT:

Chair	Gerry Thiessen
Directors	Gladys Atrill – via Zoom Shane Brienen – via Zoom Mark Fisher– via Zoom Dolores Funk Tom Greenaway Clint Lambert Linda McGuire – via Zoom Annette Morgan– via Zoom Bob Motion Chris Newell– arrived at 12:55 p.m., left at 1:06 p.m. Mark Parker Jerry Petersen Michael Riis-Christianson Sarrah Storey – via Zoom
Staff	Curtis Helgesen, Chief Administrative Officer Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services Nellie Davis, Manager of Regional Economic Development John Illes, Chief Financial Officer Deborah Jones-Middleton, Director of Protective Services Taddea Kunkel, First Nations Liaison – via Zoom Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant/Recording Secretary
Others	Ken Nielsen, General Manager, Chinook Community Forest
Media	Eddie Huband, LD News

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Thiessen called the meeting to order at 12:47 p.m.

AGENDAMoved by Director Petersen
Seconded by Director Lambert**C.W.2022-1-1**

“That the Agenda of the Committee of the Whole meeting of January 13, 2022 be approved.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**MINUTES****Committee of the Whole
Minutes – November 4, 2021**Moved by Director Parker
Seconded by Director Petersen**C.W.2022-1-2**

“That the Committee of the Whole meeting minutes of November 4, 2021 be approved.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

REPORTS

Market and Non-Market Changes in Assessments

Moved by Director Funk
 Seconded by Director Motion

C.W.2022-1-3

“That the Committee receive the Chief Financial Officer’s Market and Non-Market Changes in Assessments memorandum.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Discussion took place regarding the following:

- Providing public communication regarding Property assessments and property taxes
- Property tax rates
- Average market value increase in the RDBN
- Average market value increase for residential property on agricultural land
- Industrial/commercial properties remaining stable with some values decreasing.

Emergency Program Activity Summary and 2021 Wildfire After-Action Report

Moved by Director Motion
 Seconded by Director Atrill

C.W.2022-1-4

“That the Committee receive the Emergency Program Coordinators’ Emergency Program Activity Summary and 2021 Wildfire After-Action Report staff report.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The following was discussed:

- The Board expressed appreciation for the excellent report and thanked staff for their work
- Positive feedback from First Nations communities regarding collaboration with First Nations communities during the 2021 Wildfire season
- Cooperation between BC Wildfire Service and local contractors to action the 2021 Wildfires in the region.

Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action

Moved by Director Lambert
 Seconded by Director Funk

C.W.2022-1-5

“That the Committee receive the First Nations Liaison’s Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action memorandum.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Taddea Kunkel, First Nations Liaison provided an overview of the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action memorandum focusing on Recommendations 22 and 23.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Director Greenaway
Seconded by Director Funk

C.W.2022-1-6

“That the meeting be adjourned at 1:11 p.m.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Gerry Thiessen, Chair

Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY NECHAKO STAFF REPORT

TO: Chair Thiessen and the Committee of the Whole
FROM: Jason Blackwell, Regional Fire Chief
DATE: February 10, 2022
SUBJECT: Bulkley Nechako Emergency and Public Alerts Breakdown

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board receive the Bulkley Nechako Emergency and Public Alerts Breakdown report.

Attached is a further breakdown of the number of users for the Bulkley Nechako Emergency and Public Alerts as requested by the Board.

The attached tables show the increase in users for the year of 2021 in each municipality, the total for the rural areas, and the current number of users for each Electoral Area.

There were no baseline numbers for the Electoral Areas, therefore the table only depicts the current number of users. Moving forward we will now be able to track any changes for each Electoral Area.

Staff have been continuing to encourage the public to sign up by posting information on our social media sites, links on our website, word of mouth, and public markets. Staff will also be adding messaging to any future Evacuation Alerts and Evacuation Orders.

Written by,

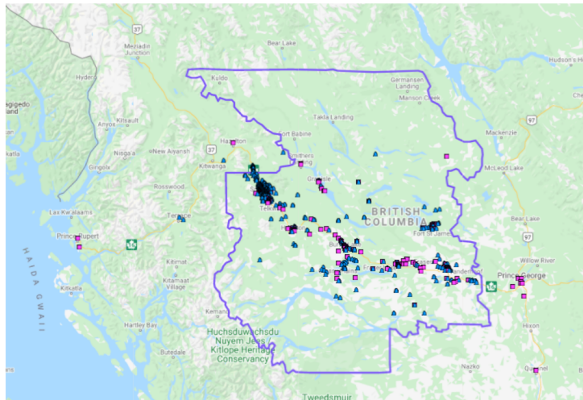
Handwritten signature of Jason Blackwell in black ink.

Jason Blackwell
Regional Fire Chief

Handwritten signature of Deborah Jones-Middleton in black ink.

Deborah Jones-Middleton
Director of Protective Services

RDBN Voyent Alert Registration Overview:

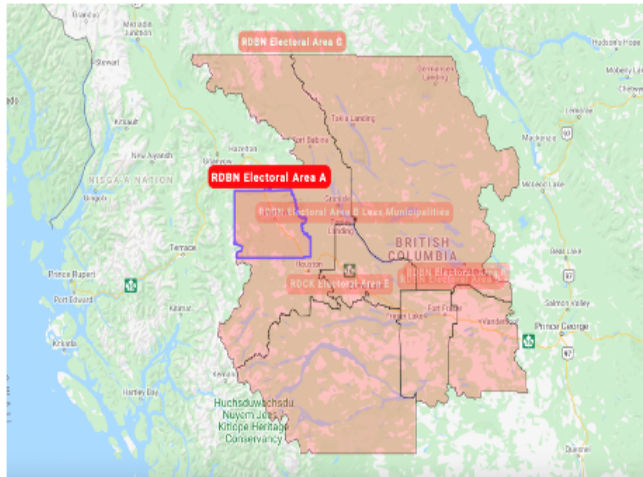


RDBN Registered Users:			
Pop.	As of Jan 17, '21	As of Jan 24, '22	
Burns Lake:	1,779	125 (7.0%)	377 (21.2%)
Fort St. James:	1,598	51 (3.2%)	96 (6.0%)
Granisle:	303	103 (34.0%)	152 (50.2%)
Smithers:	5,351	2,982 (55.7%)	3,195 (59.7%)
Telkwa:	1,327	66 (5.0%)	143 (10.8%)
Houston:	2,993	68 (2.3%)	162 (5.4%)
Fraser Lake:	988	58 (5.9%)	125 (12.7%)
Vanderhoof:	4,439	95 (2.1%)	236 (5.3%)
Rural:	19,118	716 (3.7%)	792 (4.1%)
TOTAL:	37,896	4,264 (11.3%)	5,278 (13.9%)

Notes:

- i) Smithers follows import from prior used system based on purchased white pages data set.
- ii) Rural = Users outside of municipal boundaries.
- iii) System wide clean up was done Jan. 5, 2022 removing approx. 450 “bad emails, cancelled phone numbers (from Telus) etc.)

RDBN Voyent Alert Registration Overview By Electoral Area:



RDBN Registered Users:			
	Total Users	Municipal	Rural
Electoral Area A	3,522	3,338	184
Electoral Area B	467	377	90
Electoral Area C	222	96	126
Electoral Area D	227	125	102
Electoral Area E	96	0	96
Electoral Area F	391	236	155
Electoral Area G	353	314	39
TOTAL:	5,278	4,486	792



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Memo

TO: Chair Thiessen and Committee of the Whole

FROM: Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services

DATE: February 10, 2022

SUBJECT: North Central Local Government Association Resolutions
Submission Guidelines and Deadlines

RECOMMENDATION

(all/directors/majority)

Receive.

BACKGROUND

The deadline for submitting resolutions for consideration at this year's NCLGA Annual General Meeting and Convention is March 4, 2022. Resolutions received after the deadline will not be printed in NCLGA's Annual Report and Resolutions Book and may only be admitted for debate by special motion during the convention.

Staff are requesting that resolutions topics be submitted as soon as possible for consideration at the February 24th Board Meeting.



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Committee of the Whole Memorandum

To: Chair Thiessen and Committee
From: Nellie Davis, Manager of Regional Economic Development
Date: February 10, 2022
Regarding: Regional Business Liaison Update

Recommendation:

Discussion/Receipt.

Background:

As per discussion at the January 20th Committee of the Whole Budget meeting, staff are providing a report on the activities of the Regional Business Liaison (RBL), Terry Wiebe.

The RBL is a term position funded through the Regional Business Liaison Program administered by Northern Development Initiative Trust. The RDBN RBL position was designed to complement the work of the RBL position hosted by Community Futures Nadina to ensure all areas of the region have access to RBL services. The RDBN RBL works remotely from Fort St. James and serves the eastern end of the region (Fraser Lake, Fort Fraser, Vanderhoof and Fort St. James).

In addition to providing information updates as requested to business organizations, the RBL position focuses on providing individualized supports for business who, from the onset of the pandemic, have been in a challenging time. Terry has been able to provide guidance and direction to local business and has been able to meet in-person and via phone with many local business owners to develop an individualized plan to help them navigate the realities of COVID-19 and associated restrictions. Prior work experience in each of these communities with WorkBC and Community Futures was highly beneficial, and he has been able to leverage these connections through the RBL position.

