From: NCLGA Admin <admin@nclga.ca>
Date: April 13, 2021 at 11:13:28 AM MST
To: NCLGA Admin <admin@nclga.ca>
Subject: Letter to Minister Osborne re: Emergency Fire Equipment Funding

Dear Regional District Board Chairs and CAOs,

In March, Port Hardy Mayor Dennis Dugas formulated a coalition of small rural community Mayors within AVICC. They collaboratively wrote a letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs regarding the need for additional provincial funding for emergency fire equipment and facilities in small rural communities (see attached letter).

Mayor Dugas encourages small rural communities within the NCLGA region to submit similar letters to Minister Osborne. Since this issue may affect small municipalities, electoral areas and unincorporated communities with independent fire halls within your regional districts/regional municipalities, NCLGA invites you to send similar letters to Minister Osborne and forward this request to small municipalities in your region.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Kind Regards,

Susan Chalmers
Executive Coordinator
North Central Local Government Association
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March, 3, 2021

Honourable Josie Osborne
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
PO Box 9056 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC
V8W 9E2

Emailed to: MAH.minister@gov.bc.ca

Re: Emergency Fire Equipment and Facilities Funding for Small Rural Communities.

Dear Minister Osborne,

We are looking for your support regarding a critical public safety issue in our small rural communities, specifically the lack of Provincial funding for essential local fire and road rescue services, which would include apparatus, equipment, training and facilities.

As you are aware the cost of protecting our communities has increased significantly over the years. The cost of apparatus, equipment, training, and facilities are putting the small rural communities in a critical financial bind, taxing the residents beyond what is affordable and without provincial support we feel our financial situation will be unsustainable.

This request for Provincial funding assistance has been presented to the Province through endorsed resolutions to the UBCM for over 27 years, to date the provincial response has been "NO". We feel we cannot accept this answer anymore.

Through the Insurance Premium Tax, the Province has collected a 4.4% tax revenue through residential / commercial fire insurance and automobile insurance since 1921, which we now believe goes into the government's general revenue fund. The estimated revenue collected is in the hundreds of millions annually, we are asking for some of this revenue to be available through grant programs or another form of assistance to support our communities so we can provide an affordable, reliable, and sustainable essential fire protection and road rescue service for our regional residents and businesses.

We look forward to your assistance in setting up meetings with the appropriate Ministers to discuss ways we can leverage reliable funding support for fire and road rescue services in small rural communities.

We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely the Undersigned,

Dennis Dugas, Mayor, District of Port Hardy
Mayor Gaby Wickstrom, Mayor, Town of Port McNeill
Kevin Cameron, Mayor, Village of Port Alice

Dennis Buchanan, Mayor, Village of Alert Bay
Andrew Hory, Chair, Regional District of Mount Waddington
Julie Colborne, Mayor, Village of Zeballos
Martin Davis, Mayor, Village of Tahsis
Mark Baker, Mayor, Village of Sayward
Brad Unger, Mayor, Village of Gold River
Leslie Baird, Mayor, Village of Cumberland
Mark Swain, Mayor, District of Lantzville
Ken Williams, Mayor, District of Highlands
Bill Beamish, Mayor, Town of Gibsons
Bob Day, Mayor, Lake Cowichan
Mayco Noel, Mayor, District of Ucluelet
Mayor and Council, District of Tofino Council

cc: Ian Morrison, President, Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities
    Michele Babchuk, Member of the Legislative Assembly
    Brian Frenkel, President, Union of British Columbia Municipalities