

May 17, 2017

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

MAYOR'S OFFICE

MAY 25 2017

VICTORIA, B.C.

Dear Mayor Helps:

Re: 2016 Resolutions

Please find attached the provincial response to the 2016 resolution(s) put forward by your Council and endorsed by the UBCM membership at Convention.

I trust this information will be of assistance to you. Please feel free to contact Reiko Tagami, UBCM Information & Resolutions Coordinator, with any questions.

Tel: 604.270.8226 ext. 115 Email: rtagami@ubcm.ca

Sincerely,



Councillor Murry Krause
President

Enclosure

Whereas the BC Supreme Court upheld local government land use authority with respect to the disposal of contaminated soils in the case of Cowichan Valley (Regional District) v. Cobble Hill Holdings Ltd., 2016 BCSC 489;

And whereas the risk remains that local government land use regulations relating to disposal of contaminated soils may be overridden by provincial Order-in-Council:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM call on the Province of British Columbia to respect local government land use authority and provide for thorough and appropriate consideration of local government input and land use regulations in the contaminated soils permitting process.

Convention Decision: Endorsed

Provincial Response

Ministry of Environment

Environmental Management Act (EMA) authorizations address discharges of waste to the environment. Land Use, and more specifically, zoning is the responsibility of the local government. The EMA letter of transmittal, which accompanies the permit, reminds all permittees that it is their responsibility to abide by all other legislative requirements, including local zoning requirements.

Whereas British Columbians with disabilities encounter a variety of physical, sensory and technological barriers as well as ones related to communication, education, employment, attitudes and many others on a daily basis;

And whereas the Government of British Columbia launched a non-mandatory, non-legislated initiative entitled "Accessibility 2024" in 2014 with the goal of making BC the most progressive province in Canada for people with disabilities by the year 2024;

And whereas both the Province of Ontario and the Province of Manitoba have enacted disability legislation with the Province of Nova Scotia working toward the introduction and enactment of disability legislation in 2016;

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM believes it is important to achieve a barrier-free province for all persons with disabilities and calls upon BC's Legislative Assembly to enact a strong and effective British Columbians with Disabilities Act.

Convention Decision: **Endorsed**

Provincial Response

Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation

Accessibility 2024 was released by the Premier in June 2014 and is a 10-year action plan focused on making BC the most progressive province in Canada for people with disabilities by 2024.

In Accessibility 2024, our government has committed to consulting on options for a made-in-BC approach to accessibility-related legislation. Any consultation around BC accessibility legislation would be done with the participation of local governments, the disability community, the business community and other British Columbians.

In June, the Federal Government initiated an engagement process with provinces, territories, municipalities, stakeholders and the public to consult on national accessibility consultation, and our government will be working very closely with our federal counterparts to support this process. We want to ensure we build on those conversations and look forward to working with the federal government in their national consultation.

Whereas the British Columbia Local Government Act prescribes local government election processes, including the candidate nomination period and other election timelines;

And whereas local governments endeavour to ensure best practices and operational efficiencies are employed to encourage voter turnout;

And whereas the time period between the end of the nomination period and the beginning of the election period, through advance voting opportunities, is insufficient to enable voters who are absent from the jurisdiction during the voting period, to participate in voting through a mail ballot process:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM request that the Province of British Columbia amend the Local Government Act, prior to the 2018 Local General Elections, to increase the time period between the end of the candidate nomination period and the beginning of the election period, to facilitate the administration of the mail ballot process and provide greater voting opportunities for citizens.

Convention Decision: **Endorsed**

Provincial Response

Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development

Government is interested in supporting local governments seeking to improve their efficiency and effectiveness and encourages practical ideas for raising voter turnout during local government elections.

As indicated by the UBCM Resolutions Committee, this is the first time that the Ministry has been made aware of a request to extend the time period between the end of the nomination period and the beginning of the election period for the purpose of mail ballot voting opportunities.

Amending the legislation in the Local Government Act to extend the time between the end of the nomination period and the beginning of the election period may have a significant impact on the timing of other election processes including the set date for regular elections (3rd Saturday of October) and any by-elections. Consequential changes to the election process, either before the current nomination period or after the current election period, would also need to be considered and researched.

To explore this issue further, work would need to be undertaken with election administrators, through the Local Government Management Association. That work would assist to better understand the extent and impact of the mail ballot timing issue, including the reasons why the current timing is problematic; how Chief Election Officers currently handle and administer mail ballot voting; as well as considering any practical solutions already in use.