In the beginning Terry saw a focus on securing capital to stay open. The [Canada Emergency Business Account](#) (CEBA) provided interest free loans up to \$40,000 to keep business owners going during this challenging time.

As we continued to see an ebb and flow of restrictions, the focus shifted to hiring back existing employees and finding new ones. The [Canada Recovery Hiring Program](#) (wage subsidies) has been the most popular program in our region, and it will likely see a continued need as the economy recovers from COVID-19.

On Dec 22, 2021, the BC Government initiated the [COVID-19 Closure Relief Grant](#) which is available to any business or not for profit that had to close due to COVID-19 restrictions. For example, gyms are eligible for this grant because they were unable to stay open during the last wave of restrictions.

Reporting measurables for the RBL program include Business, Sector, and Support Type. The highest Sector by volume has been retail businesses, followed by restaurants. Over 75 businesses and social services have been supported to access Provincial and Federal supports through the RBL position.

There are five months remaining in the RDBN's Regional Business Liaison term position, therefore, Terry will be available to continue supporting businesses in the region until June of 2022. Directors are encouraged to direct businesses to contact the RBL for support to navigate existing programs. Contact information is available on the RDBN website here [Contact Regional Business Liaison](#).



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Committee of the Whole Memorandum

To: Chair Thiessen and Committee
From: Nellie Davis, Manager of Regional Economic Development
Date: February 10, 2022
Regarding: Draft Regional Economic Development Strategy

Recommendation:

Receipt.

Background:

Attached is the Draft 2022-2024 Regional Economic Development Strategy. Staff are seeking comments and/or revisions prior to providing the Strategy to the Board for approval.

This Strategy guides the development of the Regional Economic Development Workplan and Budget. It is created to reflect regional priorities, as identified by RDBN Board Strategic Priorities, Official Community Plans, and consultation with regional Economic Development stakeholders, including economic development staff from member municipalities, First Nations, Community Futures Development Corporations, and local Managers for the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development's Regional Economic Operations Branch.

This plan was developed by staff using the Province of BC's Strategic Planning Toolkit for Local Economic Development.



Regional Economic Development Plan 2022-2024

"A World of Opportunities within our Region"

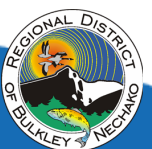
INTRODUCTION

The Regional Economic Development Department Annual Workplan and Budget are guided by this overarching document. This Plan is created in consultation with Economic Development stakeholders across the region, including Municipal, First Nations and Provincial Economic Development Staff, Community Futures, and others. It incorporates RDBN Board Priorities as well as Economic Development priorities from the region's Official Community Plans.

The RDBN undertakes Economic Development Planning to guide the work of the Regional Economic Development Department. In addition to the fluid and responsive work identified in this plan, the Department also provides RDBN Grant Services in the region, including facilitating the Grant in Aid and Federal Gas Tax programs, as well as Grant Writing Support for RDBN initiatives and Non-Profit Organizations in the region.

The Regional Economic Development Action Plan covers a period of three years, which provides an opportunity to approach economic development with a medium and long-term lens while recognizing the changing nature of regional opportunities and trends to remain flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances.

Projects and initiatives designed to meet the goals identified in this plan will be proposed annually as part of the Department Workplan and Budgeting Process.



WHERE ARE WE NOW? - Quick Stats

- We are home to eight Municipalities and seven Electoral Areas.
- The RDBN is located within the traditional territory of nearly 30 First Nations, of which 14 Nations have communities on the land. These communities represent Dakelh, Nedut'en and Wet'suwet'en people.
- The RDBN population is 37,896, with 2.5% growth from 2006-2011 and 3.3% decline from 2011-2016.
- RDBN Age demographics trend the same as Northern BC, with 25-54 years comprising over 35% of the population.
- Median household income is consistent with Northern BC stats, with 2016 reporting a median of around \$75,000.

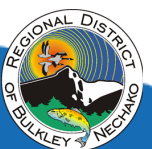
Board Direction

The RDBN Board is committed to providing opportunities to increase the vibrancy, diversity, and sustainability of the regional economy. There is a strong understanding of the connectedness between rural and urban areas, and a high level of commitment to seeing development happen in a way that reflects and preserves the natural, cultural, and built amenities, and ensures balance and compatibility between future economic activity and the rural character of the Plan areas.¹

Current Activities

- Support advancing Reconciliation through the First Nations Liaison position
- Support regional Economic Development capacity building through the Regional Communications Team
- Support for Agriculture Sector through the Agriculture Coordinator Position
- Support for Business and Entrepreneurship through Regional Business Forum
- Support collaborative Tourism Marketing initiatives through the Tourism Working Group and other partner cost-shared initiatives

¹ Source: RDBN Electoral Area Official Community Plan (Economic Development)



Past Activities

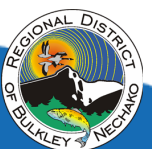
- Website and Marketing focused on Mining Activity
- Tourism web-based itinerary generator
- Region-wide Business Directory
- Support for Beyond the Market Agriculture Initiative
- Investment Readiness Action Plan Development
- BC Provincial Nominee Program - Entrepreneur Immigration

WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO?

Vision

Regional Economic Development Stakeholders were interviewed, and a brainstorming session was hosted to help create a vision for the future of the RDBN.

"The RDBN will be home to a growing, diverse population. Critical infrastructure needs are being addressed and support the development of healthy communities. The region is working towards adapting to climate change impacts, which includes a strong agriculture sector and food security, as well as new, green technology, and job opportunities. Strong commitment to Reconciliation is demonstrable through relationships and partnerships in the region, and small and medium businesses are being supported to thrive."



Strategic Areas and Goals

Strategic Areas were gleaned from consultation and RDBN Board Priorities.

1) Connectivity and Infrastructure

Reliable, high-speed internet, cellular service, and other critical infrastructure were identified as barriers to economic and social development. This also includes opportunities to research and secure funding to address housing gaps, increase access to recreation infrastructure, and support green energy projects or climate change adaption/mitigation infrastructure projects.

2) Collaboration

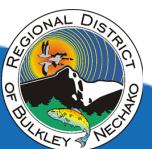
Many participants indicated a strong commitment to regional collaboration, including collaboration between local and First Nations governments and joint education. Proposed projects included studies related to the regional economy, movement towards a circular economy, as well as improved information sharing processes and repositories.

3) Tourism, Attraction, and Retention

Topics identified as priorities include ongoing work of collaborative marketing within the region, as well as planning and development of Tourism related infrastructure and signage. Retaining, supporting, and attracting a diverse, youthful population, including entrepreneurs was identified as a priority. This includes ensuring programs and process are in place to support a diverse workforce, including access to childcare and transportation.

4) Agriculture, Labour Force, and Small Business Development

Support for Agriculture, including climate change adaptation, was considered a high priority. This includes exploring opportunities for local skills training and job or business opportunities related to green technology. Small business development and entrepreneur support were also highly ranked.



HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET THERE?

Connectivity and Infrastructure

Goal: Improve or Develop Critical Infrastructure to Support Economic and Social Development.

Actions

- Pursue P3 Partnerships to facilitate broadband infrastructure development
- Complete RDBN Connectivity Strategy
- Support collaboration with partners for tourism infrastructure
- Support Funding applications for RDBN housing, green energy, and recreation initiatives

Details

- Connectivity work will be guided by the RDBN Connectivity Committee and implemented by staff.
- RDBN will facilitate communication and support planning and funding strategies for new or improved tourism infrastructure.
- Grant writing staff will support infrastructure-related applications.

Collaboration

Goal: To increase and streamline communication and partnerships within and outside the region.

Actions

- Maintain and grow Regional Economic Development Communications Group
- Identify and facilitate opportunities for partnership projects between several stakeholders
- Expand educational opportunities available to grow the economic development capacity in the region
- Facilitate projects for research and studies of regional benefit to support economic and social development
- Prioritize relationship building with and among First Nations and local governments in the region through meaningful dialogue opportunities

Details

- Regional Communications Meetings will be expanded to include additional, diverse educational opportunities. This group is a highly valuable collaboration to ensure communication and information sharing among economic development professionals in the region.
- Research and studies will be pursued at the recommendation of the Regional Communications Team to ensure regionally beneficial projects are completed and shared widely.
- Formal and informal opportunities will be prioritized to develop trust and the development of relationships.



Tourism, Attraction, and Retention

Goal: To develop and market the incredible built and natural amenities in the region.

Actions

- Develop and implement Attraction and Retention marketing initiative for the region
- Facilitate the Tourism Working Group to assist the RDBN in understanding the needs and desires of member municipalities and First Nations regarding Tourism work. This group helps direct RDBN tourism initiatives
- Promotion of the established #visitbulkleynechako brand and website through media channels
- Continue participation in regional partnerships to leverage marketing opportunities
- Continue to support RDBN and local community group infrastructure development initiatives through grant writing support
- Support Northern BC Tourism to develop regional strategies and marketing content

Details

- A well-researched understanding of target markets and strong collaboration with Northern BC Tourism ensures that the RDBN participates appropriately in marketing efforts in the region.
- Collaboration with partners along Highway 16 allows the RDBN to leverage minimal contributions for maximum impact in Tourism marketing.
- Marketing initiatives can be easily tweaked to also function as resident or targeted skilled labor attraction and retention, as community attributes that attract visitors also attract residents.
- Participation in the NBCTA Signage Strategy, Northwestern BC Destination Development, and Northwest BC Coop advisory committees ensures that the RDNB contributes to and is represented in regional strategy development and implementation.



