



September 1, 2026

The Honourable Spencer Chandra Herbert, MLA
Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Sent via email: IRR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Chandra Herbert:

The Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (AVICC) is the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) area association representing the interests of local governments and member First Nations in the Vancouver Island, qathet, the Sunshine Coast, Central Coast and North Coast regions.

Following consideration at the 2026 AVICC Annual Convention, AVICC members endorsed a resolution sponsored by the City of Port Alberni that is relevant to your Ministry. The resolution and supporting background information is included for your review and consideration:

- **Resolution 2026-R35 – Establishment of a Framework for Intergovernmental Relations with First Nations – City of Port Alberni**

The resolution is based on the recognition that meaningful collaboration and engagement between local governments and First Nations is essential to fostering mutual respect, understanding, and shared decision-making on matters affecting communities throughout British Columbia. It highlights that the absence of a consistent and formalized engagement framework can create challenges related to communication, resource sharing, coordinated service delivery, capacity building, and conflict resolution.

AVICC appreciates the ongoing efforts of your Ministry to advance Reconciliation and foster meaningful partnerships that support communities across British Columbia. We are also grateful for the opportunity to connect with you on this issue at the upcoming UBCM Convention. This resolution requests that your Ministry build on your good work by establishing a comprehensive framework for intergovernmental relations with First Nations that includes clear engagement protocols, equitable resource-sharing models, capacity-building initiatives, conflict resolution processes, and mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

The circumstances of each local government and First Nation across the province varies, and relationships between local governments and First Nations are unique within each community. AVICC recognizes that no single approach will meet all circumstances for local governments and First Nations and views a provincial framework as an opportunity for the Province to provide guidance, tools, resources, and support while

maintaining the flexibility necessary to respect local circumstances, existing relationships, and diverse governance structures across the province. We also acknowledge that there are many local governments which lack the resources required to implement a framework without additional capacity funding.

We respectfully request your consideration of this resolution and would welcome a response outlining any current or planned provincial initiatives, supports, guidance, or capacity-building resources intended to strengthen intergovernmental relations between local governments and First Nations.

If you have any questions, or require additional information, please contact Theresa Dennison, AVICC Executive Director, at 236-237-1202 or tdennison@avicc.ca.

Sincerely,



Vanessa Craig
AVICC President
Director, RD Nanaimo, Area B (Gabriola, Mudge, and DeCourcy Islands)

cc:

Sharie Minions, Mayor, City of Port Alberni; sharie_minions@portalberni.ca
Hon. Christine Boyle, MLA, Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs; HMA.Minister@gov.bc.ca
Hon. Rebecca Alty, MP, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations ministrerca-ministercir@rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca
Andrew McGifford, Interim Chief Administrative Officer, City of Port Alberni; andrew_mcgifford@portalberni.ca
Councillor Cori Ramsay, President, Union of BC Municipalities; cori.ramsay@princegeorge.ca
Union of BC Municipalities; ubcm@ubcm.ca

Attachment: R35_Establishment of a Framework for Intergovernmental Relations with First Nations

Date: December 16, 2025
File No: 0390-20-AVICC

RESOLUTION for Consideration by Delegates at the AVICC 2026 AGM & Convention

Request for Advocacy for the Establishment of a Framework for Intergovernmental Relations with First Nations

City of Port Alberni

WHEREAS the Province of British Columbia recognizes the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples, as outlined in the Constitution Act of 1982, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP);

AND WHEREAS meaningful collaboration and engagement between municipal governments and First Nations are essential for fostering mutual respect, understanding, and shared decision-making in matters affecting local communities;

AND WHEREAS the lack of a consistent and formalized framework for intergovernmental relations has led to challenges in communication, resource sharing, and coordinated service delivery between First Nations and local governments;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Council for the City of Port Alberni hereby requests the AVICC & Union of B.C. Municipalities advocate to the provincial and federal governments for the establishment of a comprehensive framework for intergovernmental relations with First Nations;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this framework should include:

