

March 27, 2020

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

MAYOR'S OFFICE

APR 03 2020

VICTORIA, B.C.

Dear Mayor Helps:

Re: Provincial Response to 2019 Resolutions

UBCM has received the Province's response(s) to your Council resolution(s) from 2019. Please find the enclosed resolution(s) and their provincial response(s).

Responses received from the Province have been posted to the UBCM web site under Resolutions & Policy.

If you have any questions about this process, please contact Jamee Justason, Resolutions and Policy Analyst at 604.270.8226 ext. 100 or jjustason@ubcm.ca

Yours truly,



Maja Tait
UBCM President

Enclosure

Whereas the Province of British Columbia responded to a housing affordability crisis in 2016 with legislation empowering the City of Vancouver to introduce a surtax on vacant residential properties, resulting in \$38-million in revenues for that community in 2018 and creating a strong disincentive to leaving properties vacant;

And whereas communities across British Columbia face housing affordability pressures, while a portion of the housing supply in all communities remains vacant, including properties that have remained derelict for years or decades, and vacant and derelict buildings pose substantial risks in terms of public safety in communities, as well as liveability and desirability for nearby and adjoining neighbourhoods and properties:

Therefore be it resolved that the Province of British Columbia extend the authority to introduce a surtax on vacant residential properties to local governments across British Columbia, providing communities with the discretion to decide whether to introduce an additional tax to discourage vacant and derelict buildings, and encourage the occupancy, maintenance, and improvement of buildings to address housing affordability and public safety.

Convention Decision: Endorsed

Provincial Response

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Affordable and available housing is of paramount concern to the Province. To address this concern, the province is taking a number of tangible steps, including: working with the federal government to develop a new National Housing Strategy and implementing a 10 year housing plan to help people find a home.

One part of the plan is a speculation tax that targets, among other things, vacant homes. Currently, this tax focuses on large urban centres, which face the most serious housing problems, and addresses the issue of property owners who do not pay taxes in BC but take housing stock out of the market.

As affordable housing is a systemic provincial issue, the speculation tax is best administered at the provincial level. Also, the Province has the most appropriate audit and compliance tools for administering the tax. Revenue from this tax will help to fund important housing affordability initiatives in BC.

Designing an authority for a vacancy tax for local governments would require amendments to the Community Charter. There are varied interests for this measure among local governments across BC, indicating a need for further discussion before considering legislation beyond what was granted to the City of Vancouver in 2016. While enabling legislation does not need to be used by every community, it would have to be usable – and under the Community Charter, that means useable across a range of communities throughout the province.

The Province will continue to monitor the effectiveness of Vancouver's tax and listen to the views of local governments across BC on this matter. Any such work would need to consider the more recent addition of the provincial speculation tax in some areas, as both taxes are intended to have the same functional effect of increasing vacancy rates by encouraging property owners to rent their vacant properties. There would need to be greater understanding of the effect of having two taxes with the same purpose in these regions of the province.

Regarding a surtax on derelict properties, municipalities already have the authority to regulate, prohibit, and impose requirements on unsightly premises. Included in this authority is the ability to establish a fine for violation of municipal bylaws and impose fees for municipal works done on the property. Therefore, the Province will not be able to explore a tax on derelict properties at this time.

Whereas almost 500,000 individuals in BC experience food insecurity, and Canada remains one of the only Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) nations without a national school food program and Canada's current patchwork of school food programming reaches only a small percentage of students;

And whereas school food programs have been shown to increase children's consumption of vegetables, fruits and other healthy foods and decrease the consumption of unhealthy ones; improve students' mental health, including reductions in behavioural and emotional problems; improve cognitive skills and increase scholastic success:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM advocate to the provincial government for a Universal Healthy School Food Program that will enable all students in BC to have access to healthy meals at school, building on existing programs and including food education to serve culturally appropriate, local, sustainable food to the fullest extent possible.

Convention Decision: Endorsed

Provincial Response

Ministry of Education

In 2017/18, the Ministry provided approximately \$52.4M to 51 school districts to fund school meal programs through CommunityLINK and the Vulnerable Student Supplement.

Ministry staff are currently working to understand the current landscape of existing school meal initiatives and approaches in school districts. Work to date has also included discussions with external partners, school districts, health authorities, Non-Government Organization sponsors, Non-Profit organizations and community supports.