Agriculture, Labor Force, and Small Business Development

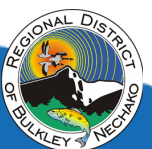
Goal: To support stability and growth in the Agriculture Sector and for Small Business

Actions

- Support the implementation of the RDBN Food and Agriculture Plan
- Facilitate small business support through the Regional Business Forum and Start-up Business Contest
- Counter the boom-and-bust cycle by supporting and cultivating economically diverse business opportunities
- Ensure businesses and Agriculture producers are well supported to plan for emergency events

Details

- Support for the Agriculture sector is facilitated through the Regional Agriculture Coordinators and the Connecting Consumers and Producers program.
- Support diversification within and outside of traditional economic industries will help support vibrant, sustainable communities.
- Emergency support planning will be approached in partnership with RDBN Protective Services and other business support agencies, such as Community Futures.



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The annual Regional Economic Development Work Plan will detail activities associated with each Strategic Area. The annual Work Plan and Budget development occur in the Fall for the upcoming calendar year.

ARE WE GETTING THERE?

Monitoring

Grant Writing Support for Non-Profit organizations is reported annually to NDIT.

Progress on the RDBN Food and Agriculture Plan is reported quarterly to the Board.

Project reporting occurs annually to the Board or as required.

Project reporting for particular stakeholder groups is reported as required, including the Regional Communications Group and the Tourism Working Group.

Performance measurement

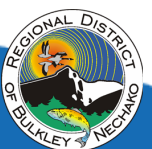
Performance of social media and websites is measured via appropriate tracking for those mediums (impressions, site traffic, Click-through-rate).

RDBN Grant Program performance is tracked by dollars allocated (Grant in Aid, Federal Gas Tax, CCP Community Event Grants). The COVID-19 Relief Grant Program will also continue into 2022.

Public engagement is measured via the appropriate metrics for the initiative (e.g.: newsletter distribution, survey responses, feedback forms, social media engagement, public meeting attendance).

APPENDICES

- Sample OCP - Economic Development Section
- Implementation Strategy (Current Year)
- Link to [RDBN and Community Profiles and Industrial Land Use Inventories](#)
- Link to [Visit Bulkley-Nechako Tourism Website](#)
- Link to [Connecting Consumers and Producers Online Directory](#)



Sample OCP - Economic Development Section

4.8. Economic Development ¹

It is recognized that in order to achieve the goals contained in the Plan the region must provide opportunities for the creation of a vibrant, diverse, and sustainable economy. To do so requires maintenance and enhancement of the region's quality of life, as well as its natural, cultural, and built amenities. Future economic development is closely tied to the maintenance of a well-planned rural area.

Industrial activity in the Plan area is supported in select areas and circumstances, and local commercial and tourist commercial uses are also supported where appropriate. The Plan also recognizes the importance of a healthy home based business sector to the regional economy. The Plan supports the maintenance of existing, and the increased establishment of new, home based businesses that are compatible with the rural residential and agricultural character of the area, and do not negatively impact the quality of life of area residents.

4.8.1. Objectives

(1) To concentrate commercial and industrial development in existing centres of activity, and to direct most of that activity within the Town of Smithers and the Village of Telkwa, with the understanding that certain commercial and industrial activities are necessary in the rural area and must be accommodated in accordance with the policy contained in this Plan.

(2) To increase the attractiveness of the Plan area to new residents, entrepreneurs, and business by protecting and enhancing the aspects of the social, cultural, natural, and built environment that contribute to the quality of life of residents.

(3) To support home based business activity that fits within the rural character of the area and does not negatively impact resident quality of life.

4.8.2. Policies

(1) Home based business activity that is compatible with the rural residential character of the Plan area may be supported. The Regional District especially encourages consulting, technology and information based home based business to locate in the Plan area.

(2) The Regional District encourages service providers to improve cell phone service and high speed internet service in the areas where this service is limited or non-existent.

(3) The opportunity to establish home based business with a personal service, retail, or industrial character shall be limited in order to protect rural residential areas from impacts associated with noise and traffic, and to help protect the integrity of existing commercial and industrial areas.

¹ Smithers Telkwa Rural Official Community Plan 43 RDBN Bylaw No. 1704, 2014 Section 4: General Application Objectives and Policies

Regional Economic Development Plan - Implementation Strategy

Strategic Area	Goals	Year One (2022) Implementation
Connectivity and Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pursue P3 partnerships for connectivity infrastructure - Complete RDBN Connectivity Strategy - Support collaboration with partners for tourism infrastructure - Support Funding applications for RDBN infrastructure initiatives - Support Parks and Trails Planning staff to secure funding for new RDBN recreation assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete AAP for Regional Broadband Service - Complete first iteration of RDBN Connectivity Strategy - Facilitate meetings in early 2022 for identified partnerships (eg: Trails in Area G, Granisle and Lake Babine Nation) to prepare for Grant opportunities
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain and grow Regional Economic Development Communications Group - Identify and facilitate opportunities for partnership projects between several stakeholders - Expand educational opportunities available to grow the economic development capacity in the region - Facilitate projects for research and studies of regional benefit to support economic and social development - Prioritize relationship building with and among First Nations and local governments in the region through meaningful dialogue opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research and secure funding for Regional Economic Leakage Study - Research education opportunities for RCM - Data warehouse update and training (expand to Ag data) - Update information on Economic Development website (opportunities@rdbn.bc.ca) - Update Community Profiles with new Census Data - Increase participation and collaborative work with Chambers in the region. - include purposeful Reconciliation conversations and education opportunities in planned events.
Tourism Attraction and Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitate the Tourism Working Group to assist the RDBN in understanding the needs and desires of member municipalities and First Nations regarding Tourism work. This group helps direct RDBN tourism initiatives. - Promote through the region and the established #visitbulkleynechako brand and website through social media and print media - Continue participation in regional partnerships to leverage marketing opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create Attraction and Retention Campaign to target major urban centres - NBCTA Signage Strategy Advisory Committee Participation - Complete region-wide Geotagged Asset Map and market to locals and visitors - Social Media Plan update - Ongoing participation in advisory groups for Northwest BC Co-op Marketing, Ride North, Route 16, GO North RV

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to support RDBN and local community group infrastructure development initiatives through grant writing support - Support Northern BC Tourism to develop regional strategies and marketing content 	
<p style="text-align: center;">Agriculture, Labour Force and Small Business Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support the implementation of the RDBN Food and Agriculture Plan - Support the work of the Bulkley-Nechako Opportunities Table - Facilitate small business support through the Regional Business Forum and Start-up Business Contest - Support and cultivate economically diverse business opportunities - Implement the Business Façade Improvement Program in partnership with NDIIT in Electoral Areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - facilitate community conversations about slaughter licenses and meat cutting capacity - Podcast and YouTube Series Production/ Ag Newsletter - Ongoing marketing and promotion of Connecting Consumers and Producers Directory and Events - ongoing advocacy for resolutions to the veterinarian shortages - Plan and run Regional Business Forum with learning opportunities - Plan and run Start-Up Business Contest -support ongoing work of developing components of a Food Hub network



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chair Thiessen and Committee of the Whole

FROM: Taddea Kunkel, First Nations Liaison

DATE: February 10, 2022

SUBJECT: Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action

RECOMMENDATION: (all/directors/majority)

To receive/discuss.

BACKGROUND

As part of the RDBN's efforts for creating space to discuss the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions' 94 Calls to Action and how to support local First Nations in their advocacy for reconciliation efforts in the region, staff has prepared this memo to discuss the Calls to Action that focus on the legacy of Residential Schools and justice.

The five Calls to Action brought forward in this report build off the last regarding the overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples in custody and the socio-economic and systemic issues that exacerbate it. Calls 31 to 35 seek to address and amend legislation to provide realistic alternatives to imprisonment for Indigenous offenders. According to CBC News' Beyond 94 there has been some progress made on Calls 31, 32, 34, and 35.

In the 2017 federal budget, the government committed \$120.7 million over five years to address the overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples in the criminal justice and corrections system through three different program streams: (1) Indigenous Justice program, (2) "to help previously incarcerated Indigenous Peoples heal, rehabilitate, and find good jobs," and (3) to help fund the Indigenous Community Corrections Initiative¹. This approach looks to find community-based and culturally relevant solutions that are alternatives to incarceration, provide reintegration supports, and seek to stop repeat offenses. Despite the funding commitment, measuring the effectiveness and reach of these programs and initiatives remains unclear.

Other initiatives include the creation of a healing lodge in Manitoba² and 2021 federally introduced Bill C-22, which proposed legislation that would repeal

¹ <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform-single/beyond-94?&cta=31>

² <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform-single/beyond-94?&cta=35> ; <https://www.csc-ssc.gc.ca/002/003/002003-2000-en.shtml>

mandatory minimum penalties that disproportionately harm Indigenous and Black offenders, and those struggling with addiction³. The proposed Bill C-22 would have allowed for alternative treatment options for Indigenous offenders with FASD⁴. This Bill did not pass before the fall election and has yet to be reintroduced. As these Calls require changes in legislation and increased funding for community-based support, their implementation and outcomes will not be felt overnight.

