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The Honourable John Horgan, M.L.A.
Premier of British Columbia.
PO Box 9041 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC V8W 9E1

DATE

Dear Premier;

Re: CETA Education in the MASH Sector & Advancing Strategic Procurement in B.C.

Congratulations on becoming British Columbia's 36th Premier, and to you and your colleagues for forming government. Thank you for your commitment to making sure all British Columbians can realize their full potential, and that BC's great economy works not just for the few, but for everybody.

We write to urge our new government to act quickly on the extraordinary opportunity that lies before us to transform public procurement in British Columbia. The municipal, academic, school and health (MASH) sector has enormous impact on local economies and communities in how it chooses to buy and invest. How 'value' is defined in purchasing and procuring goods and services is how the MASH sector communicates and demonstrates its values. As local governments, we know that we can take a more strategic approach to procurement; we can better leverage the way we spend tax dollars to achieve key social, environmental, and economic public policy goals and, therefore, positive community outcomes. And we can do this within all existing trade agreements by not focusing on 'local' but rather on *community benefit*.

However, the upcoming implementation of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) creates an urgent need for education in the MASH sector and the risks and responsibilities in public procurement. We are not aware of any initiative to undertake this education at a provincial or federal level.

More specifically, we are writing as a group of Vancouver Island and Sunshine Coast mayors and councillors to (1) raise our collective concern regarding the lack of CETA education being provided to the MASH sector, (2) inform you of the on-the-ground work taking place to advance strategic procurement policy and practice, and (3) invite the Province to support and collaborate with this work.

How we are currently working to transform public procurement

In 2016, delegates at the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (AVICC) and UBCM voted overwhelmingly in support of the Village of Cumberland's resolution to advance strategic procurement (aka social procurement) in the local government sector. Since then, an ad hoc group of elected officials from the AVICC region has been working with Sandra Hamilton, the leading Canadian authority on strategic procurement, to develop appropriate approaches and models to educate, implement and advance strategic procurement. Ms. Hamilton brought forward the concept of a Community Benefit Hub, a centre of excellence offering

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strategic procurement education, expertise, and networking to the 51 municipalities across the AVICC region. In April 2017, AVICC delegates voted unanimously in support of this ad hoc group continuing its work to develop the hub concept and business plan for AVICC's consideration in early 2018.

Our Working Group vision is that the AVICC region leads the country in the advancement of strategic public procurement. Ms. Hamilton, in her work across Canada, is also meeting with other government and organizations to promote a national network of such hubs in an effort to elevate the sophistication of municipal procurement and to reduce risk under CETA. This model holds promise for the BC public service and the MASH sector across BC.

Simultaneous to the Working Group, Ms. Hamilton is also the catalyst and leader of an innovative infrastructure pilot working closely with industry to design to develop a standardized, approach to adding social value into infrastructure projects. Collaborators include the City of Victoria, the Town of Qualicum Beach, the City of Campbell River, the Vancouver Island Construction Association and the Construction Foundation of BC.

An invitation

In closing, CETA implementation, combined with a people-focused provincial government, provides the British Columbia public service (including the MASH sector) with an exceptional opportunity to modernize procurement practices and to better leverage taxpayer funded contracts to achieve key public policy goals, such as: Indigenous Reconciliation; skills & workforce development; moving markets toward the UN 2030 Sustainability Goals; aggregating public sector demand to assist in bringing new innovations to the marketplace.

We urge the Province to work with us, and/or any other appropriate organization, to increase awareness and education about the implications of CETA for the MASH sector. And we invite the Province to meet with us to learn more about our Working Group, and to collaborate with Ms. Hamilton and the group in our next pilot for 2018, which is being designed to explore the opportunities of strategic Indigenous procurement in the context of CETA.

Thank you for your commitment to put people at the heart of everything we do.

Sincerely,

Lisa Helps, Mayor
City of Victoria

Josie Osborne, Mayor
District of Tofino

Teunis Westbroek, Mayor
Town of Qualicum Beach

David Formosa, Mayor
City of Powell River

Andrew Adams, Mayor
City of Campbell River

Aaron Stone, Mayor
Town of Ladysmith

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Leslie Baird, Mayor
Village of Cumberland

Shirley Ackland, Mayor
Village of Port McNeil

Silas White, Councillor
District of Sechelt

Sandra Hamilton Social MBA
Strategic Procurement Advisor

CC: Hon. Selina Robinson, Minister of Municipal Affairs & Housing
Hon. Scott Fraser, Minister for Indigenous Reconciliation
Hon. Clare Trevena, Minister of Transportation & Infrastructure
Hon. Carole James, Minister of Finance and Deputy Premier
Hon. George Chow, Minister of State for Trade
Hon. Andrew Weaver, Leader of the BC Green Party

Encl.