School meal programs in BC are designed and coordinated by individual school districts and research shows 71% of schools provide some form of a food program(s), ranging from occasional snacks to breakfast and lunch.

The Ministry is engaged in conversation with the Federal Government on their announcement towards the creation of a National School Food Program.

Whereas youth have a strong interest in the future of local communities;

And whereas empowering young people to participate in democratic processes fosters ongoing and active civic participation:

Therefore be it resolved that the Province of British Columbia revise the voting age for local government elections to 16 years of age.

Convention Decision: Endorsed

Provincial Response

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Government is interested in encouraging active civic engagement among all British Columbians.

Traditionally, the voting age in local and provincial elections have been the same and requires voters to be 18 years of age at the time of voting; this ensures both consistency and helps to minimize public confusion in relation to voting.

Lowering the voting age for local elections would require careful consideration and analysis including considering matters such as exploring reasons of age requirements on voter eligibility, ease of administration and the implications of a divergence in the voting age for federal, provincial and local elections. Issues such as the adoption of provincial voters lists for local elections and voter identification requirements would also need to be considered.

Currently, no Canadian jurisdiction permits youth to vote in regular elections. Several jurisdictions worldwide, including Austria, Argentina, and Scotland, have lowered the voting age to 16. Future work will include reviewing the experiences of these and other jurisdictions.

Whereas the transportation sector is the second-largest contributor of GHG, some of the largest reductions in GHGs are possible through facilitating a mode shift to low carbon mobility options, such as increased ridership of emissions-free transit;

And whereas transforming regional public transit could drastically increase mode-shift to clean public transit system:

Therefore be it resolved that the Province of British Columbia and BC Transit take immediate actions to support and provide funding for transformational improvements to regional BC transit infrastructure to promote and enable rapid mode shift to transit, including transitioning the BC Transit fleet to zero emissions as early in the 2020s as possible.

Convention Decision: Endorsed

Provincial Response

Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

Government is committed to improving public transit in BC. A strong public transit system reduces greenhouse gas emissions by providing an affordable alternative to auto travel. Encouraging more British Columbians to shift their travel from autos to transit produces lower carbon emissions per person-trip. Public transit also takes more car trips off the road, reducing traffic congestion, and supports the development of more compact liveable communities.

Together with federal and local governments, BC is investing in public transit infrastructure in communities across the province. In the next 10 years, more than \$8 billion will be invested under the Public Transit Infrastructure Fund and the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program to improve the capacity, accessibility and safety of transit systems. This includes SkyTrain extensions upgrades and new SkyTrain cars in Metro Vancouver, and new buses, passenger exchanges, and bus shelters across the rest of the province.

Ministry staff and BC Transit are undertaking work on the transition to low emission fleet. In March 2019, in response to direction from the Province, BC Transit released its Low Carbon Fleet Program which identifies a pathway for replacing BC Transit's bus fleet over the next decade with lower and zero emission vehicles to meet CleanBC targets.

BC Transit plans to start buying only electric heavy-duty buses in 2023, with a target of creating a fully electric fleet by 2040. In July 2019, the Government of Canada, the Province and BC Transit announced the purchase of the first 10 battery electric buses for deployment in 2021. BC Transit is also introducing new CNG buses and fueling infrastructure to Victoria and the Central Fraser Valley to reduce emissions.

Whereas the Federal government recently released a scientific report that reveals that Canada is warming at twice the global rate, the Provincial government recently approved a \$5.35-billion package of tax incentives for a \$40-billion LNG Canada megaproject, supported by \$1.275 billion from the Federal government, and, according to a 2015 report by the International Monetary Fund, the annual Federal government subsidy to the fossil fuel industry is \$46 billion;

And whereas the funding formula for local governments has changed little since 1867 with local governments receiving roughly 8 cents of every tax dollar leaving them unprepared for the emerging and significant costs of mitigation and adaptation to climate change:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM call on the Provincial government to end all subsidies to fossil fuel companies and to invest the money instead in climate change mitigation and adaptation activities being undertaken by local governments in a predictable and regularized funding formula;

And be it further resolved that the UBCM through the FCM call on the Federal government to end all subsidies to fossil fuel companies and to invest the money instead in climate change mitigation and adaptation activities being undertaken by local governments in a predictable and regularized funding formula.