CALLS TO ACTION FOR DISCUSSION

Legacy of Residential Schools and Justice

31. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to provide sufficient and stable funding to implement and evaluate community sanctions that will provide realistic alternatives to imprisonment for Aboriginal offenders and respond to the underlying causes of offending.

32. We call upon the federal government to amend the Criminal Code to allow trial judges, upon giving reasons, to depart from mandatory minimum sentences and restrictions on the use of conditional sentences.

33. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to recognize as a high priority the need to address and prevent Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), and to develop, in collaboration with Aboriginal people, FASD preventive programs that can be delivered in a culturally appropriate manner.

34. We call upon the governments of Canada, the provinces, and territories to undertake reforms to the criminal justice system to better address the needs of offenders with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), including:

- i. Providing increased community resources and powers for courts to ensure that FASD is properly diagnosed, and that appropriate community supports are in place for those with FASD.
- ii. Enacting statutory exemptions from mandatory minimum sentences of imprisonment for offenders affected by FASD.
- iii. Providing community, correctional, and parole resources to maximize the ability of people with FASD to live in the community.
- iv. Adopting appropriate evaluation mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of such programs and ensure community safety.

35. We call upon the federal government to eliminate barriers to the creation of additional Aboriginal healing lodges within the federal correctional system.

³ <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform-single/beyond-94?&cta=32>

⁴ <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform-single/beyond-94?&cta=34>

**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO****STAFF REPORT**

TO: Chair Thiessen and Committee of the Whole
FROM: Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning
DATE: February 10, 2022
SUBJECT: Watershed Security Strategy and Fund Discussion Paper

RECOMMENDATION

Receipt

VOTINGAll / Directors / Majority

DISCUSSION

The Province has released the attached “Watershed Security Strategy and Fund Discussion Paper.” This discussion paper appears to be a step in the process for the Province to determine how watershed governance shall be structured in BC.

The governance tools included in the *Water Sustainability Act* are outlined on page 14 of the discussion paper. These tools allow the Province to establish objectives for a watershed, stream, or aquifer that must be enforced through a provincially approved “Water Sustainability Plan” that is developed and implemented by a “local authority”. A “local authority” includes local governments. Therefore, the manner in which the Province implements watershed governance may have notable impacts on the RDBN and other local governments.

The potential implications of the *Water Sustainability Act*, and the potential for the delegation or downloading of governance responsibilities to local governments, is discussed in the attached 2013 staff report to the RDBN Board.

Attachments:

1. Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy – Watershed Security Strategy and Fund Discussion Paper
2. October 21, 2013 Report – Proposed New Water Sustainability Act
3. WSA Leg Prop Overview

https://www.rdbn.bc.ca/application/files/3216/4390/7884/WSA_Leg_Prop_Overview.pdf

4. WSA Leg Prop Final

https://www.rdbn.bc.ca/application/files/5616/4390/7882/WSA_Leg_Prop_final.pdf

5. WSA Tech Briefing Final

https://www.rdbn.bc.ca/application/files/5116/4390/7882/WSA_Tech_Briefing_final.pdf

Watershed Security Strategy and Fund

Discussion Paper



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List of abbreviations and acronyms

Declaration Act	<i>Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act</i>
MLUP	Modernized Land Use Planning
UN Declaration	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
WSA	<i>Water Sustainability Act</i>
WQO	Water Quality Objective
WSP	Water Sustainability Plan



Message from Minister George Heyman

Our water is a precious and limited resource. During the last decade, we have witnessed the increasingly dramatic impact that a changing climate is having on British Columbia's water due to extreme heat, floods, drought and wildfires. That is why we urgently need to prepare for future climate conditions and work together to strengthen our water security.

We depend on water for drinking, washing, cooking, growing our food, and recreation. Many small businesses and industries rely on water to support economic growth. It's also essential for aquatic life and sustaining our world class fisheries. Importantly, water has cultural and spiritual significance for Indigenous peoples, which is why we will work together on a shared future for water management.

As the climate crisis continues, watersheds will play an increasingly central role in our lives by providing protection from storms and floods. Healthy watersheds are critical for achieving watershed security and resiliency and are the foundation of healthy communities.

To strengthen the security of our watersheds, we all need to work together. Increasing the role of Indigenous peoples, local governments and communities in watershed governance can help us mitigate the risks to our watersheds.

We are working together in partnership with Indigenous peoples to develop the Watershed Security Strategy and Fund. We are also engaging with the public and consulting with stakeholders. In addition, we are making sure our efforts align with other priorities like fish protection, land-use planning and protection of drinking water.

Management and stewardship of watersheds is a collaborative effort among government ministries, and my ministry is aligned with the important work being done across government to keep our watersheds secure and healthy. The ministries of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, and Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development also have a strong role in managing water resources, and Parliamentary Secretary Fin Donnelly and Minister of State Nathan Cullen will support development of the strategy.

We want to make sure we are listening to people and planning ahead as we develop the Watershed Security Strategy and Fund. This discussion paper is meant to facilitate dialogue and input that will build on the important actions and projects already underway throughout B.C. I am inviting you to join in the conversation and provide input on the ideas presented in the discussion paper. Together, we can build a legacy of healthy and resilient rivers, lakes, streams and aquifers for all living things.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "G. Heyman". The signature is fluid and cursive.

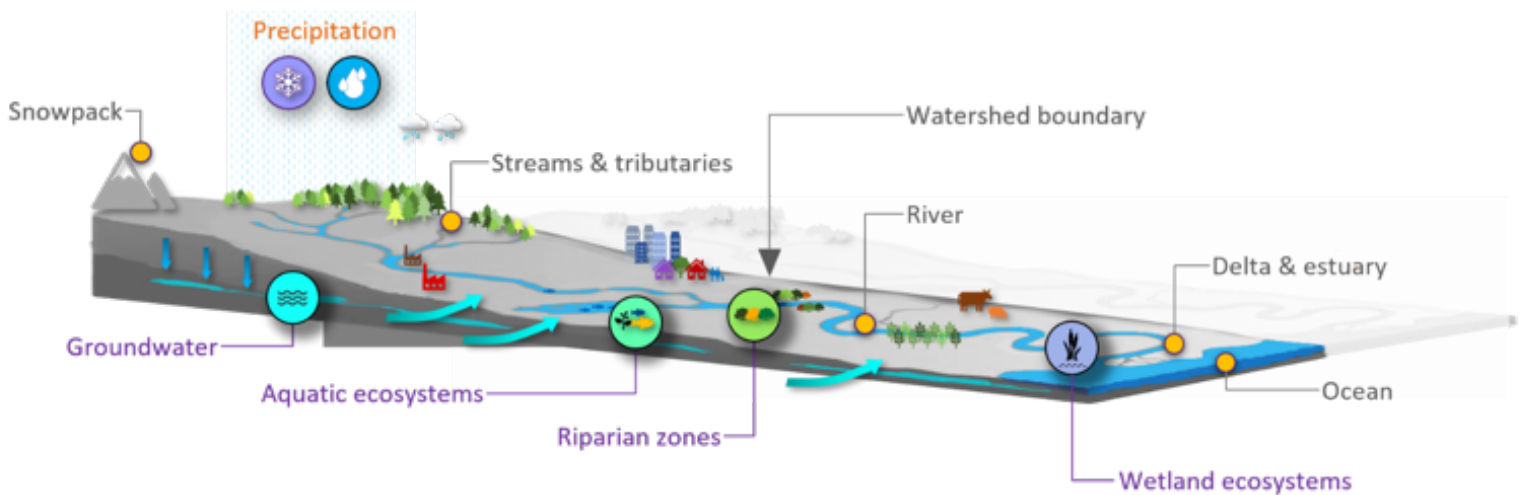
George Heyman

Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

Introduction

Watersheds are areas of land where rain, snow and other types of precipitation run off into a common river, lake, stream, or aquifer. Watersheds are essential for life: they are home to a host of aquatic species, provide water for drinking, for growing our food, have immense cultural and spiritual value for local communities, and afford us opportunities to swim, fish, paddle, and play.

Figure 1: What is a watershed?



During the summer of 2021, B.C. experienced record-breaking temperatures, massive wildfire events, and prolonged droughts throughout the province. Subsequently, in the fall of 2021, extreme rainfall and flooding had a profound impact on our communities—leading to loss of life, damage to property, disruption of critical supply chains, and economic hardship.

The 2019 provincial [Preliminary Strategic Climate Risk Assessment](#) identified seasonal and long-term water shortages as among the greatest risks to B.C. Research shows that climate change amplifies not only extreme events like heat waves and wildfires, but also floods. This is threatening the health of watersheds, and by extension the wellbeing of all living things. Increasing the role of Indigenous peoples, local governments and communities in watershed governance can help us mitigate risks and contribute to continued use, protection, and enjoyment of watersheds across B.C.

