BC Urban Mayors Caucus Ready to Work with UBCM and Province on Local Government Financial Resiliency

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BRITISH COLUMBIA – At the annual Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) conference this week delegates adopted the report, "Ensuring Local Government Financial Resiliency: Today's Recovery and Tomorrow's New Economy." This report makes 20 recommendations on reforming local government financing that, when implemented, will create positive outcomes for the provincial government and local governments, and strong, resilient communities across BC.

"The BC Urban Mayors' Caucus (BCUMC) is pleased to see the strong alignment between these recommendations and the BCUMC's Blueprint for BC's Urban Future," said Kelowna Mayor and BCUMC Co-Chair Colin Basran. "Better mental health supports so that police aren't left to fill in the gaps, increased funding for housing for working people, and reforming the antiquated property tax system are all key priorities for us."

"Ensuring Local Government Financial Resiliency" calls on the Province to work with local governments to address significant municipal cost drivers like Community Safety, Attainable Housing and Climate Change. The report calls for a partnership and ongoing dialogue with the Province to addresses issues common to both local governments and the provincial government.

"We recognize that all 20 recommendations can't be implemented at the same time," said Victoria Mayor and BCUMC Co-Chair Lisa Helps. "The BCUMC has prioritized the recommendations that we'd like to see action on before then end of this municipal term. We're willing to put in the work and to collaborate closely with UBCM and the Province to make these much-needed changes happen."

BCUMC's priority recommendations:

- Work together to review the current local government property tax system and the impacts of the New Economy.
- The Province continue to advocate with the federal government in the continuation of federal/provincial cost-share agreements at the current or greater level.

- The Province commit to work with UBCM to identify the appropriate revenue sources that may both increase funding available for attainable housing and incentivize the use of residential property for housing.
- The Province to commit to partner with UBCM and local governments, recognizing and reversing the historic downloading of jurisdictional responsibility on housing, in the development and implementation of a province-wide homelessness strategy.
- Work with the Province and key stakeholders, recognizing and reversing the historic downloading of jurisdictional responsibility for mental health and addiction services on local governments and locally-funded police, to develop a comprehensive strategy to address mental health and addictions patients.

These recommendations align closely with and will advance the BCUMC's Blueprint for BC's Urban Future which can be found here.

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About the BC Urban Mayors' Caucus

The BC Urban Mayors' Caucus is an informal, non-partisan group of mayors from Abbotsford, Burnaby, Coquitlam, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nanaimo, New Westminster, Prince George, Richmond, Saanich, Surrey, Vancouver and Victoria, representing over 55 per cent of the province's total population. The group came together in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and acts as a unified voice on critical issues facing their communities and urban British Columbia. www.bcurbanmayorscaucus.ca