
NEWS RELEASE

BC Chamber applauds UBCM proposal to cooperate with Office of the Auditor General for Local Government

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Vancouver, September 23, 2016 – The BC Chamber of Commerce is encouraged that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) has proposed a resolution to cooperate with the Office of the Auditor General for Local Government (AGLG) in the [2016 UBCM Resolutions](#) released ahead of the annual UBCM conference.

“It’s great to see the UBCM embrace the notion that the AGLG wants to work collaboratively with local governments and can play a role in helping municipalities deliver services more efficiently, effectively and economically,” said Val Litwin, President and CEO of the BC Chamber of Commerce.

The BC Chamber championed the effort to establish the AGLG, and Litwin said that since coming into effect in April 2012, the Office has been an invaluable resource for local governments.

“The goal of the AGLG is to provide recommendations, and while it’s up to each municipality on whether or not they want to act on the advice given, the point is that there’s a way for mayors and their councils to gain an objective and comprehensive perspective on the delivery of government services and programs.”

In addition, the BC Chamber supports the following policy resolutions that echo those its members, including:

- The reinstatement of ferry service between Port Hardy and Bella Coola, which would involve a two-ferry solution to support economic development and job creation in Coastal First Nations communities (refer to our related policy ‘[Legislative Review of the Discovery Coast Ferry Route 40](#)’);
- Implementation of a tax on short term accommodation that ensures an equitable competitive environment between all short term accommodation providers (refer to our related policy ‘[Taxation of Short Term Residential Rental Units](#)’); and

- Reduction of the property transfer tax on both new and existing homes to mitigate any negative impacts of housing affordability in our province (refer to our related policy ['Property transfer tax reform'](#)).

The BC Chamber also supports the UBCM's call on the federal government to support B.C. in achieving the highest level of spill prevention, preparedness and response capacity on Canada's West Coast. However, the BC Chamber cautions that the development of a spill prevention and preparedness plan should not hinge on limiting marine traffic in B.C. waters, particularly at a time when Canada's largest ports are competing with the United States to maintain our claim as the Asia-Pacific Gateway. B.C.'s Chambers overwhelmingly agree that a more innovative and comprehensive approach must be taken to ensure both the economic and environmental sustainability of our waterways.

Despite this, and some other concerns around the 2016 Resolutions put forth by the UBCM, Litwin is optimistic that the UBCM is recognizing the needs of B.C. businesses.

"These are real wins for our local Chambers and Boards of Trade who work tirelessly to advocate on behalf of the businesses in their communities," said Litwin. "I am pleased that our provinces' municipal leaders are hearing our voice and taking it into account when developing policies."

The BC Chamber is the largest and most broadly-based business organization in the province. Representing more than 125 Chambers of Commerce and 36,000 businesses of every size, sector and region of the province, the BC Chamber of Commerce is "The Voice of Business in BC."

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