Watersheds are nested within the traditional territories of over 200 First Nations and the jurisdiction of 162 municipalities and 27 regional districts. Watershed governance involves all levels of government (local, provincial, federal and First Nations), community water users and stakeholders working together to make- and take accountability for decisions affecting their local watershed.

The relationship between the Province and Indigenous peoples, particularly First Nations, is distinct from the Province's relationship with local governments and stakeholders and creates different legal obligations. The Province is committed to developing and implementing a Watershed Security Strategy and Fund with Indigenous peoples, and in collaboration with local and federal governments.

Gathering, sharing, and incorporating Indigenous, community and scientific knowledge in a meaningful way is important for informing management decisions. Understanding the uses and plans for the land base and having the resources to support effective watershed governance are also critical to watershed health. This discussion paper lays out some ideas about how a Provincial Watershed Security Strategy can support these approaches.

What do we mean by watershed security?

Watershed security implies the availability of good quality water for healthy ecosystems and communities. Watershed security will look different from watershed to watershed, and so will best be defined locally. Some elements of watershed security may include:

- ▶ Safe drinking water for all,
- ▶ Healthy and resilient aquatic, riparian, wetland, and watershed ecosystems,
- ▶ Sufficient water to support food security, recreation, jobs, and local economies,
- ▶ Sufficient water for First Nations, and
- ▶ Reduced risks from water related hazards such as flooding and drought.

QUESTIONS:

- ▶ Do you agree with this definition of watershed security?
- ▶ If not, how would you describe watershed security?

Water Management in B.C.

While a range of federal, provincial, and local government legislation support water management, the *Water Sustainability Act (WSA)* is the primary law governing freshwater in B.C. Other examples of laws that influence water management and governance include the *Environmental Management Act*, the *Drinking Water Protection Act*, the *Forest and Range Practices Act* and the *B.C. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act).

The WSA significantly reformed water management when it came into effect in 2016. It introduced groundwater licensing and new tools, including Water Sustainability Plans (WSP) and WSA Objectives, to support watershed planning, regional water management and watershed governance. Some of the WSA's tools have yet to be tried out and are described in further detail later in the paper.

Through the WSA, people can apply for a licence to divert and use water for a variety of purposes. Water licences state the rights and responsibilities of water users through terms and conditions (e.g., the purpose of the water use, the amount of water that can be used and the date the licence was issued and takes effect). The WSA also provides tools for managing water during shortages, including temporarily restricting water use to protect essential household needs and flows for the environment.

Amendments may be proposed to the WSA as part of the eventual Watershed Security Strategy.

The Province’s Relationship with Indigenous Peoples

The Declaration Act establishes the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration) as the Province’s framework for reconciliation. Honouring the spirit, intent, and obligations of the Declaration Act and UN Declaration will be central to the Watershed Security Strategy.

The Province is actively working with First Nations and other Indigenous peoples on numerous priorities, including trying out new watershed governance systems, science and monitoring, and improving engagement processes. Incorporation of Indigenous laws, knowledge systems, values, and responsibilities into the governance of freshwater across Canada aligns with B.C.’s commitments under the Declaration Act and to broad principles of reconciliation.

There is a separate process for progressing legislative changes associated with the alignment of existing legislation, such as the WSA, with the Declaration Act.

Draft Principles that Guide the Province of B.C.’s Relationship with Indigenous Peoples

Principle 10

The Province recognizes that a distinctions-based approach is needed to ensure that the unique rights, interests, and circumstances of Indigenous peoples in B.C. are acknowledged, affirmed, and implemented. The Province respects the distinctions-based rights and diversity of Indigenous peoples—First Nations, Métis and Inuit—in B.C. It also respects the unique needs, interests, and perspectives of intersectional populations, including Indigenous Elders, women, youth, children, 2SLGBTQQA+ people, peoples with disabilities and Indigenous peoples living in urban settings.

Your Participation

We are in the early stages of a phased process that will help the Province consider potential actions to improve watershed security in B.C. The process will unfold as described below.

At a glance:

Winter 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Indigenous peoples will be engaged through multiple pathways (e.g., government-to-government tables, direct engagement). ▶ New processes will be established to support collaborative development and implementation of a Watershed Security Strategy with Indigenous peoples. ▶ Local governments, federal government staff, and stakeholders (e.g., thought leaders, stewardship groups, sector organizations) will be engaged in discussions. ▶ Public input will be gained through feedback on this discussion paper.
Fall 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Strategy options that consider engagement feedback will be developed. ▶ A draft strategy will be released for public and Indigenous engagement.
Spring/Summer 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Launch the Watershed Security Strategy.

A Watershed Security Strategy for B.C.

The Province is committed to developing and implementing a Watershed Security Strategy and Fund with Indigenous peoples, and in collaboration with local and federal governments.

We will also hear from the public, environmental non-governmental organizations, opinion leaders and industrial water users, all of whom have varied and unique contributions to make on the path to watershed security. This paper looks for your views on how this can be developed, and acknowledges that:

- ▶ The relationship between the Province and Indigenous peoples, particularly First Nations, is distinct from the Province's relationship with local governments and stakeholders and creates different legal obligations.
- ▶ People who live in and do business in a watershed are most directly affected when issues with water arise, such as water scarcity or drought, flooding, pollution, degraded aquatic and riparian ecosystems, and or other problems.
- ▶ Healthy watersheds are critical for achieving watershed security and resiliency and are the foundation of a stable economy.
- ▶ Many communities are already doing important work to protect and restore their local watersheds and all people in a watershed have an important role in managing water.

The Watershed Security Strategy will identify a role for all British Columbians in taking care of our watersheds within a broad provincial framework.

How to use this paper

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy invites you to contribute your knowledge and ideas on the development of a Watershed Security Strategy.

This paper is designed to promote discussion. We want to hear your thoughts on:

- ▶ The engagement approach and how you would like to be involved in the future,
- ▶ Questions posed in the proposed outcomes and opportunities section,
- ▶ Issues or concerns you think we should be aware,
- ▶ Ideas or solutions you or your organization wishes to share,
- ▶ Anything you wish to share on the topic of how watershed security can be achieved in B.C.

You are invited to participate in the online discussions and to submit your ideas through www.gov.bc.ca/water until March 18, 2022 at 4:00 p.m., or email livingwatersmart@gov.bc.ca.

Alignment with other government initiatives

The Watershed Security Strategy will focus on freshwater resources, including both groundwater and surface water. Several ongoing initiatives will inform development of the Watershed Security Strategy, including:

- ▶ Development of related strategies, such as a Wild Salmon Strategy and Coastal Marine Strategy as well as the [Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy](#).
- ▶ Work to implement the recommendations of the [Auditor General's report on improving drinking water management and source water protection](#).
- ▶ Ongoing efforts to [modernize Land Use Planning and consider cumulative effects](#).
- ▶ Ongoing projects focussed on governance and protection of watersheds, including in the Nicola Valley, the Upper Bulkley and Morice River watersheds, and the [Hullcar Valley](#).

Work is ongoing across government to address biodiversity, conservation, invasive species, and clean energy priorities. Government staff will collaborate to ensure work is coordinated, linked, and aligned.

Proposed outcomes and opportunities

The following list of proposed outcomes and opportunities has been informed by what we have heard to date from Indigenous peoples, internal experts, opinion leaders, industrial water users, and members of the public. The outcomes may inform the objectives of the Watershed Security Strategy and the opportunities may inform future actions. This list is provided as a starting point for discussions.

Outcome One: Support and enable watershed governance.

Governance refers to the processes through which people come together, make decisions, and take accountability for action. Watershed governance is governance at the watershed scale. Currently, watershed governance in B.C. varies—who is involved, what their roles are and what they are accountable for is not always clear. With a renewed focus on area-based planning and tools for area-based water management, all levels of government, Indigenous peoples, local stakeholders, and the public are more often playing a greater, and more meaningful, role in watershed governance.

For example, local governments (i.e., municipal, and regional governments) have an important role in managing watersheds and achieving watershed security over the long-term. The Watershed Security Strategy may provide them with new opportunities to take a more holistic view of the watershed to understand how different land and water uses may impact local water sources. Supporting governance at a watershed scale could result in changes to how decisions are made, providing a space for local communities and all levels of government to have their voices heard.

As we develop the Watershed Security Strategy, we intend to:

1. Explore provincial options for watershed governance,
2. Understand how we can best support variations in watershed governance approaches, and
3. Work with Indigenous peoples to ensure that watershed governance initiatives are designed to advance reconciliation by protecting Indigenous rights and interests.

The Province has a unique constitutional relationship with First Nations. Treaties and government-to-government agreements may provide a basis for some watershed governance arrangements.

OPPORTUNITIES

The Watershed Security Strategy may...

- ▶ Propose a provincial framework for watershed governance that could:
 - Clarify and coordinate the roles and responsibilities of different actors within a watershed (e.g., all levels of government, water users, thought leaders, environmental non-governmental organizations),
 - Prioritize transparent and accountable decision-making,
 - Acknowledge all uses, interests and values associated with water in the watershed,
 - Provide options for the structure, composition, and procedures of watershed governance initiatives,
 - Support coordination and collaboration across all levels of government (federal, provincial, local and First Nations) to achieve shared water management goals, and
 - Strengthen First Nations' capacity to govern and advance shared decision making.

