



October 10, 2023

ATT: Regional District Board of Directors

Economic Development within the PRRD and Indigenous Liaison

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter for your consideration.

The Fort St John Chamber has identified areas that would allow the region to grow by supporting stable social, cultural and economic stability.

On behalf of our membership, we would like to bring forward the following suggestions, which we believe are opportunities for the Regional District to support reconciliation and economic development.

The UNDRIP Action Plan speaks of the need to engage our Indigenous communities in social, cultural and economic development and growth, along with the tools to achieve self-governance.

The Fort St John Chamber of Commerce encourages the PRRD to bring a liaison on staff who could advise staff and the Board on reconciliation and understanding of the scope and scale of work needed to be achieved to move towards meaningful relationships. In addition to reconciliation, work is required to build trust within the indigenous community, allowing the PRRD to create appropriate and thoughtful policies that will collectively benefit and support the region.

Through mechanisms such as the Leaders table, we would suggest that input on the job description be received and approved collectively. In the spirit of reconciliation, Indigenous communities should be included in the hiring process to ensure the candidate selected can work effectively with all parties involved.

Further to the Indigenous Liaison, we believe that the PRRD should engage in a process to understand the economic future of the region better.

"Local businesses to strengthen our communities."

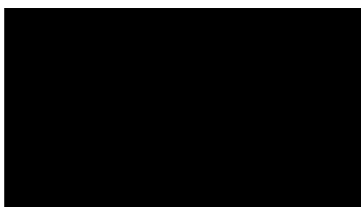
We believe that having a dedicated staff working with Indigenous communities, municipalities, rural directors, and economic developers within the region will allow decision-makers to better understand our economy's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. That data can help inform decisions around land use, resource development, urban reserves, and the business climate in general and create a vision that will allow leaders from the region to advocate and lobby for the resources required from the government to achieve the goals mentioned above.

As Indigenous communities move to self-governance, it is vital that, as a whole, we understand the needed resources to grow our economy sustainably and orderly.

A logical and inclusive economic development plan is required to promote and secure industry investment and other forms of investment in our region.

We encourage the Board to consider the clear need to carve out a plan for economic sustainability within the PRRD and to dedicate time and effort to creating a framework for not only the business community but also those who choose to participate in the economy of the northeast.

We are grateful for the opportunity to bring the voice of North Peace businesses to the attention of the PRRD board. As always, the Fort St John Chamber of Commerce welcomes collaboration and communication with the PRRD and look forward to building a positive and productive relationship with our business community



Adam Reaburn
President



Kathleen Connolly
CEO