

## **ISSUE:**

Local Governments throughout the province have taken on increasing responsibility for issues and services historically under the jurisdiction of the Provincial Government including but not limited to supportive housing and shelters, health and social services, and support for community outreach efforts. Without increasing local taxes to unacceptable and detrimental levels it is no longer possible to meet increasing demand for social services and maintain core municipal government operations. ***PTT, PST and LT revenues, increases to Gas Tax and Gaming Fund, and support for local fuel taxes are urgently needed to support local governments in the provision of social services needed and expected by their community members in addition to increasing costs for essential service delivery and infrastructure maintenance.***

## **PROPOSED RESOLUTION:**

*WHEREAS costs, regulations, and responsibilities for municipalities are increasing at an unsustainable rate;*

*WHEREAS some traditionally provincial or federal funded responsibilities have shifted to local government;*

*THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that AVICC and UBCM ask the Province to work with Municipalities towards sharing:*

- *Sales Tax*
- *Liquor Tax*
- *Property Transfer Tax*

*AND FURTHER THAT the Province support and simplify the creation of local fuel taxes for Municipalities as an additional revenue stream.*

## **BACKGROUND: NEW SERVICES AND SERVICE LEVEL INCREASES**

### ***Homelessness and Encampments***

The City of Courtenay and the surrounding jurisdictions have experienced increasing social issues in recent years, including homelessness and addiction.

Homeless encampments have dramatically increased, putting a strain on the City's limited Bylaw Enforcement staff, as well as Courtenay Public Works Services, Administration and the emergency response services. This impacts the City's resources and budget, including staff time and contributions of land, facilities, services, utilities, and grants. Courtenay also provides emergency and annual funding to various non-profit community organizations providing direct outreach and support to those experiencing homelessness.

Social pressures from the challenges of homelessness and addiction are also resulting in additional pressure on the Comox Valley RCMP. Other pressures include an increase in reports of overdoses, property crime, and vandalism, as indicated by feedback from the Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Association membership, business and public complaints to the City of Courtenay and reporting from City operations staff. The Comox Valley RCMP have confirmed increases in service requirements directly related to homelessness in reports to Courtenay Council.

### **Escalating Costs of Essential Services**

In addition to the above-noted social concerns, Courtenay also faces increasing costs for essential services, and maintaining and constructing infrastructure both within and outside our jurisdiction. For example, Courtenay is contributing funds toward a new regional composting facility that will remove organic material, extend the life of the regional landfill, and reduce our community's climate footprint; Courtenay's contribution towards regional capital projects and in-service asset operating expenses is estimated at 25 - 30% annually.

### **Climate Change Adaptation**

As a coastal community, the City of Courtenay is also considering the impacts of climate change and flooding experiences in low-lying areas (e.g. 2014 flood). As the impacts of climate change will continue to worsen, the City of Courtenay is updating its Official Community Plan to generate "climate friendly" community planning solutions in line with Courtenay Council's 2019 declaration of a Climate Crisis.

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