

February 27, 2020

Chair Jason Lum
Fraser Valley Regional District
1 – 45950 Cheam Avenue
Chilliwack, BC V2P 1N6
Via email: lum@chilliwack.com and jkinneman@fvrld.ca

RE: Referred Resolution 2019-B183 – Rural Homelessness – Crown Land Encampments

Dear Chair Lum:

The above referenced resolution sponsored by your community was included in the 2019 Resolutions Book for consideration at the annual UBCM Convention.

Due to a lack of time at the Convention, delegates did not have an opportunity to consider B183. UBCM Policies provide that all resolutions not considered at Convention are referred automatically to the UBCM Executive for their consideration and action.

At the recent February Executive meeting, the Executive considered all of the resolutions referred to them from the 2019 Convention, including B183. The Executive were provided with the Resolutions Committee comments and recommendations, as outlined within the Resolutions Book, to assist them in their deliberations.

Upon review, the Executive have decided to endorse resolution B183 with an amendment. As such, it will be conveyed to the Province. Please see the enclosure for the amended text.

Should you have any questions, please contact Jamee Justason, Resolutions and Policy Analyst, at 604-270-8226 Ext. 100 or jjustason@ubcm.ca

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maja Tait", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Maja Tait
UBCM President

Enclosure

Whereas homelessness is a challenge facing both urban and rural communities;

And whereas electoral areas have the least ability to address homelessness, in that they are by their very nature remote from health, social, police and other services and the minimal tax bases cannot support the hard and soft infrastructure required to address homelessness;

And whereas the province's response to homeless encampments on Crown land has been inconsistent or ad-hoc in nature, sometimes relocating encampments without taking into account impacts on rural communities and regional district resources:

Therefore be it resolved that the Province of British Columbia through its newly established Office of Homelessness Coordination within the Ministry of Poverty Reduction and Social Development develop a rural homelessness strategy to address what is clearly **work with local governments to develop policy to address rural homelessness, which is currently** a gap in the Province's response to homelessness.

Convention Decision: Referred to UBCM Executive

Executive Decision: Endorsed as Amended

Resolutions Committee Comments

The Resolutions Committee advises that the UBCM membership has not previously considered a resolution calling on the Province through its Office of Homeless Coordination to develop a rural homelessness strategy.

However, the Committee notes that the membership has endorsed resolution 2017-B98 which calls on the federal government to refocus the Homelessness Partnering Strategy – Rural and Remote Homelessness program funding to those programs in communities of less than 25,000 population.

The Committee also notes that the membership has consistently endorsed resolutions calling on the provincial and federal governments to develop a national housing strategy and complementary provincial housing strategy as part of a comprehensive plan to address homelessness (2017-B52, 2016-B45, 2015-B14, 2015-B45, 2015-B46, 2015-B108, 2015-B109, 2013-B54, 2009-C28, 2008-A3, 2007-B58, 2007-B109).

Resolution 2015-B46 also calls on the Province to develop a BC Plan to End Homelessness, although not one specifically focused on rural areas. The Province, as part of its 2019 Budget, announced funding for a Provincial Homelessness Action Plan, encompassing additional funding for modular housing, additional employment assistance benefits, and homeless counts among other initiatives. This plan also is also intended to encompass the joint implementation of an encampment prevention and response strategy by BC Housing, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, although details on this strategy are not publicly available.