- 1. Guidelines for Engagement: Clear protocols for consultation and collaboration between municipalities and First Nations, ensuring that all parties are involved in decision-making processes that affect their communities.*
- 2. Resource Sharing Models: Mechanisms to facilitate the equitable distribution of resources, funding, and support to First Nations and municipal governments to advance shared goals and objectives.*
- 3. Capacity Building Initiatives: Programs to enhance the capacity of both First Nations and local governments to engage in effective intergovernmental relations, including training and development opportunities.*
- 4. Conflict Resolution Processes: Established pathways for addressing disputes or challenges that arise in intergovernmental engagements, fostering a culture of cooperation and mutual respect.*
- 5. Monitoring and Evaluation: A system for assessing the effectiveness of the framework and its implementation, allowing for continuous improvement and adaptation based on the needs of the communities involved.*

Date: December 16, 2025
File No: 0390-20-AVICC

RESOLUTION for Consideration by Delegates at the AVICC 2026 Convention

Request for Advocacy for the Establishment of a Framework for Intergovernmental Relations with First Nations

City of Port Alberni

The relationship between municipal governments and First Nations in British Columbia is crucial for fostering sustainable communities, promoting economic development, and addressing social and environmental challenges. Despite the recognition of Indigenous rights at both the federal and provincial levels, there exists a significant gap in formalized intergovernmental relations that can facilitate effective collaboration and mutual understanding. This backgrounder outlines the need for a structured framework to enhance these relationships, the benefits of such a framework, and the steps that can be taken to implement it.

The Constitution Act of 1982 acknowledges the rights of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Moreover, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) sets international standards for the treatment of Indigenous communities, emphasizing the importance of free, prior, and informed consent in decision-making processes.

Many municipalities and First Nations face challenges related to:

- **Lack of Communication:** Insufficient dialogue can lead to misunderstandings and missed opportunities for collaboration.
- **Resource Allocation:** Disparities in funding and resources hinder the ability of both municipal governments and First Nations to deliver essential services effectively.
- **Cultural Misunderstandings:** Differences in governance structures, values, and traditions can create barriers to effective partnerships.
- **Conflict Resolution:** The absence of established processes for addressing disputes can escalate tensions and hinder progress.

Benefits of a Framework for Intergovernmental Relations

1. **Enhanced Collaboration:** A formalized framework would promote ongoing dialogue and cooperation, leading to more effective governance and service delivery.
2. **Equitable Resource Distribution:** Clearly defined resource-sharing models would ensure that both municipalities and First Nations can access the funding and support they need to thrive.
3. **Capacity Building:** Training initiatives and capacity-building programs would empower both parties to engage effectively in intergovernmental relations.

4. **Conflict Resolution Mechanisms:** Established processes for resolving disputes would foster trust and respect, enabling a more collaborative approach to governance.
5. **Improved Community Outcomes:** By working together, municipalities and First Nations can better address local issues, promote economic development, and enhance the quality of life for all residents.

Proposed framework components to include but not be limited to:

1. **Guidelines for Engagement:** Establish clear protocols for consultation and collaboration, ensuring all parties are engaged in relevant decision-making processes.
2. **Resource Sharing Models:** Develop equitable mechanisms for distributing resources and funding to support shared objectives.
3. **Capacity Building Initiatives:** Implement training programs to enhance the skills and knowledge of municipal and First Nations leaders and staff.
4. **Conflict Resolution Processes:** Create established pathways for addressing disputes that may arise in intergovernmental engagements.
5. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Implement a system to assess the framework's effectiveness and adapt it based on community needs and feedback.

The establishment of a comprehensive framework for intergovernmental relations with First Nations is essential for fostering meaningful partnerships and ensuring that the rights and interests of Indigenous communities are respected and upheld. By advocating for this framework through AVICC and the Union of B.C. Municipalities, we can work towards a more collaborative future that benefits all residents of British Columbia.

Yours truly,
CITY OF PORT ALBERNI



Sharie Minions
Mayor

c: City Council
M. Fox, CAO
S., Director of Corporate Services
UBCM Member Municipalities