



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BC Rural Dividend Program funding for Summerland's Integrated Solar Project

Summerland has received \$100,000 in grant funding from the BC Government's Rural Dividend Fund in support of the municipality's Integrated Solar project.

The BC Rural Dividend Fund is focused on supporting worthy projects that help rural communities navigate changes impacting their economies, and will provide \$25 million a year over three years to assist rural communities with a population of 25,000 or less to reinvigorate and diversify their local economies. Summerland applied for the funding under the Business Sector Development Category of the provincial program which funds:

- › Projects that increase new business creation, business growth and adaptability in the community.
- › Projects that allow communities to retain existing businesses and encourage their expansion.

The purpose of the District of Summerland's Integrated Solar Project is to strengthen the Electrical Utility asset, enhance the local economy and create jobs, increase energy security and independence, support innovation, and attract new residents and visitors, particularly young people and skilled tradespersons. This project will form the basis for an integrated, long-term approach to sustainable energy management within the District, which will provide ongoing opportunities for job creation, community involvement, and partnerships with local businesses, schools, and not-for-profit groups.

Mayor Waterman states *"We are thrilled with the news of the funding through the Province's Rural Dividend fund which helps rural communities throughout BC diversify and strengthen their economies. This support will allow the District to undertake technical feasibility studies for a large scale solar array, including site assessments, engineering reports, and business plan modelling. The grant also provides funding for technical training for staff and the community regarding solar energy, and infrastructure upgrades to the electrical utility to interconnect existing equipment safely and seamlessly with the new localized solar energy generation."*

In February, the District of Summerland held a "solar conversation" event intended to introduce the possible routes that Summerland can take to implement a large solar array into the Electrical Utility. The event was very well attended and interest in the possibility of a solar array is continuing to build. Summerland is one of only five BC municipalities which owns their own electrical utility, and the District will utilize the support from the province through the Rural Dividend fund to take the next steps at optimizing this resource.

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