



September 20, 2019

Ref: 248966

Her Worship Mayor Lisa Helps
City of Victoria
1 Centennial Square
Victoria BC V8W 1P6

Dear Mayor Helps:

Thank you for your correspondence to the Honourable Scott Fraser, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, and me, regarding amending the Community Charter to authorize local governments to engage in reconciliation dialogue with the First Nations. As Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and responsible for the Community Charter, I am pleased to respond.

I very much respect the effort made by the Victoria City Council to engage in reconciliation dialogue with First Nations. As you know, our government is committed to true, lasting reconciliation with Indigenous people in British Columbia and fully adopting and implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

We support local governments working to build strong relationships with neighbouring First Nations and Indigenous governments. Local governments are empowered to do this work under the existing legislative framework, which emphasizes local autonomy and independence, and collaboration between all orders of government.

This was further emphasized last year with the renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) and the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation to support the advancement of reconciliation at the community level.

Proposals to amend the Community Charter should be brought to the Province's attention through the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) resolution process, or through some other form of direct contact by UBCM with the Ministry.

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Should a resolution receive widespread local government support and be endorsed by the UBCM membership at an Annual Convention, the Province would then need to undertake thorough policy analysis that identifies the implications of those changes to determine if a legislative solution would in fact be required and the nature of such legislation, including consideration of the principles supporting the existing framework.

I continue to encourage your council and all councils and boards to consider ways to advance reconciliation initiatives within the existing legislative framework, including, as you've suggested, amending the City's procedural bylaws or making use of other programs such as the Community to Community (C2C) program that was expanded last year to fund reconciliation activities.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Robinson', written over a horizontal line.

Selina Robinson

Minister

pc: Honourable Scott Fraser, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation