



Reference: 30739

June 28, 2023

VIA EMAIL: avicc@ubcm.ca

Penny Cote
Director, Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District
President, AVICC
525 Government Street
Victoria, British Columbia
V8V 0A8

Dear Penny Cote:

Thank you for your letter of May 30, 2023, regarding the AVICC Regional Resolution R3 about the Watershed Security Strategy and Fund. We appreciate hearing about the unique issues facing watersheds on Vancouver Island and the resulting complexities for local governments.

You may be aware that on March 6, 2023, with First Nations leadership, the Province of B.C. committed \$100 million to initially establish a Watershed Security Fund (Fund) and launched the next phase of the development of the Watershed Security Strategy (Strategy) through an Intentions Paper.

We have heard through engagement on the Strategy about the impacts of forestry on B.C.'s watersheds, in particular where there are private managed forest lands. Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship staff are working with colleagues from across government, including the Ministry of Forests, to review the feedback received and develop potential actions related to forestry activities that may be included in the Strategy for consideration by Government later this year.

Part of this work is to also consider how the Strategy might be resourced. With the commitment of the \$100 million, the Fund has been created with the Real Estate Foundation (REFBC) as an interim steward. Together with First Nations, REFBC will establish an enduring co-governed approach for the Fund. We expect to learn more about the Fund over fall/winter 2023/24 and will consider this in our own work as we finalize the Strategy. We appreciate the need for funding to local government for watersheds work and will share the nature of the resolution with the Fund developers.

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Director Penny Cote, AVICC President

The Province of B.C. receives a number of resolutions in the lead up to the UBCM annual convention. You and your constituents may be aware of the long-standing resolution referral process between the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities. The practice is to respond to local government resolutions as a whole once endorsed by UBCM members following the annual convention. Should we have the opportunity, we will provide an update on developing the Strategy and the Fund at that time. In the interim, if you have any questions or would like to discuss the Strategy and Fund further, please do not hesitate to reach out to Jennifer Vigano, Director, Watershed Strategies and Governance at Jennifer.Vigano@gov.bc.ca.

Again, thank you for writing and sharing the results of the resolution with us.

Sincerely,



Nathan Cullen
Minister
Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

pc: Jennifer Vigano, Director, Watershed Strategies and Governance, Ministry of Water,
Land and Resource Stewardship