Whereas the City of Victoria has been recognized and demonstrated its commitment to the importance of healthy citizens as the foundation of a healthy, engaged and economically vibrant community; and Canada is currently the only country with a national medicare program that does not have a national pharmacare program, with over 3 million Canadians unable to afford the cost of medicines prescribed by doctors, and the risk of having no insurance for medicines particularly high among lower income Canadians, including many workers with precarious and seasonal employment;

And whereas research suggests that adding a national pharmacare program to our national health care system is sound policy, both economically and socially; would lower costs to businesses by as much as \$8 billion per year, with a corresponding competitive advantage for Canadian companies; and could produce substantial cost savings for local government expenditures on employee benefits;

And whereas a national prescription drug formulary would support better quality prescribing, including reducing dangerous and inappropriate prescribing to Canadian seniors:

Therefore be it resolved that the Government of British Columbia work with all provinces and the federal government to develop and implement a national pharmacare program as an extension of Canadian Medicare, to improve the health outcomes of citizens, ensure fairness in access to medicine, and provide for greater efficiency and effectiveness in Canada's health care system.

Convention Decision: **Endorsed**

Provincial Response

Ministry of Health

Under the Canada Health Act all necessary drug therapy administered within a Canadian hospital setting is insured and publicly funded. Outside of the hospital setting, provincial and territorial governments are responsible for the administration of their own publicly-funded prescription drug benefit programs.

Most Canadians have access to insurance coverage for prescription medicines through public and/or private insurance plans. The federal, provincial and territorial governments offer varying levels of coverage, with different eligibility requirements, premiums and deductibles. The publicly-funded drug programs generally provide insurance coverage for those most in need, based on age, income, and medical condition.

In January 2016, the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Health Ministers committed to work together to address the issues of affordability, accessibility and appropriate use of pharmaceuticals. On the topic of a proposed "national pharmacare program" there remains a lack of consensus of what "national pharmacare" means as there are differing definitions and interpretations since drugs are currently funded privately (predominantly) and publicly. Further, depending on what model of national pharmacare is contemplated, the potential financial costs/savings and complexity of implementation will vary tremendously. Due to the lack of clarity, there is no consensus at this time on any specific action, although there remains ongoing exploration of this highly complex proposal.

In British Columbia, PharmaCare is the Ministry of Health program that provides public drug coverage through ten drug plans. The Fair PharmaCare plan provides assistance to residents with the cost of eligible prescription drugs and designated medical supplies based on their net income reported to the Canada Revenue Agency. The lower their income, the more help they receive. British Columbians with the lowest incomes do not need to meet a deductible and receive immediate assistance.

The federal government did address the idea of a national PharmaCare program during the 2015 election campaign. They said that they will work with the provinces to lower drug costs and determine how to make measurable progress on the health care issues that matter to Canadians, including the affordability of prescription drugs. They also said that they are committed to creating a plan that covers the catastrophic costs associated with major diseases like cancer, diabetes, and arthritis.

On August 6, 2010, at a meeting of the Council of the Federation, Premiers agreed to establish a pan-Canadian Purchasing Alliance (pCPA) to consolidate public sector procurement of common drugs (brand and generic), medical supplies, and equipment, where appropriate. The alliance is intended to leverage the combined purchasing power of public drug plans in multiple jurisdictions, leading to lower drug costs, increased access to drug treatment options and increased consistency of listing decisions across participating

provinces and territories.

BC has strongly supported pCPA and remains very active. As a result, a total of 63 brand pharmaceutical negotiations were concluded by March 31, 2015, resulting in an estimated annual savings of \$315 million to provincial and territorial drug plans. In addition, the prices of 14 of the most common generic drugs have been reduced to 18 percent of the brand name prices since 2012, which is projected to result in annual savings of \$190 million to provincial and territorial drug plans.

Besides building on the overall success that is being achieved by the pCPA, and establishing a pCPA Office to provide additional support for this initiative, further analysis at the provincial and federal levels is required to provide a better understanding of the potential for additional savings, and evidence-based decision making for improved access and consistency across Canada, before a national PharmaCare program can be developed.

Whereas the Alliance of BC Students (ABCS) has identified that over the past ten years, the growth in full time and international student populations at British Columbia post-secondary educational institutions has greatly outpaced development of new student housing spaces, forcing students to search for affordable housing off-campus in rental markets with low vacancy rates;

And whereas ABCS research indicates that if the restriction on debt were removed for the development of university residences, the business case exists to unlock over 20,000 new student housing spaces province wide:

Therefore be it resolved that the provincial government remove the restriction on public entity debt that presently applies to British Columbia's public post-secondary educational institutions, **or employ other mechanisms that have been successful in providing housing options**, thereby enabling these colleges and universities to take on debt to build new student housing.

Convention Decision: **Endorsed as Amended**

Provincial Response

Ministry of Advanced Education

Government remains committed to working with post-secondary institutions to increase the supply of student housing in a sustainable manner that meets the needs of students.

As part of the Provincial Government's \$500 million investment announced in September 2016, a mix of new affordable rental housing will be developed to meet the needs of a wide variety of people throughout the province. This could include partnering with post-secondary institutions on the construction of new affordable student housing.

The Ministry of Advanced Education is exploring options to increase student housing spaces, including looking at different financing vehicles to enable public post-secondary institutions to increase student housing without debt being added to the province's books.