

May 8, 2017

17-10

For Immediate Release

CRD advocates for local issues at NCLGA

Terrace, B.C. – The Cariboo Regional District (CRD) saw success at the North Central Local Government Association's (NCLGA) Conference and AGM with all three of their resolutions endorsed by the NCLGA membership. The resolutions deal with BC Hydro grants-in-lieu, the Board of Variance and agricultural dams.

The first resolution submitted by the CRD Board seeks fair compensation from BC Hydro for transmission and distribution lines that run throughout regional districts. Currently, private utilities are required to pay property taxes to local governments for properties including right-of-ways for distribution and transmission lines. Rather than paying property tax, BC Hydro pays grants-in-lieu to the provincial government. As a result, regional districts do not receive compensation for the transmission and distribution lines in their jurisdictions. The CRD Board's resolution calls for NCLGA and UBCM to lobby the Minister of Finance to review the issue of grants-in-lieu paid by BC Hydro with respect to its transmission and distribution assets as promised during the preparation of Budget 2012.

The Board put forward a second resolution dealing with the legislative requirement for local governments to have a Board of Variance. The Board of Variance is a three person, non-elected committee empowered to make land use decisions that could potentially overturn a decision of the elected municipal council or regional district board. The Board of Variance considers appeals and decides if there should be minor relaxation to a few specific bylaw requirements, when an applicant can demonstrate that compliance would cause hardship. The CRD recognizes the importance of an appeal process, but there are other avenues for appeals in land use decisions. Thus, the resolution asks the NCLGA and UBCM to lobby the Province to remove the requirement for a Board of Variance from the Local Government Act.

Lastly, the Board submitted a resolution urging the Province to provide greater support to agricultural dam owners. Currently, the Dam Safety Regulation requires owners to hire engineers to inspect and develop plans to maintain dams based on the level of risk. These requirements are complex, onerous and prohibitively expensive to dam owners. Further, the level of risk depends in part on development downstream, which is beyond the control of the dam owner. The Board's resolution calls for the NCLGA and UBCM to lobby the Province to assist agricultural dam owners in meeting the requirements of the Dam Safety Regulation and to apportion fairly the cost of inspecting and maintaining agricultural dams.

All three resolutions will now progress to the resolution floor at the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) Conference and AGM in Vancouver on September 25-29, 2017.

The NCLGA conference and AGM took place from Wednesday, May 3 through to Friday, May 5 in Terrace, B.C. The CRD Directors also attended an Electoral Area Rural Director's Roundtable, which preceded the conference on Tuesday, May 2. Find more information about the event at nclga.ca.

-30-