



# Standing Committee Report

## Electoral Area Services Committee

**To:** Electoral Area Services Committee  
**From:** Sally Ginter, Chief Administrative Officer  
**Date:** December 11, 2025

**Subject:** Inclusive Regional Governance Final Report 2025

---

**Objective:** To seek the Electoral Area Services Committee's endorsement of the Inclusive Regional Governance Final report for Regional Board approval

### Discussion:

This report highlights the strong ongoing partnership between the Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) and Westbank First Nation (WFN) as they work together to advance inclusive regional governance and chart a path for WFN to become a full voting member of the Regional District Board ("Board").

### Background:

Supported by a \$50,000 study grant from the BC Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs (Ministry), this work forms part of the Ministry's Inclusive Regional Governance Initiative (Initiative). The Initiative aligns with the Province of British Columbia's 2022-2027 Action Plan (Action Plan) under the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA), which supports First Nations participation in regional district boards outside of modern treaties. The Initiative reflects a shared commitment to reconciliation and equitable governance.

After evaluating five potential governance models in [June 2024](#), the Regional Board and Westbank First Nation identified Model Five as the preferred and most viable approach for further exploration. Model Five is a tailored framework that respects WFN's self-government status while integrating effectively with RDCO's regional governance system. For more information on the models, please reference Appendix B of the Inclusive Regional Governance Final Report 2025.

A decision-making model and the direction to form an Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG) made up of RDCO and WFN staff members, was supported by the Regional Board and WFN Chief and Council in June 2024. For more information on the decision-making model and Terms of Reference for the IWG, please reference Appendix C of the Inclusive Regional Governance Final Report 2025.

Through the Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG), a comprehensive review of governance models, technical requirements, and legislative considerations has been undertaken. The last update was provided to the Board in [February 2025](#). The key considerations explored by the IWG include:

- **Governance Structure (Legislative and Policy):** Designing a governance approach that reflects WFN's inherent right of self-government while integrating effectively with RDCO's regional system and broader provincial and federal frameworks.

- **Voting Structure and Representation:** Determining a fair and effective approach to WFN's representation and voting on the RDCO Board, including considerations for non-Member residents on Westbank Lands (reserves).
- **Service Participation:** Transitioning WFN from purchasing services through a Local Services Agreement, to fully participating in the design, development and adoption of RDCO services – across both mandatory and optional services.
- **Financial Considerations:** Examining cost-sharing, taxation, borrowing, and liability requirements associated with full membership.
- **Planning Frameworks:** Exploring alignment of regional and First Nation planning frameworks, including RDCO's Regional Growth Strategy and Official Community Plans, with WFN's Comprehensive Community Plan and Land Use Plans.
- **Emergency Management:** Enhancing joint readiness and response under the new Emergency and Disaster Management Act.

For a more in-depth review of the topics explored by the IWG, reference Appendix H in the Inclusive Regional Governance Final Report 2025. For the outstanding issues that require additional policy direction or legislative change, reference Appendix I in Inclusive Regional Governance Final Report 2025. For a summary of the topics explored by IWG meeting, refer to the Inclusive Regional Governance Final Report 2025.

### Next Steps:

The RDCO's next steps include:

- **Final reporting:** Forward the final report to the Regional Board and WFN Chief and Council for consideration.
- **Submit Final Report:** Deliver the final report to the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs.
- **Advocate for Support:** Continue to advocate for advancement of the Inclusive Governance mandate under BC's DRIPA Action Plan.
- **Maintain Provincial Engagement:** Continue ongoing dialogue with the Ministry as policy direction and legislative pathways are determined.
- **Prepare for Implementation:** Develop readiness plans for governance integration.

### Recommendation(s):

**THAT** the Electoral Area Services Committee endorses the Inclusive Regional Governance Final Report as attached to the report from the Chief Administrative Officer dated December 11, 2025.

---

Respectfully submitted by: Jodie Foster, Director of Communications and Information Services

Approved for Agenda: Sally Ginter, Chief Administrative Officer

---

Attachment(s): 1. RDCO-WFN Inclusive Regional Governance Final Report 2025  
2. Inclusive Regional Governance presentation

---