

To: Electoral Area Services Committee

Date: 2021-01-14

From: Tarina Colledge, Emergency Management Specialist

File No: 0230-24-UBCM

Subject: Letter to UBCM recommending a Standing Committee on Emergency Management

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Fraser Valley Regional District Board authorize the Board Chair to sign and send the attached letter to the Union of BC Municipalities requesting that the UBCM Flood and Wildfire Advisory Committee evolve into a standing committee on emergency management.

STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

Provide Responsive & Effective Public Services
Support Healthy & Sustainable Community

PRIORITIES

Priority #3 Flood Protection & Management

BACKGROUND

The Province of BC is modernizing the *Emergency Program Act* – the provincial legislation that governs local government Emergency Management activities. The Province has identified the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) as the primary vehicle for consulting with local governments on the changes to the legislative framework for Emergency Management in BC.

FVRD is an active member of the UBCM Flood and Wildfire Advisory Committee. In response to the effort by the Province to update the *Emergency Program Act*, the role of this committee has evolved to consider emergency management more broadly. Flood and wildfires are not the only emergencies faced by local government, and the committee focus has shifted to advising and engaging in regards to the emergency management legislative modernization.

There is an opportunity for UBCM to formally expand the mandate of the committee to emergency management rather than a more narrow focus on flood and wildfires. This change would position the committee to better engage with the Province to achieve the best outcomes for local governments with respect to the new Emergency Management legislation. The UBCM committee would be well positioned to ensure that the new Emergency Management legislation is aligned with the suite of legislation under which local governments operate.

DISCUSSION

FVRD Staff have been participating in the UBCM Flood and Wildfire Advisory committee, which was created initially in response to the floods and wildfires of 2018. The focus of this committee has shifted to advising and collaborating with Provincial staff on the modernization of the provincial emergency management legislation.

A discussion paper (Modernizing BC's Emergency Management Legislation, Oct, 2019) indicated the direction the Province intends to go with new Emergency Management legislation. A number of local governments, including FVRD, raised concerns about overlap and potential inconsistencies between the potential new legislation and the existing acts governing regional districts and municipalities. Modernizing Emergency Management, through the lens of one suite of legislation, has the potential to create gaps between the *Local Government Act*, the *Community Charter*, and *Municipal Finance Act*. For example, proposed changes involve budgetary impacts to local governments without addressing methods to resource additional assigned responsibilities in implementing the Province's programs.

UBCM can help facilitate modernization and continuance of local government emergency management practices in greater alignment with local government operations as a whole to ensure the modernization is respectful of the entire legislative framework under which we operate. Evolving the UBCM Flood and Wildfire Advisory Committee is the ideal next step to implement proper consultation and collaboration through the next phases of local government emergency management modernization.

COST

There are no costs associated with this report.

CONCLUSION

Staff have engaged with UBCM to discuss possible options and believe that moving the UBCM Flood and Wildfire Advisory Committee to a standing committee on emergency management is the next step to ensure modernization of emergency management is met with fulsome and meaningful consultation respectful of the framework under which local governments operate.

COMMENTS BY:

Graham Daneluz, Director of Planning & Development:	Reviewed and supported.
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Kelly Lownsbrough, Chief Financial Officer/ Director of Finance:	Reviewed and supported.
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Jennifer Kinneman, Chief Administrative Officer:

Reviewed and supported.