- ▶ Explore opportunities related to:
 - Capacity building within local communities to deliver watershed initiatives (e.g., facilitating formal and peer-to-peer learning opportunities, building connections between local water leaders, providing opportunities to get involved in planning initiatives).
 - Enabling Indigenous-led water initiatives, collaborating through Treaty or government-to-government processes, and capacity building for Indigenous peoples with respect to water and watersheds.
 - Connecting Treaty and government-to-government processes to other watershed governance initiatives to facilitate collaboration, identify shared values and priorities and promote good relations.
 - Co-managing of watersheds with First Nations.

QUESTIONS

- ▶ What could the Province provide to better enable watershed governance initiatives?
- ▶ How can the Province facilitate and support government-to-government arrangements that help improve watershed health and security and advance reconciliation?
- ▶ How can watershed governance protect provincial, regional, Indigenous, and local values?

Outcome Two: Enhance our understanding of watersheds and the risks they face.

Our knowledge about managing our shared watersheds is ever expanding thanks to the work of community groups, NGOs, academic institutions, Indigenous peoples, local governments, industrial water users, and many others across the province. Yet, there is always a need for more data and better methods for understanding trends or watershed health. This will help us make informed decisions to improve the health of surface water and groundwater in B.C.

Coordinating monitoring and scientific activities among all efforts within a watershed would improve our ability to characterize the attributes of watersheds in B.C. that really matter, and to identify risks to water values. Having a transparent and shared understanding of our watersheds will allow us to identify knowledge gaps, prioritize the right water monitoring programs in the right places, and support good watershed governance through evidence-based decisions. Improving our understanding of watershed health will enable us to assess whether actions work and inform adaptive management actions.

OPPORTUNITIES

The Watershed Security Strategy may...

- ▶ Evaluate ways to build a common approach to characterizing watersheds in B.C. that are place-based and practical for protecting water values and improving watershed security.
- ▶ Evaluate opportunities to review and coordinate monitoring programs to maximize the value of investments in managing water resources and to support watershed characterization efforts.
- ▶ Assess options for identifying risks to watershed health and use monitoring to inform adaptive management approaches and activities designed to avoid or mitigate risks.
- ▶ Ensure watershed governance arrangements have access to the necessary data, software tools and professional expertise needed to characterize the status and risks to water in watersheds.

QUESTIONS

- ▶ What does your organization, government or community need to be successful to access, collect, and share water data?
- ▶ Do you use watershed characterizations to help understand the status, drivers, and stressors in your watershed? If so, what do you use watershed characterizations to understand (e.g., land use pressures, climate and climate change, status of fish and aquatic health, etc.)?
- ▶ What is preventing you from characterizing the status and risks to water in your local watershed and what can be done to fix this?

Outcome Three: Progress reconciliation with Indigenous peoples using new and improved mechanisms for collaboration on provincial water priorities.

Indigenous peoples are seeking to improve engagement and collaboration on provincial water priorities, including policy, regulations, and strategies. Many First Nations are facing multiple engagement requests from the Province, which limits their capacity to meaningfully collaborate on provincial initiatives. Article 19 of the UN Declaration requires governments to engage Indigenous peoples in a way that promotes free, prior, and informed consent when developing policy that may affect them. The Declaration Act also sets out a framework for reconciliation that requires the Province to align new provincial policy with the UN Declaration and, in time, bring existing provincial policy into alignment with the UN Declaration. Implementation of the Watershed Security Strategy may require additional policy and legislation. Developing the Watershed Security Strategy with Indigenous peoples will help ensure that future engagement and collaboration are consistent with the UN Declaration.

OPPORTUNITIES

The Watershed Security Strategy may...

- ▶ Evaluate solutions to reduce engagement fatigue through co-ordination of Indigenous engagement on provincial initiatives related to water.
- ▶ Identify innovative approaches to effectively engage First Nations, Métis, Inuit, urban Indigenous peoples, Indigenous youth, and Indigenous elders for developing provincial-scale policy, legislation, and strategies.
- ▶ Evaluate opportunities for provincial-level Indigenous-led water initiatives and advance self determination.
- ▶ Evaluate ways to educate and support those involved in watershed governance to progress reconciliation and the implementation of the UN Declaration and Declaration Act.
- ▶ Assess opportunities for the Province and Indigenous peoples to develop unique watershed-based approaches to implement and co-manage the actions contained within the Watershed Security Strategy.

QUESTIONS FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

- ▶ How can engagement fatigue be addressed for provincial water policy development?
- ▶ How would you or your organization like to be engaged in provincial scale water policy and legislation development?
- ▶ What is needed to help ensure Indigenous-led water initiatives are successful?

QUESTIONS FOR ALL AUDIENCES

- ▶ What would be helpful for your organization to better understand the Province's obligations to Indigenous peoples for water policy development (e.g., written materials, webinars, videos)?

Outcome Four: Achieve healthy water for everyone.

Drinking water refers to water that is safe for human consumption, cultural uses, and domestic purposes. Access to a sufficient quantity of good quality water is central to the wellbeing of communities. In B.C., drinking water comes from streams, rivers, lakes, and aquifers. Protecting current and future sources of drinking water is very important because it can be costly and difficult to treat poor quality water. Risks to drinking water are increasing due to climate change, industrial development and population growth, and the risks are intensified for small water systems. Coordinating and prioritizing the protection of source water in decision-making through effective watershed governance will benefit our health, and ensure water is safe for drinking, ceremonies, food gathering and bathing.

OPPORTUNITIES

The Watershed Security Strategy may...

- ▶ Assess how the protection of drinking water sources could be prioritized in decision-making and planning processes that may impact water quality and quantity.
- ▶ Assess opportunities to support regional groups to protect drinking water sources (e.g., through collecting data, or piloting projects, providing guidance on policy tools such as Drinking Water Protection Plans or Water Sustainability Plans).
- ▶ Evaluate how improved management of natural assets, such as wetlands, aquifers, and aquatic ecosystems, could contribute to the protection of drinking water sources.
- ▶ Assess ways to improve mapping of water sources (including groundwater) and identifying risks and hazards to support source protection planning.

QUESTIONS

- ▶ Which principles do you think should underlie source water protection?
- ▶ How can communities, all levels of government (local, provincial, federal and First Nation), as well as industrial water users work together better to protect drinking water for human health and well being, for now and in the future?

Outcome Five: Integrate water more efficiently and effectively into Land Use Planning.

Modernized land use planning (MLUP) defines the kinds of activities that can occur on provincial public land and waters. MLUP is distinct from planning undertaken by local governments and does not define the uses of federal lands, private lands, or provincially designated Agricultural Land Reserve lands. Considering the use of these lands should be addressed through watershed governance arrangements. Unsustainable land use practices can have serious impacts on the health of watersheds. Urban development, forestry, mining, and other industries that remove vegetation within watersheds can contribute to flooding, pollution, and harm aquatic ecosystems and drinking water sources. Integrating water planning, programs, and initiatives into MLUP will help ensure water is considered in decision-making and watershed values are protected.

OPPORTUNITIES

The Watershed Security Strategy may...

- ▶ Assess options for identifying common values and objectives early so processes are strategically aligned where water planning and MLUP initiatives overlap.

- ▶ Evaluate ways to identify aquatic ecosystems and drinking water sources early so that they are considered at all collaborative planning tables.
- ▶ Assess opportunities to share and collaboratively manage land and water decisions with First Nations and local governments.
- ▶ Provide guidance on how to address water-related challenges using WSA tools within or outside of MLUP, including: WSA Objectives, WSPs, and other (WSA) area-based regulations.

QUESTIONS

- ▶ What do you value most about your watershed (e.g., water for drinking, water for aquatic species, water for recreation, water for business, wild food harvesting, etc.)? Are any of these values threatened by development in your watershed? If so, how could the Watershed Security Strategy help people in your watershed protect those values?
- ▶ What is the best way to communicate information about WSA tools with you (e.g., written materials, webinars, videos, etc.)?
- ▶ How do you think that water should be considered in land use planning?

Water Sustainability Act Tools

- ▶ **WSA Objectives**—WSA Objectives are enabled under [Section 43](#) of the WSA. They are an area-based planning tool that can promote positive outcomes for water and communities across a range of land and water planning and decision processes. They can be established to sustain water quality and quantity for specified human uses of water and for aquatic ecosystems.
- ▶ **Water Sustainability Plans**—WSPs are enabled under [Sections 64-85](#) of the WSA. They are initiated by a ministerial order and can provide for extensive change in how a watershed is managed. A planning area can include both public and private land.
- ▶ **Area-based regulations**—Area-based regulations provide government with the ability to customize solutions for watersheds in response to site, region, or watershed-level issues. There are several area-based tools under the WSA, such as WSA Objectives and WSPs. Other tools include requiring new users of groundwater to obtain a drilling authorization before constructing a well where groundwater supplies are under pressure.

Outcome Six: Reset the water supply and demand relationship.

