



March 21, 2023

Steve Forseth, President
Sheila Boehm, Vice President
Judy Greenaway, Vice President

Reference: 315004

North Central Local Government Association
1511 3rd Avenue
Prince George BC V2L 3G3

Dear Steve Forseth, Sheila Boehm and Judy Greenaway:

Re: Meeting and Resolutions

I am writing to follow up on our meeting of January 9, 2023, where Deputy Minister Kaye Krishna, Associate Deputy Minister Kevin Richter and I discussed with you the transportation investment priorities of the North Central Local Government Association (NCLGA). We appreciated the opportunity to meet with you, and I am pleased to provide more information about some of the ministry's investments in NCLGA communities.

The ministry is committed to ensuring our highway network is resilient and reliable, both now and in the future. As we invest in our highway network, we are using the highest design standards to ensure our infrastructure can withstand future climate-related weather events. Since 2015, all designs of provincial highway infrastructure—including new, rehabilitated and rebuilt infrastructure—must take into account future climate events. We are working collaboratively with several ministries, First Nations, regional districts, municipalities and other organizations as we explore ways to build a more resilient transportation network. Ministry staff are also working with climate specialists at the Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium to obtain future climate data that will inform our designs.

In 2022/23, the provincial government is forecasting to spend approximately \$575 million on bridge, highway, and sideroad improvements, with over \$150 million invested in the Northern region. This represents the largest investment ever in our highway preservation program. As part of the overall preservation program investments, the ministry has committed \$345 million over 10 years to mitigate the impacts of climate change. This program will target vulnerable infrastructure in priority areas to better withstand devastating floods, slides and wildfires.

The ministry has also continued to invest in the [Cariboo Road Recovery Projects](#), which will deliver long-term solutions to the slides and washouts that occurred on roads between Williams Lake and Quesnel in 2020 and 2021. The Province is seeking federal funds to help pay for these repairs, which are estimated to cost up to \$1 billion.

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The ministry's capital expansion program increased to almost \$1 billion in 2022/23. These investments have allowed the ministry to deliver projects in the North and Central regions of B.C., including:

- Major rehabilitation of the Simon Fraser Bridge in Prince George (\$20.5 million)
- Highway 16 Toboggan Passing Lane Project near Smithers (\$7.3 million provincial contribution with \$2.4 million federal contribution)
- Highway 97 and Racing Road improvements in Quesnel (\$11.3 million provincial contribution with \$7.7 million federal contribution)
- Highway 16 Commercial Vehicle Inspection Station near Terrace (\$19.2 million provincial contribution with \$15 million federal contribution)
- Significant initial planning and design work on a long-term solution for the future of the Taylor Bridge in the Peace.

The ministry also continues to improve our ability to respond to emergencies. In the 2021 Telegraph Creek Road freshet event, which saw over 50 sites of road and structure damage, we worked closely with the Tahltan Nation on the repairs. Through this collaboration, we were able to reopen the road to limited traffic within three weeks and fully reopen it within the year. Additional work to increase the resiliency of the road continues.

We know that our highways and sideroads are often the sole means of transport for rural and Indigenous communities, and we are committed to continuing to invest in our network to preserve its safety and reliability so these communities can prosper. We will continue to build partnerships and capacity in the communities we serve, so we can draw on these resources to respond to emergencies quickly.

I regret that we did not have the opportunity to meet again during your trip to Victoria in March. I appreciate your organization's advocacy, and I look forward to connecting with you again in the future. If you have any questions or require any assistance in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact Darrell Gunn, Executive Director, Northern Region, at 250 645-9609 or Darrell.Gunn@gov.bc.ca. He will be pleased to help you.

I hope this information is helpful. Thank you again for taking the time to meet with me.

Sincerely,



Rob Fleming
Minister