



Resource Municipalities
COALITION

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Honourable Katrine Conroy, Minister

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development
PO Box 9049, Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

June 2, 2021

RE: Public Engagement

Minister Conroy,

The Resource Municipalities Coalition advocates for responsible resource development as we believe responsible resource development sustains communities by addressing impacts on ecosystems as well as cumulative impacts to a healthy natural environment and to citizens by ensuring the provision of effective social services that improve quality of life while building a sustainable future.

It is based on this fundamental belief that we reach out to you and your Ministry to consider public engagement as a critical part of the Government's ability to ensure that the quality of life for all British Columbians is considered. While we recognize that government can not satisfy what may be perceived as engagement by all British Columbians, we believe that government should allow for sufficient time and provide equal opportunity for all British Columbians to participate.

As the Ministry looks to advance plans regarding the *"Caribou Recovery Plan and Snowmobile Management Plan"* in Northeast British Columbia, engagement at each step of the process must be considered carefully, as not only do these decisions impact British Columbians personally from a recreation perspective, but they also have financial impacts to business, affecting 444 jobs in Northern BC, and impacting \$38.7M in community economic output.

Northeast British Columbia is a region that contributes 35% more in personal income tax than the average BC resident; from an export's revenue perspective, \$141,000 per capita verses a BC average of \$24,000. Additionally, the Northeast generates .93 jobs provincially for every 1 job generated in the region. As a region that occupies 24% of the provinces land mass and contributes above average levels of revenue to provincial coffers that support important social services enjoyed by all British Columbians, being actively listened to by government becomes an expectation and we believe is the right of every British Columbian. A 6-week public input session via a webpage or requested meetings under current challenges to connect, does not demonstrate meaningful engagement, and perceives a checkbox exercise.

While we recognize that public engagement has been hampered throughout the province with connectivity concerns and the impacts of a global pandemic, making it difficult for government to host or residents to participate in proper public engagement, the Resource Municipalities Coalition encourages the province to review their approach to public engagement to ensure that input can be received effectively through various platforms of engagement; lengthening the timeframe to allow PHO restrictions to relax and support meaningful public engagement opportunities.

Likewise, the Resource Municipalities Coalition encourages government to create and communicate what the engagement process will look like to all stakeholders' groups within the engagement region including the opportunities to re-engage with the government on "What We Heard" documents. Those who participated in the engagement should be able to see that their collective voice was considered.

Sincerely,



Mayor Lori Ackerman
City of Fort St John



Mayor Rob Fraser
District of Taylor

Keith Bertrand

Mayor Keith Bertrand
District of Tumbler Ridge



Mayor Joan Atkinson
District of Mackenzie



Mayor Gary Foster
Northern Rockies Regional Municipality



Executive Director Mike Whalley
Resource Municipalities Coalition

CC: Premier Horgan
Minister Mark
Minister Robinson

Minister Cullen
Minister Osborne

Minister Heyman
Minister Ralston

Minister Kahlon
Minister Rankin