

The Province and Industry will work collaboratively with the NEBC Resource Municipalities Coalition

**January 26, 2016
For Immediate Release**

Fort St. John, BC – NEBC Coalition members met with several BC Cabinet Ministers last week at the Premiers Natural Resources Forum to advocate that the Provincial government fully monitor and enforce BC's tax and labour laws and regulations in relation to out of province contractors and businesses. In addition, the Coalition advocated that the Province and industry maximize utilization of BC's local work force and businesses.

The Ministers indicated that the Province would work collaboratively with the Coalition and its business members to review all of the documentation and research to determine the magnitude of the issues raised. They will also continue with the establishment of a collaborative process and approach to identify and implement the necessary measures to ensure BC's laws and regulations were being effectively enforced.

Mayor Rob Fraser stated that, "The addition of the business voice to our Coalition added immense strength and impact to our meeting with Ministers and industry at this week's Premier's Natural Resource Forum."

Meetings were held with the following Ministers at which Coalition members and the Executive Director were present and in the case of the meeting with Ministers Morris and Polak, MLA Pimm, Tyler Kosick, Dave Wallis and Art Jarvis were also present.

- Shirley Bond, Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training
- Mike Bernier, Minister of Education
- Andrew Wilkinson, Minister of Advanced Education
- Steve Thomson, Minister of Forest, Lands and Natural Resource Operations
- Mike Morris, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General
- Mary Polak, Minister of Environment

Mayor Lori Ackerman advised, "The unanimous reaction from the Cabinet Ministers was support for ensuring that BC's tax and labour laws were being monitored and enforced. The majority of questions and discussions centered around the need for research and data to fully document with more precision the specific issues of non-compliance with BC's laws and regulations."

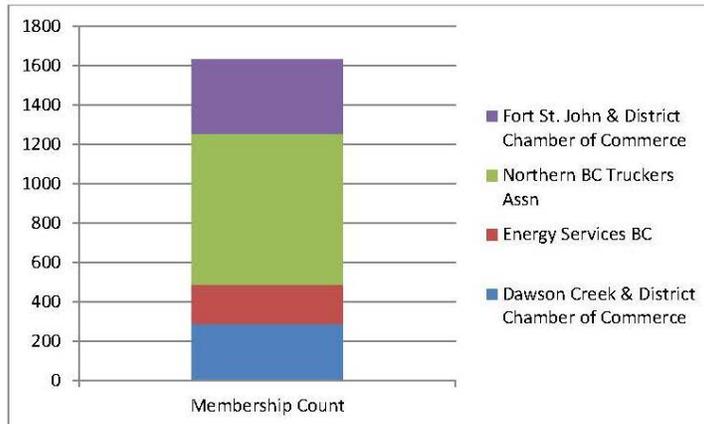
The expanded Coalition including the business organizations adopted on January 16, 2016 a Strategic Plan for Protecting BC Business and Resource Communities with a specific focus on creating a level playing field to ensure that business and work force opportunities were maximized for BC companies and workers.

Mayor Bill Streeper advised that a meeting was held with CAPP. "In the meeting with Geoff Morrison of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers there was also agreement that enforcement of BC's laws and regulations would be in the best overall interest of CAPP. CAPP also stressed that they wanted to see the documentation and research identifying the specific elements of non-compliance with BC's laws and regulations. They also fully committed to working on a collaborative basis with the Coalition and its business community to address these issues."

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Colin Griffith the Coalition Executive Director advised that, "The next working committee meeting for the Coalition is scheduled for February 10th. In the meantime the Coalition has implemented a short term work plan to start the process of gathering baseline data and information that will assist in the documentation of all of the issues and realities that challenge BC businesses and the work force."

By virtue of the Fort St. John & District Chamber of Commerce, Northern BC Truckers Association, Energy Services BC and the Dawson Creek & District Chamber of Commerce joining the Coalition it now represents over 1600 businesses and owners in NEBC who in turn support the Coalition's principles.



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