Convention Decision: **Endorsed**

Provincial Response

Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources

The Government of British Columbia is actively supporting local governments to address climate change through initiatives under CleanBC.

The CleanBC Communities Fund supports cost-sharing of infrastructure projects in communities across the province. These projects will focus on the management of renewable energy, access to clean-energy transportation, improved energy efficiency of buildings and the generation of clean energy. In 2019, both the Federal and Provincial governments committed up to \$63 million in funding for projects under this program.

CleanBC outlines the British Columbia's strategy to shift away from fossil fuels and towards clean and renewable energy and at the same time foster jobs and economic growth.

The British Columbia Government does not provide subsidies to the fossil fuel industry. Royalty credit programs are used to encourage oil and gas investment in all jurisdictions and are mechanisms to recognize the additional cost associated with expensive resource development in remote and uncertain areas by receiving a reduced share on the Crown's production.

The British Columbia Government is encouraging investment in LNG without giving subsidies or imposing significant costs on future generations. In March 2018, the British Columbia Government made a commitment subject to receiving LNG Canada's (LNGC) notice of positive final investment decision (FID) by November 30, 2018 to implement a framework to improve the competitiveness of the LNG sector. This framework did not involve the expenditure of public funds – rather it allowed the province to attract \$40 billion of new investment and \$23 billion in new revenues over 40 years – prosperity that will help pay for services for people. LNGC announced and gave notice of a positive FID October 1, 2018.

The commitment was to prepare for Cabinet or Legislature's consideration 4 Measures intended to help improve the Project's competitive position:

- 1. Access to BC Hydro's industrial (instead of LNG) electricity rate.*
- 2. Provincial Sales Tax exemption for the construction of the LNG facility, along with separate Operating Performance Payments Agreement with the British Columbia government.*
- 3. Repeal of Liquefied Natural Gas Income Tax Act and re-introduce a natural gas income tax credit.*
- 4. Allow LNG facilities to participate in Clean Growth (now CleanBC) Industrial Incentive Program.*

Whereas the world's leading climate scientists have warned that we have less than 12 years to meet our climate targets, and early action is required to avoid significant costs and impacts to social and environmental well-being in our communities, and worldwide, local governments are uniquely positioned to enable this mobilization effort, in a coordinated and integrated fashion across sectors, enabling individual action with timely and accurate information, incentives, directions, coordination, tools, targets and scalable, impactful programs;

And whereas local governments GHG reduction plans will be effectively and expeditiously realized through a dedicated focus on cutting the most impactful GHG sources, including: retrofitting existing buildings to high-efficiency standards; renewable electricity; elimination of fossil fuel heating sources; shifting people to transit, active transportation, and renewably powered mobility options; and the electrification of commercial and passenger vehicle fleets, the complexity and pace/progress of GHG reductions in both local governments and community require additional resources and planning to reduce risks of missing interim and longer GHG and renewable energy targets:

Therefore be it resolved that local governments call on the Governments of Canada and British Columbia to pursue the following immediate sector actions to promote and enable GHG reductions and realize important social and economic co-benefits:

1. Make available all ICBC municipal vehicle km/make/model/fuel economy information.
2. Continue the development and implementation of world-class low carbon fuel standards.
3. Fully invest in delivery of the zero-emission vehicles sales targets as established in the CleanBC Plan.
4. Continue progressive and direct funding programs and partnerships for municipal low-carbon initiatives, including building retrofit, transportation, waste management and other priority and shared GHG reduction programs.

Convention Decision: **Endorsed**

Provincial Response

Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

ICBC:

The Province does not have access to transportation fuel or vehicle kilometre travelled information to allow the reporting of transport sector emissions at the community level. However, the Province and ICBC are exploring approaches to collecting information on annual vehicle use at the community level.

The Climate Action Secretariat is currently conducting quality assurance/ quality control on ICBC registration data with local governments on aggregated vehicle registration data by community. The Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources (EMPR) will also be publishing quarterly and annual reports on the transportation sector, and progress of the Zero-Emission Vehicles (ZEV) policies and programming, including light-duty vehicle registration and sales.

