



Media Release

For Immediate Release

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Summerland organizes first meeting of farming municipalities

VANCOUVER – At the initiative of the District of Summerland, mayors and councillors from 36 municipalities in British Columbia with more than 20% of their land base in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) will meet on Thursday, September 19 at the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) annual convention to discuss issues of mutual concern.

A key topic for discussion will be local governments' ability to adequately service agricultural land within their municipal boundaries. Distances between parcels makes it expensive to maintain roads and other infrastructure to agricultural properties and farm-class property taxes do not raise enough revenue to recover the costs. As a result, the shortfall to service farm land falls unfairly on residential taxpayers within the community.

“Summerland is a proud farming community and we want to preserve the ALR,” says Summerland Mayor Doug Holmes. “But we need to recognize that agriculture benefits all British Columbians yet it’s the residents of municipalities with significant amounts of farmland who bear the financial burden for the rest of the province.”

Further to organizing a meeting of agricultural communities, the District of Summerland has put forward a resolution for debate at the UBCM Convention asking the provincial government to develop a program to support local government efforts to adequately service ALR lands.

“We never get far when speaking to the Province on our own about this concern so we want to work with other municipalities with a lot of ALR land and advocate together through UBCM,” said Mayor Holmes.

UBCM is the provincial association of local governments formed to provide a common voice for its members. Its annual convention brings together local, provincial, and Indigenous governments to identify and engage on key policy issues.

This year’s meeting of farming municipalities follows a meeting of district municipalities organized by Summerland at last year’s UBCM Convention. From that meeting it emerged there were essentially three types of districts, with economies based either on mining, forestry, or agricultural.

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