Many parts of B.C. are dry in the summer, and this is only expected to continue and worsen due to climate change. Government has policy tools in place to protect water for essential household use, aquatic ecosystems, and fish populations during both short- and long-term periods of water scarcity. However, everyone has a role in enhancing supply and managing demand within watersheds. Finding alternative sources of water (e.g., rainwater harvesting) and reducing the amount of water we use (e.g., drought tolerant landscaping) will mitigate the impacts of water scarcity. Climate change, reconciliation, and changing social and economic priorities mean British Columbians also need to start looking at ways to reallocate water in some watersheds. Resetting the water supply and demand relationship will not only contribute to a more stable economy, but also a more resilient future for all living things.

OPPORTUNITIES

The Watershed Security Strategy may...

- ▶ Evaluate the use of potential new water sources such as greywater and wastewater reuse, and storage and recovery of stormwater runoff for purposes other than drinking.
- ▶ Assess how water reallocation within the existing legal framework could be used to optimize environmental, economic, and public benefits.
- ▶ Increase the participation of Indigenous peoples, local governments, agriculture, industrial water users and residents in planning to manage water scarcity and inform the provincial response to temporary periods of water scarcity.
- ▶ Evaluate the ability of WSA Objectives, WSPs and other regulatory tools to reduce water scarcity.

Case Story: The Cowichan Watershed

In the Cowichan watershed, water supply has long been a source of concern. Lower snowpacks and hotter, drier summers have reduced the quantity of water flowing into Cowichan Lake, at the same time as demand for water downstream of the lake has increased. In many years there is no longer enough water to support the collective needs of fish, residents, industrial water users and other users. Climate change will likely lead to further reductions in snowpack, in spring and early summer lake inflows, and in summer rainfall. The Cowichan Watershed Board, a formal regional partnership of government, industrial water users, First Nations and community interests, worked together to explore options to ensure water supply can meet current and future needs and guide the implementation of a comprehensive [Water Management Plan](#) (WMP) for the Cowichan Basin.

To help guide implementation of the WMP the Board collaboratively developed seven interlinked targets that focus on water quality, estuarine health, salmon stability, wise water use, watershed connection, water supply/flows, and riparian habitat protection. The targets are aspirational initiatives that tie into the community's socio-cultural values and desires. Working towards this target means the continued provision of jobs and recreation opportunities. It also means supporting the lifecycles of fish species and respecting the cultural values of local Indigenous people.

QUESTIONS

- ▶ What can water users in your watershed do to reduce the amount of water they use?
- ▶ How could the Watershed Security Strategy help implement these solutions?

Outcome Seven: Improve habitats for aquatic ecosystems.

People and aquatic ecosystems require a similar quality of water for survival. That means that aquatic ecosystems are also vulnerable to contamination that results from activities on, and changes to, the land base. Aquatic ecosystems also require appropriate volume and timing of streamflow to remain healthy. Climate change is threatening aquatic life—droughts, fires and increased temperatures all degrade the habitat of fish and other aquatic species. Mitigating stressors is important to all life—human and non-human. The knowledge and understanding to identify these stressors now is crucial for the health and resilience of aquatic ecosystems.

OPPORTUNITIES

The Watershed Security Strategy may...

- ▶ Assess opportunities for:
 - the collection of knowledge and data, and development of decision-support for environmental flows, critical environmental flow thresholds, and groundwater-surface water connectivity.
 - science, research, and long-term monitoring at sites that are actively assessing the connection between land use (e.g., resource extraction, urban development, forestry and agriculture) and the health of aquatic ecosystems and drinking water sources.
 - the management of natural assets and implementation of nature-based solutions, such as building rain gardens (sunken gardens designed to treat stormwater runoff), and protecting forests, aquifers, and wetlands.
- ▶ Identify ways in which we can increase our understanding of the services that aquatic ecosystems provide, and the financial, ecological, social and health benefits of protecting, restoring, and managing aquatic habitats.
- ▶ Assess opportunities to use economic tools to balance the wellbeing of ecosystems with food security and economic prosperity (e.g., investigate the opportunities for managing ecosystems services).

QUESTIONS

- ▶ In your opinion, what actions would best support the restoration, rehabilitation and improvement of water and aquatic habitats in your local watershed? Please provide more details on your answers and include examples where possible (e.g., if you included “provide training”, please discuss what support for this would look like and the types of training or subject areas that would be most useful.)

Outcome Eight: Integrate Indigenous Knowledge into decision-making and management.

Indigenous Knowledge systems have been developed by communities over millennia and combine spiritual, ethical, inter-generational and ecological learnings together in a holistic world view. Indigenous Knowledge is owned by Indigenous peoples, communities, and family groups—it cannot be separated from Knowledge Keepers and is only shared with their permission. The UN Declaration underscores the importance of respecting indigenous knowledge, cultures, and traditional practices in sustainably managing the environment. Integrating Indigenous knowledge in decision-making includes valuing and considering it alongside scientific knowledge, and ensuring that Indigenous Knowledge is used with appropriate consent and is appropriately governed.

OPPORTUNITIES

The Watershed Security Strategy may...

- ▶ Identify opportunities for training for watershed governance initiatives on how to recognize and align the value of Indigenous knowledge systems and science.
- ▶ Share examples of where science and Indigenous Knowledge have both been used to inform water management in B.C. and beyond.
- ▶ Identify opportunities for Indigenous-led efforts related to Indigenous Knowledge (e.g., projects related to the use, revitalization and sharing of Indigenous Knowledge).

QUESTIONS FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

- ▶ What is needed to help ensure Indigenous-led efforts related to Indigenous Knowledge are successful?
- ▶ How can the Province support the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and Indigenous Knowledge in water management decisions?

QUESTIONS FOR ALL AUDIENCES

- ▶ What do you or your organization need to foster respectful sharing and consideration of science and Indigenous Knowledge within your organization?
- ▶ Does your organization practice the respectful sharing of knowledge? If so, do you have any lessons you may share?

Case Story: Burrard Inlet Water Quality Objectives

Water quality objectives (WQOs) for Burrard Inlet represent a collaborative effort led by Tsleil-Waututh Nation with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy to inform water quality management and to protect the water values associated with the Burrard Inlet and its freshwater tributaries.

The [Burrard Inlet WQOs](#) have been co-signed by the Province and the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, establishing a first-of-a-kind government-to-government initiative that weaves western science with Traditional Indigenous values and knowledge. The WQOs are for the protection of human consumption of shellfish and finfish, aquatic life, wildlife, cultural practices, recreational uses, and institutional uses.

With over 25,000 km of coastline, the interaction of freshwater with marine environments adds an important dimension to freshwater management in B.C. Many anadromous fish species contribute to healthy freshwater ecosystems and are of great importance to Indigenous cultures.

Outcome Nine: Strengthen education and outreach about managing water in B.C.

Water quality and water use is affected by the thousands of decisions that are made daily by watershed residents, governments, industries, and urban, land, and water planners. These decisions can have a range of consequences for watershed security. Strengthening education and outreach about water and our human-induced changes will increase awareness of our shared water values, threats facing watersheds, and the importance of protecting water quality and conserving water.

Purposeful education and outreach must reflect the audience and knowledge being shared. Water-related knowledge is held by governments, Indigenous peoples, local stewardship groups, university researchers, watershed scientists and other professionals, and many citizens who live, play and work in our watersheds. Communicating this knowledge in an accessible way will inform watershed stewardship behaviours and awareness, facilitate collaborative monitoring programs, support watershed governance efforts and improve decisions made by all.

OPPORTUNITIES

The Watershed Security Strategy may...

- ▶ Identify audiences that would benefit from, or are looking for, education and outreach about water and understand what knowledge they need (e.g., about floods, droughts, pollution, how to avoid development impacts or improve the health of surface water and groundwater, how to monitor surface water and groundwater).

- ▶ Evaluate a range of methods for education and outreach, acknowledging the diversity of audiences and their needs (e.g., websites, reports, videos, presentations, training).
- ▶ Identify opportunities for:
 - partnering with different levels of government, Indigenous and non-Indigenous community groups to deliver education and outreach on water and monitoring.
 - sharing methods, lessons learned and management strategies amongst individuals and parties gathering knowledge in watersheds across B.C.

QUESTIONS

- ▶ What is the best method for you, your community or organization to receive and share information?
- ▶ Please list what additional watershed knowledge and/or tools would be most useful to you.

Outcome Ten: Create a Watershed Security Fund.

The Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy's mandate letter includes a commitment to establish a fund related to the Watershed Security Strategy and dedicated to the goal of protecting clean water. This fund could complement existing funding programs and help support a range of watershed governance arrangements and activities that contribute to watershed security.

QUESTIONS

- ▶ How would you prioritize investments in watershed security if more funding is directed toward supporting a Watershed Security Strategy?
- ▶ What do you see as the main benefit(s) British Columbians would obtain through government investment in watershed security?
- ▶ What opportunities and priorities do you think a Watershed Security Fund could focus on?

Case Story: The Healthy Watersheds Initiative

The [Healthy Watersheds Initiative](#) (HWI) is a \$27M fund created through [StrongerBC](#) to support over 60 projects throughout B.C. This funding gets people back to work in B.C. in roles that protect species, restore watersheds and ecosystems, and prepare for climate change impacts. Projects involve restoration of fish spawning and rearing habitats, important fish passageways, wetlands, and riparian areas. Many projects are led by or implemented in partnership with Indigenous communities.