Low Carbon Fuel Standards:

The Government's CleanBC plan includes the commitment to make our fuel cleaner by increasing the Renewable and Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS) to 20 percent by 2025, 30 percent by 2030. In addition, to meet the demand for cleaner fuels, CleanBC includes the commitment to support production, in BC, of 650 million litres of renewable gasoline and diesel by 2030. The Province is engaging with stakeholders regarding the LCFS and expects to introduce legislation and approve regulations in spring 2020.

Zero Emission Vehicles:

The ZEV Act was passed on May 29, 2019. The ZEV Act requires automakers to meet ZEV sales targets; reaching 10 percent of new light-duty vehicle sales by 2025, 30 percent by 2030 and 100 percent by 2040. The ZEV Act applies to new vehicles for retail sale or lease, with annual requirements for automakers to meet, starting for model year 2020.

To further support developing the ZEV sector and meeting the targets, Budget 2019 included new funding of \$90 million for BC's Clean Energy Vehicle (CEV) program.

While the ZEV Act provides the overarching framework for the ZEV standard in the province, some of the more technical components of the legislation are to be prescribed by regulation. EMPR completed

consultations and are establishing regulations for Spring 2020.

Funding Programs and Partnerships:

The Province is currently finalizing the review of projects applying to community green infrastructure funding within the Federal Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program and the Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund (CleanBC Communities Fund, Rural and Northern Communities Infrastructure and Organics Infrastructure Program). Final decisions are anticipated in spring 2020.

Currently, there are no guaranteed future funds for programs under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program. There are additional federal amounts that the Province could choose to utilize by matching with provincial funding. However, the timing of future intakes is not confirmed, as the Province does not yet have approval of provincial matching funds.

The Province will be implementing commitments in CleanBC and will develop additional strategies to help BC and local government partners make progress on their respective climate actions.

2019 B143 Shifting Investment to Low-Emission Transportation

Victoria

Whereas the Prime Minister of Canada and the Premiers of BC and most provinces signed the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change in 2016, endorsing a policy shift that could substantially reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) pollution from transportation while funding public transit improvements, including inter-city and commuter bus and rail service;

And whereas the transportation sector is the second-largest contributor of GHG pollution in Canada, representing 23% of total emissions:

Therefore be it resolved that local governments call on the Governments of Canada and British Columbia to fully implement their commitment in the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, to shift investments “from higher to lower-emitting types of transportation”.

Convention Decision: Endorsed

Provincial Response

Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources

British Columbia is a leader in clean transportation, with a world-leading hydrogen and fuel cell industry, the highest electric vehicle adoption rate in North America in 2019 (9% of new light-duty vehicle sales), and one of the largest public charging networks in Canada. Under CleanBC, BC Hydro, FortisBC, and the Province are continuing to work with local governments and private sector companies to deploy public charging stations for electric vehicles along all primary and secondary highways, and major roads throughout British Columbia.

BC introduced the Clean Energy Vehicle Program in 2011 and has since committed more than \$195 million to make Zero Emission Vehicles more affordable and reduce GHG emissions.

The Clean Energy Vehicle (CEV) Program has been highly successful in: reducing market barriers; encouraging the adoption of CEVs by British Columbians; leveraging private, municipal and federal investment in CEVs and infrastructure in BC; and supporting new economic opportunities in the CEV sector. The CEV Program provides incentives for zero-emission light-duty vehicles, trucks, buses, and airport and port ground equipment, and makes investments in infrastructure, training, and public outreach.

Budget 2019 includes over \$107 million to help British Columbians switch to clean transportation options including \$90 million for CEV Program initiatives. The CleanBC-GoElectric suite of programs supports rebates for vehicles and infrastructure across all vehicle classes, in addition to research, training, public awareness and economic development in the clean transportation sector.

On May 29, 2019 the Province also passed the Zero-Emission Vehicles Act (ZEV Act), delivering on a key commitment the government made in its CleanBC plan. The ZEV Act will require that automakers ensure an increasing percentage of vehicle sales in BC are zero-emission models, offering British Columbians more choice of ZEVs.

CleanBC also made a commitment to speed up the switch to cleaner fuels in the transportation sector by increasing the low carbon fuel standard to 20% by 2030, and increasing the supply of cleaner fuels in BC. Lastly, CleanBC also committed to make vehicles run cleaner by increasing tailpipe emissions standards for vehicles sold after 2025.