

To: Fraser Valley Regional District Board
From: Samantha Piper, Manager of Communications

Date: 2025-02-13

Subject: 2025 Advocacy and LMLGA Resolutions

Reviewed by: Kelly Lownsborough, Director of Corporate Services and CFO
Jennifer Kinneman, Chief Administrative Officer

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Fraser Valley Regional District Board direct staff to forward two resolutions to the Lower Mainland Local Government Association (LMLGA) for consideration at its Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Conference from April 29 – May 1, 2025;

AND THAT the Fraser Valley Regional District Board direct staff to further develop an Advocacy Plan, following 14 issues in 2025.

RESOLUTION #1: *Illegal dumping in rural areas clean-up funding*

WHEREAS the Province of British Columbia does not have a funding policy in place to offset costs associated to illegal dumping in rural areas of British Columbia;

AND WHEREAS the dumping/tipping fees, equipment, and fuel costs to clean-up the effects of abandoned vehicles, garbage, and litter unfairly places hardships on the efforts of dedicated volunteers and requires the backing of private donations to cover the costs associated with the clean-up work;

AND WHEREAS these sites are unsightly, negatively impact environmentally sensitive areas including waterways and natural spaces, posing a threat to public safety;

AND WHEREAS the sites are located on rural Crown land area, and can be directly associated with the impacts of low inventories of affordable housing in the Province of British Columbia;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Union of British Columbia Municipalities ask the provincial government to take urgent steps to develop a policy to support a community-based funding model to support clean-up efforts on Crown lands undertaken by volunteers and organized interest groups.

RESOLUTION #2: Unmet Demands on Social and Community Infrastructure as a Result of Provincial Housing Targets

WHEREAS the mandate letters of the sitting provincial government include

- Growing the economy;
- Affordability;
- Strengthening healthcare; and
- Community safety

AND WHEREAS the Province has mandated accelerated and densified housing, placing historical and unmet demands on social and community infrastructure such as education, transit, social welfare and supportive housing;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities ask the provincial government to focus on strengthening complete communities and make historically significant investments in schools, community mental health, and transit to accommodate growth.

BACKGROUND

The FVRD Board has two Standing Committees whose terms of reference include the development of strategies to advocate to other levels of government on issues of concern within the Fraser Valley. The EA Advocacy Committee and the Intergovernmental Relations Committee met in late January 2025 and provided staff with a list of 14 topics to potentially bring forward as resolutions to the LMLGA for consideration or to continue to research and monitor for ongoing advocacy.

Resolutions endorsed at the LMLGA AGM & Conference are submitted to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) for consideration at its annual Convention. The 2025 LMLGA AGM & Conference is scheduled for April 29 to May 1, 2025. The submission deadline for resolutions is Wednesday, March 5, 2025. This report provides summaries of all of the issues raised by the Board for advocacy in 2025 and offers recommendations for approaches, including research, resolutions, meeting requests and monitoring.

DISCUSSION

The following topics will be included in the 2025 Advocacy Plan. The Plan will be reviewed by the EA Advocacy Committee and the Intergovernmental Relations Committee throughout the year and does not preclude the Board from bringing new topics forward for consideration throughout 2025.

1. *Illegal dumping in rural areas clean-up funding*

Status: RESOLUTION

Rationale: There is no provincial funding process to support the efforts of volunteer groups who rally and coordinate their efforts to clean up illegal dumping sites, which typically occur on Crown land. The costs are often the burden of the volunteers involved in the clean-up or through one-off private contributions. Illegal dumping sites continue to be problematic because of the public safety risks, environmental risks, and unsightliness for neighbours and people enjoying natural settings.

2. *Unmet Demands on Social and Community Infrastructure as a Result of Provincial Housing Targets*

Status: RESOLUTION

Rationale: The Ministry mandate letters released from the Province prioritize growing the economy, affordability, strengthening healthcare and community safety. However, these mandates fail to include the importance of social and community infrastructure such as schools, transit sustainability, and community health as part of their Provincial targets. The importance for government to focus on making complete communities that include social infrastructure and coordination of services is paramount for every community in British Columbia.

3. *Follow-up to the 2024 UBCM Resolution on Management of Fire Risk on Crown Land*

Status: MEETING REQUEST

Rationale: FVRD staff has been directed by the FVRD Board to request a meeting with the Minister of Forests, Honourable Ravi Parmar. The meeting will be to continue discussions on the FVRD's UBCM Resolution NR33 (endorsed) from the 2024 UBCM Convention, *Managing Fire Risk on Crown Land*.

4. *Follow-up to the 2024 UBCM Resolution on Disaster Financial Assistance for Victims of Climate Related Events*

Status: MEETING REQUEST

Rationale: FVRD staff received direction from the FVRD Board to request a meeting with the Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness, Honourable Kelly Greene. The meeting will be to continue discussions on the FVRD's UBCM Resolution EB33 (endorsed) from the 2024 UBCM Convention, *Disaster Financial Assistance for Victims of Climate Related Events*.

5. Legislative Amendments Allowing for Provincial Agencies and Local Governments to Seize Property Associated with Illegal Fill Activities

Status: RESEARCH

Rationale: A Resolution is not feasible at this time based on the following:

- FVRD staff received direction from the FVRD Board to develop a soil deposit bylaw for the FVRD. This project is in the proposed 2025 work plan but currently not drafted. Requesting authorities for local government bylaw enforcement where no bylaw currently exists is not appropriate.
- To date, there has been no authentic consultation with the Ministry of Environment, Agricultural Land Commission, Indigenous Communities in British Columbia, or Local Governments in British Columbia;
- To date, there has been no consultation to determine the preference of implementing Peace Officer status for specific resources resulting in the ability to seize property associated with illegal fill activities;
- To date, there is no research available on the financial impacts of the intended change;
- To date, there is no indication of the timeline needed to make such legislative amendments and the impact on Provincial Agencies and Local Governments.