The Real Estate Foundation of BC administers this funding with support from Watersheds BC and an Indigenous Leaders Advisory Circle. The Indigenous Leaders Advisory Circle, among other things, helps ensure that HWI projects are strengthening relationships with Indigenous communities and are hearing and sharing Indigenous knowledge in a respectful way.

Conclusion

We want to hear from you.

If you have any thoughts on:

- ▶ The engagement approach and how you would like to be involved in the future,
- ▶ Questions posed in the proposed outcomes and opportunities section above,
- ▶ Issues or concerns you think we should be aware,
- ▶ Ideas or solutions you or your organization wishes to share, and/or
- ▶ Anything you wish to share on the topic of how watershed security can be achieved in B.C.

Please participate in the online discussions and please submit your ideas through www.gov.bc.ca/water until March 18, 2022 at 4:00 p.m., or email livingwatersmart@gov.bc.ca.



MEMORANDUM

To: Chairperson Miller and the Board of Directors
 From: Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning
 Date: October 21, 2013
 Re: Proposed new Water Sustainability Act

On October 18th, 2013 the Province released information regarding a proposed Water Sustainability Act, and requested public comment by November 15th, 2013. The province has not specifically asked local governments for comment; however, given the potential for this legislation to impact the RDBN it is recommended that the Board provide a response.

BACKGROUND:

The *Water Act*, established in 1909, is the legislation that manages the diversion and use of provincial water resources. As a result of increased pressures on water associated with climate change, population growth, and water use the Province is undertaking a process to review the *Water Act*.

In March of 2010 the Province introduced the “Water Act Modernization Discussion Paper”, and requested input from local governments and other stakeholders. The discussion paper identified a number of options which delegated responsibility for the management of water resources to local governments or other local agency.

The Regional District Board provided a letter dated April 12th, 2010 to the Province that made the following points.

- The Province is best equipped to manage our critically important water resources, and is in the best position to provide the most efficient and effective service, with appropriate input from the local community.
- The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako does not have the resource or the financial capacity to assume increased water management responsibilities.
- If the Province delegates water management responsibilities to local governments there should be an opportunity to review and comment on the changes proposed to the Water Act, and the details of the proposed governance structure.
- The Province should consider a governance structure that is flexible and appropriate for the unique circumstances that exist in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako.

WATER SUSTAINABILITY ACT: LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL

The Province has released three documents describing the new Water Sustainability Act to be considered by the Province. The three documents are available at <http://engage.gov.bc.ca/watersustainabilityact/>:

- “Water Sustainability Act: A Legislative Proposal Overview” - This document describes BC’s proposed new Water Sustainability Act. This document is available online or from staff upon request.
- “Water Sustainability Act: A Legislative Proposal” - This document provides a condensed description of BC’s proposed new Water Sustainability Act. This document is provided to the Board under separate cover.
- “Water Sustainability Act: A Technical Briefing” – This document provides a powerpoint style overview of the proposed new Water Sustainability Act. This document is attached.

STAFF COMMENT

Staff note the following Sections of the “Water Sustainability Act: A Legislative Proposal” document.

Section 2.3.2 (page 22)

- The legislation would allow the Regional District to be delegated statutory authority as a decision maker under the future Water Sustainability Act.

Section 2.3.3 (page 26)

- The Water Sustainability Act will be relying on the future development of regulations to determine “Water Objectives,” and the implementation of those objectives, by local governments and others.

Section 2.3.3 (page 29-31)

- The Water Sustainability Act will allow the province to establish Water Sustainability Plans for an area where they consider it necessary. There is little information regarding who would develop these plans, and their implementation. It is anticipated that local governments would be required to play some role in the implementation of Water Sustainability Plans.

Section 2.3.8 (pages 64)

- The Water Sustainability Act will allow for the delegation or sharing of responsibility with a local government, agency, or person. It also allows for the establishment of advisory groups. Little information is provided regarding the anticipated governance model to be implemented by the Province.

The Water Sustainability Act appears to provide the Province with much flexibility to delegate or download responsibility. There is the expectation that once the Water Sustainability Act is in place the Province will develop regulations under the Act that will require local governments to play a role in planning, managing, and regulating water use. However, the information provided is relatively silent on the potential roles and responsibilities of local governments and the governance structure that may be put in place.

In staff's opinion this flexibility is good as it will allow the Province the ability to determine governance structure, and the role of local governments, based on the needs of the region and the water issues that exist. However, based on the limited information provided it is not known how this flexibility may be exercised.

Staff recommend that the letter attached to this report as Appendix A be provided to the Province as the RDBN's input regarding the proposed Water Sustainability Act.

Recommendation

That the letter attached to this report as Appendix A be provided to the Province as the RDBN's input regarding the proposed Water Sustainability Act.

All / Directors / Majority

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Llewellyn,
Director of Planning

Appendix A

October 22, 2013

Water Sustainability Act Submission
Ministry of Environment, Water Protection and Sustainability Branch
PO Box 9362, Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC, V8W 9M2

Please accept this letter as the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako's submission to the Province regarding the proposed Water Sustainability Act.

The proposed Water Sustainability Act appears to provide the Province with much flexibility regarding the governance structure that may be put in place to manage water resources across the province. It is important that the Province take advantage of this flexibility to ensure that the roles of local governments are appropriate for the unique circumstances that exist in each region of the province. Solutions designed to address water related issues in one part of the Province may not be appropriate for the north, or its residents.

The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako has limited resources and financial capacity to assume increased water management responsibilities, and we would like the opportunity to ensure that our future role in water management is appropriate. Therefore, it is requested that the Province provide local governments the opportunity to review and comment on the details of any proposed governance structure, or proposed local government role, related to the management of water resources.

Sincerely,

Bill Miller, Chairperson
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board



1208690

January 28, 2022

Via email: inquiries@rdbn.bc.ca

Board Members
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako
37 3rd Ave
PO Box 820
Burns Lake BC V0J 1E0

Dear Board Members:

Thank you for meeting with me at the virtual Union of British Columbia Municipalities Convention in September 2021.

It was a pleasure to hear from you during my first UBCM Convention as Minister, and I learned a lot.

In our meeting, we discussed your support of Carrier Sekani Family Services and the impact the new facility will have on the region.

You also took the time to tell me about some of the challenges you and other rural communities continue to face, including ongoing challenges around mental health stigma and the siloing of services, connectivity issues making virtual services inaccessible, and the increasing number of mental health concerns in the agriculture sector.

Our ministry is working hard across government to create an accessible, robust, and culturally safe system of mental health and addictions care that meets people where they're at. For your convenience and interest, I've attached a list of local mental health and substance use resources in your community. I would also like to bring your attention to wellbeing.gov.bc.ca, our recently released navigation tool to help British Columbians connect with the right provincial mental health and/or substance use resources, quickly and easily.

Thank you for your interest in a Foundry Centre in your community. This phase of Foundry's growth will build upon the thorough Expression of Interest (EOI) and Convening process conducted in 2019-2020, which started with an open call to all communities across BC. Forty community agencies responded to Foundry's EOI, of which 19 were shortlisted and eight selected.

...2

- 2 -

To respect the immense amount of work that communities, youth, and families put into that process, and the impact the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has had on BC communities and front-line employees, Foundry will be reviewing the evaluations from their 2019-2020 process to help identify the next four communities.

It was so helpful to hear from you and communities like yours throughout the week. Meetings like this help me better understand the challenges people and communities across BC face on a daily basis.

Thank you again for your leadership. I look forward to continuing to work with you as we move forward to improve mental health and substance use care for all British Columbians.

Best wishes,



Sheila Malcolmson
Minister

Attachment



Mental Health and Substance Use Services in Bulkley-Nechako

Overview

Below is a list of mental health and substance use services and supports available in your community.

Locally Available Mental Health and Substance Use Resources

- Northern Health offers a variety of mental health and substance use services that span the continuum of care, from youth, to adult, to services for older adults.
- Mental health and substance use community programs and specialized services also work with multiple partners, including some that are funded by Northern Health, to support people and families with their mental health and substance use needs.
- Primary and Community Care (general)
 - Prevention, screening, and assessment
 - Consultation and counselling for mild-moderate mental health and substance use, including mood, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, bipolar disorder, chronic pain, addictions and substance use, and personality disorder
 - Complex, stabilized mental health and substance use disorders
 - Psychosocial rehabilitation
 - Case coordination for non-high intensity care patients
 - Opioid agonist therapy maintenance and support
- Primary Care Interprofessional Teams (IPT)
 - Team-based IPT services include family practice physicians and/or nurse practitioners with knowledge in addictions medicine, mental health clinicians, life skills workers, occupational therapy, and social work
- Smithers, Hazelton, and Houston are also served by an Intensive Case Management Team and IPT services, including one-to-one addiction counselling and harm reduction supply provision
- Harm reduction materials are supplied through partners, including Positive Living Northwest, Bulkley Valley District Hospital ER, and local pharmacies, local OAT team (two physicians and one RN), Wrinch Memorial Hospital ER, and an OAT coordinator for Wrinch Memorial Hospital
- The First Nations Health Authority-funded Mental Wellness & Substance Use Mobile Support Team, serving area First Nations communities, is also providing important supports to local health care teams. This program also has substance abuse counsellors.