



MEMBER RELEASE

June 26, 2012

TO: Chief Administrative Officer
FROM: UBCM Secretariat
RE: Review of Draft Collaborative Watershed Governance Accord

Request for Review

At the May 2012 UBCM Executive meeting, the Executive approved the distribution of the attached draft Collaborative Watershed Governance Accord for review by the membership.

UBCM anticipates submitting the draft Accord for consideration, and potential ratification, by the membership at the 2012 Annual UBCM Convention. In advance of the UBCM Convention, UBCM would appreciate receiving any preliminary comments on the draft Accord, as well as any background information on watershed issues identified by your respective boards and councils.

Please submit comments and supporting materials by email to jwright@ubcm.ca by **July 13, 2012**.

Background

The Accord is the product of the Collaborative Watershed Governance Initiative Steering Committee, and was drafted under the guidance of the Fraser Basin Council. The Collaborative Watershed Governance Initiative emerged from a workshop held in November 2008, where representatives from the four orders of government and a number of industry sectors participated in a workshop that explored the issues, benefits and challenges associated with collaborative watershed management in British Columbia. The unifying consensus at the workshop was a call for collaborative action to achieve watershed sustainability, and agreement among participants to continue the dialogue and engagement.

A Steering Committee was established at that time to facilitate information sharing and dialogue amongst the Province, federal government, local government (through a UBCM representative), First Nations, and the resource sectors that impact the well-being of watersheds. The Steering Committee agreed to lead the development of an Accord for Collaborative Watershed Governance in BC, which would be signed and implemented by the parties represented on the Steering Committee. The UBCM Executive has been actively participating in, and monitoring, the development of the Accord.

The draft Accord is a high-level agreement that outlines the principles of effective governance and management of watersheds. The agreement is designed to raise awareness around the need for effective watershed governance amongst stakeholders that have responsibilities, interests and/or activities in BC's watersheds. As such, the provisions focus on facilitating effective dialogue and decision making amongst competing interests.

From a local government perspective, the Accord has the following benefits:

- seeks to address outstanding local government concerns around watershed management as identified in past UBCM resolutions;
- raises awareness on the need and opportunity for collaborative governance and elevates the issues amongst all relevant stakeholders; and
- holds the potential to be leveraged into concrete actions by the signatories.

To date, the Accord has received supporting resolutions from the two primary First Nations organizations in BC: the First Nations Summit and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. Several other organizations have provided their support in principle, including Clean Energy BC, the Council of Forest Industries, and the federal government (Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Environment Canada). Others such as the provincial government, the Mining Association of BC, the Urban Development Institute, and the BC Agriculture Council are currently reviewing the draft Accord.

UBCM Contact

For further information on the draft Collaborative Watershed Governance Accord, please contact:

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A Collaborative Watershed Governance¹ Accord for BC

Purpose of the Accord

To encourage all orders of government (local, First Nations, provincial, and federal), organizations and commercial interests throughout BC, to work collaboratively to attain enduring healthy, resilient watersheds for the benefit of those ecosystems, communities, resource users and economies that depend on them.

The signatories of this Accord will:

1. *Encourage interests in watersheds throughout the province to adopt these principles;*
2. *Encourage participation of those active in watersheds to engage collaboratively in watershed planning processes;*
3. *Encourage implementation of measures in support of collaborative watershed planning and management; and*
4. *Apply lessons learned from other models of collaborative watershed governance.*

Guiding Principles of Collaborative Watershed Governance

The following inter-dependent principles will guide activities in watersheds:

1. Ecological, social, cultural and economic considerations are integral parts of decision making.
2. Best practices are to be employed to contribute to watershed sustainability² in new and existing obligations, jurisdictions and plans.
3. Effective collaborative watershed governance is to be carried out in a transparent, accountable and inclusive manner.
4. Effective working relationships are to be developed and maintained through open communication, trust and cooperation.
5. Decisions are to be based on the best available scientific information and First Nations traditional ecological knowledge, and with the goal of achieving watershed sustainability.
6. Authorizations to use water are to take into account the interests of present and future generations.
7. Effective watershed management is to be integrated with land-based resource objectives and activities on a watershed scale.
8. Watershed governance is to include shared responsibilities and enable those affected to have input to decision-making processes.

¹ “Collaborative watershed governance” refers to a coordinated and collaborative decision making process that involves all interests within a watershed.

² “Watershed sustainability” refers to sustaining the natural attributes of watersheds for present and future generations.