



January 21, 2025

Honourable Brenda Bailey
Minister of Finance
FIN.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Bailey,

RE: Request for In-Person Meeting on Local Government Finance Reform

The Association of Kootenay & Boundary Local Governments (AKBLG) congratulates you on your recent election and cabinet appointment.

AKBLG represents municipalities and electoral areas in southeastern British Columbia, including the Regional Districts of Kootenay Boundary (RDKB), Central Kootenay (RDCK), East Kootenay (RDEK), the Town of Golden, and the Village of Valemount. Our member communities are small and rural by urban standards, with the largest city having a population of approximately 21,000. As an association, our mission is to identify and advocate for solutions to the economic, environmental, and social challenges facing Southeastern BC.

With the new legislature's work now underway, we see this as an opportune time to address the exigent priorities of our member local governments. In particular, the need for Local Government Finance Reform has been consistently at the top of the list for our membership, and we would like to meet with you to discuss how we can find collaborative solutions.

Key Finance Priorities

Through our annual resolutions process and ongoing consultation, our members have endorsed the following finance-related priorities over the past three years:

- Streamlining Grant Applications and Reporting
- Stable Municipal Funding in BC
- Top-Up Provincial Grants
- Improving Provincial Grant Processes

These priorities align with the ongoing work of the UBCM.Government.Financial.Resiliency.Working.Group and reflect the challenges faced by rural and remote communities like ours.

In recent discussions with Provincial staff, we emphasized:

The importance of the UBCM working group and the urgency of implementing recommendations in its 2024 interim report.

The need for regionally relevant data and solutions tailored to both urban and rural circumstances.

Allocation-based funding to provide stability and predictability for local governments.

Streamlining grant processes to better reflect the capacity and realities of small and rural communities.

In-Person Meeting Request

We request an in-person meeting with your office to discuss these priorities in detail and explore actionable solutions that address the unique challenges of southeastern BC. An in-person meeting is essential to facilitate meaningful dialogue, provide region-specific insights, and build a collaborative approach to tackling these issues.

Why This Meeting Matters

These financial challenges directly affect the ability of local governments to provide essential services, foster economic stability and resilience, and support community well-being. The challenges are exacerbated by our particularly rural and remote location and disproportionately affect small communities like ours, and we can provide valuable context from our members' perspective.

This discussion is critical to strengthening the partnership between AKBLG and your ministry and ensuring that the voices of rural and remote communities are heard and represented in Provincial policy.

We look forward to your response and the opportunity to work together on behalf of our shared constituents.

Sincerely,

Kevin McIsaac
President
AKBLG

Aidan McLaren-Caux Chair,
Advocacy Committee
AKBLG

cc: Honourable Brittny Anderson
Minister of State for Local Governments and Rural Communities