



October 27, 2021

Ref: 268110

Gail Given, Chair
and Members of the Board
Regional District of Central Okanagan
1450 K.L.O. Rd
Kelowna BC V1W 3Z4

Dear Chair Given and Board Members:

Thank you to your delegation for meeting with me during this year's virtual Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Annual Convention two-week process. It was a pleasure to hear from you in my first UBCM Convention experience as Minister, and the issues you brought forward were of great interest to me.

First, I would like to commend the resiliency of first responders and members of the North Westside communities, as they recently had to endure the longest wildfire evacuation in the history of the Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO). And I also again extend my deepest sympathies to those owners whose properties suffered significant losses from the fire. As your local government supports the community in progressing along the road to recovery, Ministry of Municipal Affairs staff are available to provide advice and assistance as needed.

At our meeting we discussed the RDCO's Restructure Planning Grant application for a governance and services study for the North Westside communities. As you know, I recently approved a restructure planning grant to the RDCO in the amount of \$60,000 to facilitate a governance and services study. Ministry staff are working with RDCO staff on the terms and conditions of this grant. In the meantime, if you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact Barrie Nicholls, Program Analyst, Governance and Structure Branch, by email at: Barrie.Nicholls@gov.bc.ca, or by telephone at: 778 698-3574.

Regarding First Nations' participation at the RDCO board table, it was interesting to hear about the RDCO's perspectives and current relationship with the Westbank First Nation. The RDCO has been a leader by having the Westbank First Nation at the board table in an ex-officio role for several years. The ministry is committed to supporting local governments to advance reconciliation initiatives and would like to hear more from the RDCO on how Indigenous perspectives can be included in regional governance, recognizing that the needs and interests of each nation and regional district are different.

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Your staff may also reach out to Mr. Nicholls with your perspectives on the topic of First Nations' participation. The RDCO may also be interested in reaching out to other local governments, such as the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD), to hear their perspectives on the matter. Chair John Jack of the ACRD can be reached by email at: jjack@acrd.bc.ca, or by telephone at: 250 720-2700.

I appreciate the RDCO's interest in supporting good board governance by reviewing your voting unit and changing it from 4,000 to 5,500. Demographic conditions can affect regional district board governance, particularly when one jurisdiction's population is growing rapidly over others. I appreciate the hard work that has been done among board members to try to find a proposed voting unit number that would meet most interests. I understand that you would like to see an amendment to the RDCO Letters Patent before the 2022 general local elections. As stated at the meeting, ministry staff are working diligently to position government to make an informed decision and achieve this goal. For status updates on this proposal, RDCO staff may contact Lisa Hoskins, Program Analyst, Governance and Structure Branch, by email at: Lisa.Hoskins@gov.bc.ca, or by telephone at: 236 478-1644.

I found it very valuable to hear from you and other communities directly at the UBCM Convention. Meetings such as this help me better understand the issues or opportunities your community is facing.

Thank you again to your delegation for taking the time to meet with me. I look forward to seeing you—hopefully in person—at UBCM Convention next year.

Sincerely,



Josie Osborne
Minister

pc: Lisa Hoskins, Program Analyst, Governance and Structure Branch
Barrie Nicholls, Program Analyst, Governance and Structure Branch