

## COMMUNITY SAFETY

### **(7) TITLE: FireSmart and Wildfire Mitigation Funding**

#### **SPONSOR: West Kelowna**

Whereas the Province of BC continues to face devastating wildfire events year after year and the risk of these events continues to climb;

And whereas the Province spends hundreds of millions of dollars on wildfire suppression, yet the amount dedicated to local governments for wildfire prevention via the Community Resilience Investment Grant is exponentially smaller;

And whereas In April 2024, the Premier’s Expert Task Force on Emergencies called the FireSmart program a “success story” but recommended “building capacity to expedite wildfire risk reduction projects” and “streamline administrative requirements, and providing more year-over-year certainty for communities applying for FireSmart funding”;

And whereas while improvements are being made, portions of the existing grant process is onerous and resource intensive, and does not allow for long term planning:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM work with the Province of British Columbia to dedicate additional grant funds to wildfire prevention and further ease and simplify the program, fully changing the process from a competition-based application process to an allocation-based formula for a term of at least 5 years to reduce red tape, and allow for future planning and more effective prevention-based response;

And be it further resolved that UBCM work with the Province of British Columbia to reduce the grant approval timelines to less than 30 days.

#### **UBCM Recommendation: Endorse**

#### **UBCM Comments:**

*The Resolutions Committee notes that the UBCM membership endorsed resolution 2023-EB28, also from the same sponsor, that made a near identical request, asking the Province to dedicate additional grant funds to wildfire prevention and further ease and simplify the program, changing the process from a competition-based application process to an allocation-based formula to reduce red tape, and allow for future planning and more effective prevention-based response.*

*The Ministry of Forests responded to 2023-EB28 with the following, “Starting in 2024, First Nations and local governments with a higher risk of wildfire—generally demonstrated by risk class 1 to 3—that have a FireSmart Position, participate in a Community FireSmart and Resiliency Committee, and have an acceptable Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan/Community Wildfire Protection Plan will be eligible to receive FireSmart Community Funding and Supports for FireSmart activities through an allocation-based model. This will support communities with longer-term planning and reduce administrative burdens. Under the allocation-based model, recipients will be required to submit a brief allocation-based funding request form to confirm that the eligibility criteria have been met. If approved, recipients would receive an approval agreement which includes the terms and conditions of the grant.”*

*The Committee notes that recipients of allocation-based funding will be advised of the status of their application within 60 days of submitting a complete, eligible request.*

*The Committee also notes that the membership has endorsed numerous resolutions calling on the provincial government to provide sustainable funding and/or support for the purpose of wildfire mitigation, preparedness, response and/or recovery (2024-NR34, 2023-NR33, 2023-EB28, 2022-NR26, 2022-NR27, 2022-EB36, 2022-EB37, 2022-EB88, 2021-NR10, 2020-EB12, 2020-NR12, 2019-B13, 2019-B26, 2019-B27, 2019-B76, 2019-B77, 2019-B91, 2019-B92, 2019-B93, 2019-B95, 2019-B10, 2018-B22, 2018-B43, 2018-B96, 2018-B97, 2018-B99, 2018-B100, 2018-B107, 2017-B4, 2017-B84, 2017-LR1, 2017-LR2, 2017-LR4, 2016-B6, 2015-B5, 2014-A1).*

**SILGA Resolutions Committee Recommendation: Endorse**

#### **(8) TITLE: Installation of Early Wildfire Detection Technology**

**SPONSOR: Coldstream**

Whereas the Province of BC spent \$1.1 billion on fire management in 2023 and continues to spend millions on fire management annually, and understanding that detecting and responding to fires at their earliest stage saves lives, structures, forests, the environment and reduces the costly burden of wildfire control;

And whereas early wildfire detection technology exists, is financially attainable and has been installed in some interface areas and successfully tested and used to detect fires:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM ask the Province of BC to undertake installation of early wildfire detection technology in wildland-urban interface areas with a priority for installation in wildland interface areas bordering local government residential neighbourhoods.

**UBCM Recommendation: No Recommendation**

#### **UBCM Comments:**

*The Resolutions Committee advises that the UBCM membership has not previously considered a resolution asking the Province to undertake installation of early wildfire detection technology in wildland-urban interface areas, prioritizing wildland interface areas bordering local government residential neighbourhoods.*

*However, the Committee notes that the membership has endorsed numerous resolutions calling on the provincial government to provide sustainable funding and/or support for the purpose of wildfire mitigation, preparedness, response and/or recovery (2024-NR34, 2023-NR33, 2023-EB28, 2022-NR26, 2022-NR27, 2022-EB36, 2022-EB37, 2022-EB88, 2021-NR10, 2020-EB12, 2020-NR12, 2019-B13, 2019-B26, 2019-B27, 2019-B76, 2019-B77, 2019-B91, 2019-B92, 2019-B93, 2019-B95, 2019-B10, 2018-B22, 2018-B43, 2018-B96, 2018-B97, 2018-B99, 2018-B100, 2018-B107, 2017-B4, 2017-B84, 2017-LR1, 2017-LR2, 2017-LR4, 2016-B6, 2015-B5, 2014-A1).*

**SILGA Resolutions Committee Recommendation: Not Endorse**