

Ministry of Forests – Honourable Ravi Parmar

Topic #1 – *meeting request from last year*

Expansion of Community Forests

Background

With the announcement of the new Annual Allowable Cut in the Mackenzie TSA, the timing is now for government to increase the tenure volume for the McLeod Lake Mackenzie Community Forest (MLMCF). The need to redistribute existing tenure to prioritize communities and area-based tenures is paramount to the future of our community.

The dramatic loss in Industrial Tax resulting from the closure of the Paper Excellence Pulp Mill and Canfor sawmill has put the provision of services to our residents in jeopardy. The shareholder dividends provided by the MLMCF to the District of Mackenzie has helped to address that shortfall.

Request

The District continues to request an increase of 50,000 m³ of volume be awarded to the MLMCF.

Topic #2 – *meeting request from last year*

Forest Service Road Closures

Background

In May 2023, the Parsnip West Forest Service Road (PWFSR) was closed at 41 km at Lamonti Creek due to a bridge washout. There is no planned repair date. The closure of this road reduces access to high recreational value within the region, including several Provincially established recreation sites and trails that are well used by visitors and local residents. With the downturn of the forest economy, the District has been working towards economic diversification, in particular a focus on tourism. Investment in re-opening the bridge and continuing maintenance would support local and regional efforts to transition their reliance on a forestry-based economy.

Request

The District requests the Province invest in a phased multi-year program to restore access sequentially to the forest service road to support our continued transition to a diversified economy including tourism.

Ministry of Health – Honourable Josie Osborne

Topic #1 – *from last year*

Seniors Housing in Mackenzie

Background

In 2020, the District finalized its Housing Needs Assessment, in which a lack of seniors housing for Mackenzie residents was identified. Since then, the senior population has only since grown in the community and the lack of housing is still a challenge. There is a need for a full spectrum of care in our community with a variety of housing options for our senior residents so they can continue to age in place in Mackenzie.

Request

The District requests the Ministry of Health and BC Housing be more collaborative and increase communication with their rural community partners to discuss current operations and potential opportunities for expanded seniors focused housing services in Mackenzie so we align with other small rural communities in the north.

Ministry of Finance – Honourable Brenda Bailey

Topic #1

Resource Revenue Sharing

Background

In 2024, the Province of BC announced providing \$250 million over five years to support 21 local governments that make up the Northwest Resource Benefits Alliance. Funding was to be used to support the planning and construction of local government infrastructure needed to support new industrial development and create liveable communities for their workforce. A similar agreement exists with the communities located in the North East of BC.

The District is also seeking an equitable share of benefits arising from current and future economic growth in the region. The rural communities located within the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George endeavour to create viable, healthy, sustainable communities, but are also severely challenged by substantial services and infrastructure deficits.

Request

That the Provincial Government commence revenue sharing negotiations with the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George, District of Mackenzie, Village of McBride, and Village of Valemount.

Minister of Energy and Climate Solutions – Honourable Adrian Dix

Topic #1

BC Hydro – Power Availability and Transparency

Background

Mackenzie has lost more than 400 jobs and over a million dollars in industrial tax revenue in the past 5 years due to the state of the forest industry in this Province. The District has been actively looking at ways to diversify its economy through investment attraction and support for our local enterprises in seeking new opportunities. The lack of information and transparency from BC Hydro with regard to available power in the industrial site of Mackenzie is a barrier to these activities. Following the closure of two major forestry operations, the District has been unsuccessful in receiving accurate information about how much power is still available to support new industry.

Request

That the Province requires BC Hydro to prioritize rural community economic development and that they are transparent about power availability and work strategically with rural communities to support economic diversification and job creation.