



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

AMONG

**HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN IN RIGHT OF THE PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA represented by
the Minister of Municipal Affairs (The "Province")**

AND

**THE NORTHWEST BC RESOURCE BENEFITS ALLIANCE ("RBA") as represented by
the RBA Co-chairs
and representing the collective interest of
North Coast Regional District, Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine, Regional District of Bulkley-
Nechako, Village of Burns Lake, District of Fort St. James, Village of Fraser Lake, Village of
Granisle, Village of Hazelton, District of Houston, District of Kitimat, Village of Masset, District
of New Hazelton, Village of Port Clements, District of Port Edward, City of Prince Rupert,
Village of Daajing Giids, Town of Smithers, District of Stewart, Village of Telkwa, City of
Terrace and District of Vanderhoof,
collectively referred to as the 'Parties'.**

Whereas:

- The Northwest BC Resource Benefits Alliance (RBA) is an association of 21 local governments that includes all member municipalities and electoral areas of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine, and the North Coast Regional District.
- Whereas the local government members of the RBA have, by resolution, authorized the RBA Co-Chairs to enter into this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on their behalf.
- The RBA and the Province share a vision of economic development that creates sustainable local governments and good local jobs.
- The RBA and the Province have a mutual interest in mitigating the socio-economic, financial, and environmental impacts that can accompany large industrial projects and the economic strain that can be caused by periods with high unemployment rates due to temporary jobs expiring or downturns in resource industries due to low commodity prices or other economic factors.

- In October 2019 the RBA released the “Infrastructure Needs Analysis Report for Northwest BC Local Governments”.
- The local governments within the RBA cover a vast geographical area of 185,000 square kilometers and a population of approximately 94,500.
- Almost half of the inhabitants in the northwest and northcentral areas of BC are First Nations. With the highest percentage of First Nations population in the province, the RBA local governments are seeking additional provincial funding, in part, to help enable RBA local governments to partner with First Nations on local infrastructure projects of shared interest.
- Local government financial issues are currently being reviewed through an [MOU](#) on local government financial resiliency between the Province and UBCM executed on January 25, 2022 (“Financial Resiliency MOU”). The work undertaken under this Financial Resiliency MOU is intended to be completed over a number of years and focus on issues and recommendations raised by local governments in the UBCM *Ensuring Local Government Financial Resiliency – Today’s Recovery and Tomorrow’s New Economy* report.

Therefore:

This MOU reflects the agreement of the Parties that it is essential to come to a common understanding of how historic and current industrial development may be affecting the local government infrastructure and livability of the region and the Parties’ intention to:

- consider and evaluate current and potential new industrial developments in the region; and the resulting or potential socio-economic impacts, environmental impacts, and financial contribution, inclusive of those that have been established in the region since inception of the RBA in 2014;
- be guided by the principles outlined in this MOU;
- take the Implementation actions outlined in this MOU; and
- complete the work in a timely manner.

Principles:

The RBA local governments and the Province are interested in fostering co-operative approaches on matters of mutual interest. The following principles will guide how the parties work under this MOU:

- *Flexibility and diversity* – the parties recognize that the review process is not “one size fits all” – different topics may need to be considered in different ways and at different times and there may be a number of different potential approaches to addressing any issues flagged in the review, not one “solution”.

- *Transparency* – the parties will strive for an open exchange of information wherever possible, will be clear when there are limits on matters that can be shared, and will respect needed confidentiality.
- *Mutual benefit* – wherever possible, the parties will seek approaches that are beneficial both for local governments and the provincial government.
- *Affordability and cost certainty* – the parties acknowledge that any potential approaches arising from the review will be considered in relation to the extent they are affordable to the Province and the degree to which they provide the Province with cost certainty to enable prudent fiscal planning.
- *Value* – any potential approaches arising from the review should be considered in relation to the extent to which they will create benefits or add costs for people in communities and throughout BC.
- *Resiliency* – any potential approaches arising from the review should be considered in relation to their feasibility and their impacts on the local government system as a whole.
- *Evidence-Based Decisions* – the parties recognize that findings, priorities, and recommendations associated with the review should be informed by multiple types of evidence, including quantitative data, qualitative research, observations, and experiences of all orders of government. Any potential approaches arising from the review should be supported by empirical evidence, wherever possible, and a transparent, sound, and rigorous methodology. Any unique, region-specific approaches should be supported by evidence demonstrating that the approach is intended to address a problem unique to the region, not a province-wide concern requiring consideration under the Financial Resiliency MOU and the work being undertaken by the Province and UBCM in relation to it.
- *Fairness and consistency* - any proposed approaches arising from the review should not confer an outsized or disproportionate advantage for the RBA region or local government members vis-a-vis other local governments and regions of the Province, including consideration of impacts of industrial development in other regions as well as the community benefits under other provincial programs such as the Peace River Agreement and the Columbia Basin Trust.

Implementation:

- A Working Group comprised of staff members from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Ministry of Finance and the RBA will be established. The purpose of the Working Group will be to function as a forum for discussion as well as the planning and coordination of any work undertaken in relation to the subject matter of this MOU.
- The Working Group will:
 - Identify further work needed on various topics (such as additional research, analysis, and monitoring); this work includes, but is not limited to:
 - Analysis of existing regional funding agreements in BC (e.g., lessons learned, best practices);

- Analysis of financial need and capacity at a community level (e.g., revenues, community infrastructure and servicing needs, etc.).
 - Identification and analysis of region-specific causes or issues related to financial need; and
 - Identifying and updating RBA-desired capital projects.
- Identify topic areas in which other ministries may be involved;
- Develop joint communication strategies.
- The Working Group will meet as required, but no less than every six weeks to discuss its work plan and advance its work.
- The members of the Working Group are responsible for keeping their respective senior executives and officials informed of the Working Group's activities.
- The Working Group will work toward consensus, based on consultation with the RBA representatives and the Province, respectively, with a target date of March 31, 2023 for a summary report.
- The Working Group will present the summary report to the Parties of this agreement for discussion and development of next steps. The intent of the report is to reflect the status of progress towards the common understanding of how historic and current industrial development may be affecting the local government infrastructure and livability of the region.
- This MOU is not intended to be legally binding and places no legal obligations on the parties. It is intended to serve as an expression of the intent and understanding of the parties. No legally enforceable rights or obligations will be created by or arise from this MOU in respect of any party.

Timelines/Communications:

- The Minister of Municipal Affairs and the RBA Co-chairs will meet as required, but no less than every 3 months, to discuss the work plan and provide updates by the Working Group.
- Any public communications related to activities under the MOU must be jointly agreed upon by the parties before their publication.

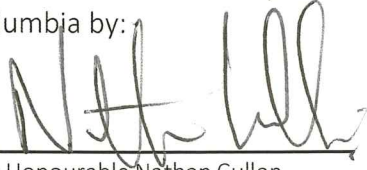
Review/Termination:

This MOU will be reviewed six months from the effective date unless the Parties jointly agree to an earlier review.

This MOU may be terminated in writing by either party delivering 3 months' prior notice in writing.

Effective date and signatures:

This MOU is effective September 15, 2022, and signed on behalf of the Province of British Columbia by:



The Honourable Nathan Cullen
Minister of Municipal Affairs

SIGNED on behalf of the Northwest BC Resource Benefits Alliance (RBA) by:



Sean Bujtas, Counsellor, City of Terrace
RBA Co-Chair



Shane Brien, Mayor, District of Houston
RBA Co-Chair



Kris Olsen, Mayor, Village of Daajing Giids
RBA Co-Chair