March 30, 2020

Mayors, Regional Chairs and Chief Administrative Officers:

As you know, on March 18, 2020, following the public health emergency declared by Dr. Bonnie Henry, the Province of British Columbia declared a provincial state of emergency to support COVID-19 response. Last Thursday March 26, 2020, the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, the Honourable Mike Farnworth, issued a series of additional orders to further support the government-wide approach to COVID-19 response and recovery, which included securing critical supply chains, making sure critical infrastructure and materials are readily available, ensuring people have access to essential goods and services to keep society running, and ensuring public safety order are enforced.

In addition, orders were issued that address local governments’ immediate procedural concerns about their ability to meet electronically and needing to hold council or board meetings where the public can attend. Local governments need to be able to function and make necessary decisions to ensure their community is working for people. The orders were made recognizing that the current COVID-19 pandemic means that local governments needed more flexibility in some procedures so that they could make those necessary decisions—such as passing budgets. At the same time, important principles of transparency and accountability still need to guide local government actions.

Attached are guidelines to provide practical advice to local governments about enhancing transparency and public participation while operating under this order.

We will continue to provide guidelines and other supports to help you implement directives from the Public Health Official and the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General. Please continue to stay apprised of daily updates being provided by the government and updated on the COVID-19 website (listed below). We have created various channels for you and your teams to raise issues and ideas to government, including weekly calls hosted by the Honourable Minister Robinson, but please do not hesitate to reach out directly to me if you have questions or require assistance addressing an issue and are unsure where to connect.

Thank you for your continued efforts and partnership in this challenging time.

Sincerely,

Kaye Krishna
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Provincial COVID-19 Resources

- BC Government [COVID 19 Provincial Support and Information](#) website provides a hub through which you can access critical information as it is updated, including the provincial health officer’s [Pandemic Preparedness Page](#) and the [BC Centre for Disease Control COVID](#) site.

- Toll-free non-health phone line at: **1 888 268-4319 (1-888-COVID19)**, is open between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. seven days a week for non-medical information about the emergency (including latest information on travel recommendations and social distancing, as well as access to support and services from the provincial and federal governments).

- Daily operational Provincial Emergency Operation Centre (PREOC) calls hosted by Emergency Management BC (EMBC) in each region for emergency planning/program staff with local governments, First Nations, and Health representatives or medical health officers, other key regional organizations. PREOCs act as a clearing house for questions of all kinds, including pandemic response task numbers and funding eligibility. If your emergency staff have not yet connected into those calls, please contact EMBC to join:

  - Central Region (CTL) preoc3.ops1@gov.bc.ca
  - Northeast Region (NEA), preoc5.ops1@gov.bc.ca
  - Northwest Region (NWE) preoc6.ops1@gov.bc.ca
  - Southeast Region (SEA), preoc4.ops1@gov.bc.ca
  - Southwest Region (SWE) preoc2.ops1@gov.bc.ca
  - Vancouver Island Region (VIR), preoc1.ops1@gov.bc.ca