Therefore, additional research and time for authentic consultation is required prior to developing a Resolution.

6. Protection, Preservation, and Optimization of Industrial Lands

Status: RESEARCH/MEETING REQUEST

Rationale: A Resolution is not feasible at this time based on the following:

- The January 2025 Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Industry (JEDI) ministerial **mandate letter included, "Make sure BC's economy has the space to grow by creating an inventory of existing industrial lands, carrying out a land-use needs assessment and a strategy for protecting and growing the industrial land base."**
- In late 2023, FVRD staff were approached by JEDI staff to discuss an initiative related to **"Trade-Enabling Lands"**. **The Ministry was looking to** work with local governments and others to advise the Province on issues related to pressures on trade-enabling land. Several meetings were held in early 2024, but no further meetings have been held since then.
- The perspectives of local First Nations will be essential in this work.
- FVRD staff will continue to monitor and make arrangements to speak with the Ministry to **determine the initiative's status.**

Staff recommend that additional research with JEDI staff is required prior to developing a Resolution. The FVRD Board may wish to request a meeting with the Minister of Jobs, Economic Development and Industry to further explore the path they are taking to meet their mandate.

7. Provincial Insurance Program for Victims of Climate-Related Events Who Are Ineligible for Disaster Financial Assistance

Status: MONITOR

Rationale: No Resolution is necessary at this time. On January 29, 2025, the Government of Canada announced the modernization of the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA) program. The Government of Canada worked closely with provincial and territorial governments in the review of the DFAA and noted significant inputs from Canadian and international experts. The modernized program is anticipated to be in effect April 1, 2025. Within the updated DFAA Guidelines Section, 10.6.11(b) supports the aspiration of the resolution maiden request:

10.6.11 Repair/reconstruction of homes

b. Homes that did not suffer structural damage but are now unsafe for occupancy (as established by a suitably qualified professional) as a direct result of an eligible disaster are eligible.

8. Expanded and Updated Process Associated with BC Assessment's Property Assessment Program to Ensure All Housing is Being Adequately Assessed and Taxed

Status: MONITOR

Rationale: No Resolution is warranted at this time. FVRD staff contacted BC Assessment and they confirmed if there were ever resource concerns, the topic would be discussed between BC Assessment and the Province of British Columbia. Each Municipality and Regional District has their own dedicated contact person within BC Assessment. If there are any concerns with assessments in any area throughout British Columbia, there are BC Assessment resources in place to assist with those concerns.

9. Implementation of a 9-1-1 Call Answer Levy on Cellular Devices

Status: MONITOR

Rationale: No Resolution is warranted at this time. The Union of BC Municipalities has received past resolutions for a 9-1-1 call levy on wireless services:

- Year: 2004, Number: SR1; Sponsor: UBCM Executive; Convention Decision: Endorsed
- Year: 2011, Number: B13; Sponsor: Cariboo RD; Convention Decision: Endorsed
- Year: 2021, Number: EB7; Sponsor: Bulkley-Nechako RD; Convention Decision: Endorsed
- Year: 2023, Number: RR17; Sponsor: Nelson; Convention Decision: Not Admitted for Debate
- Year: 2023, Number SR2; Sponsor: UBCM Executive; Convention Decision: Endorsed as Amended

At the time of this report's issuance, no Provincial Response was available for the 2023 Resolution; however, there is a Provincial Response from the 2021 Resolution – EB7 that, "Ministry staff would undertake further work to explore funding mechanism to support 9-1-1 services, such as the

establishment of a call answer levy on wireless phones and, in recognition that this is a cross-ministry issue, will work with colleagues at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs."

10. BILL 44 and the Requirement for a Housing Needs Assessment

Status: MONITOR

Rationale: FVRD staff received direction from the FVRD Board to monitor for future Lower Mainland Local Government Association resolutions or advocacy opportunities.

11. Legislative Amendments Allowing for Provincial and Local Government Access to Private Property to Undertake Recovery Works Following Weather Related Events Such as the 2021 Atmospheric River Event

Status: MONITOR

Rationale: FVRD staff received direction from the FVRD Board to monitor for future Lower Mainland Local Government Association resolutions or advocacy opportunities.

12. Provincial Funding Program for Radon Mitigation

Status: MONITOR

Rationale: FVRD staff received direction from the FVRD Board to monitor funding for radon mitigation efforts and consider future Lower Mainland Local Government Association resolutions or advocacy efforts by the FVRD Board. Staff will follow up with provincial staff contacts for updates.

13. Equitable Approach to Shelter Bed Locations

Status: MONITOR

Rationale: FVRD staff received direction from the FVRD Board to **review the City of Chilliwack's news** release regarding the equitable approach to shelter bed locations and consider whether an FVRD-led resolution or endorsement of a City of Chilliwack resolution could be achieved. Staff contacted the City of Chilliwack and confirmed that their staff intend to bring forward a resolution to Council in **February. If adopted, the FVRD Board can initiate a motion of endorsement at the FVRD's February** Board meeting.

14. Food Security Crisis

Status: MONITOR

Rationale: FVRD staff received direction from the FVRD Board to monitor for future advocacy opportunities to address the food security crisis.

COST

There is no financial implication associated with submitting resolutions to LMLGA for consideration.

CONCLUSION

Staff recommends approval of the submission of the two resolutions to the Lower Mainland Local Government Association (LMLGA) for consideration at its Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Conference from April 29 – May 1, 2025. There are 14 topics for the 2025 Advocacy Plan. In addition to the two resolutions, staff recommends approval of the 2025 Advocacy Plan with the additional categories of meeting requests, monitor, and research.