

NEBC Resource Municipalities Coalition holds Meetings with Province

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For Immediate Release

Victoria, BC - As part of the Coalition's 2016 Action Plan a delegation from the NEBC Resource Municipalities Coalition met with government representatives in Victoria last week. Meetings were held with the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Natural Gas.

The Coalition was represented by Mayor Lori Ackerman, Mayor Bill Streeper, Dave Turchanski - President of Energy Services BC, Kathleen Connolly, Executive Director of the Dawson Creek Chamber of Commerce and Colin Griffith - Executive Director.

Dave Turchanski stated "Our Coalition received very positive news from our meeting with Elan Symes, the ADM involving commitments by the Ministry of Finance to undertake a series of measures to strengthen enforcement of BC's Provincial sales Tax legislation and regulations in NEBC. We have been working collaboratively with the Ministry, as well as the Premier and her Ministers on the agreed objective of ensuring there is a leveling playing field where no business is disadvantaged." He concluded "We welcome our business compatriots from Alberta. We want open borders and a level playing field ...our BC companies have the expertise and experience to hold our own and we have always had great success in securing our share of the work. We are also advocating legislative changes based on Saskatchewan's provincial sales tax legislation and model."

Kathleen Connolly added "Our communities and business have always been the strongest advocates and supporters for sustainable development of the resources in our Region. The Coalition's current focus is on ensuring that our communities and businesses benefit from all aspects of the resource development which requires engagement with industry and the province on priority issues such as the degree of emphasis that major companies place on local content, that is the degree by which they provide opportunities for the local business, workforce and service sector to fairly engage in all of the resource development projects"

Mayor Lori Ackerman stated "By working collaboratively with the BC government our ongoing work will ensure we can minimize the negative impacts of the economic slowdown on our local business and our communities. In our meeting with Inés Piccinino, ADM Ministry of Natural Gas we had further discussions related to Minister Coleman's suggestion (in a July 6th, 2016 letter) that his Ministry was interested in discussing ways in which northeast communities and the Province can partner to attract investment in value added industries and benefit from the current low commodity prices. The Coalition will be having further meetings with Minister Coleman and his senior staff to examine opportunities to develop a sophisticated natural gas processing industry in the northeast, well beyond extracting natural gas liquids. Opportunities for industrial development, could include gas to liquids, methanol and petrochemical products, which could spur a steady source of jobs and taxation for the northeast."

Mayor Bill Streeper concluded "The Coalition will continue to support LNG development and encourage private sector investment and senior government project approval for LNG plants and pipelines. British Columbia has the majority of Canada's natural gas reserves and we are confident that our natural gas will enter the world market at some point in the foreseeable future...however in the meantime we must look at supporting the development of any or all other uses for our natural gas be it for transportation, liquids or petrochemical uses."

Executive Director of the Coalition Colin Griffith added "The Coalition will continue its work with the BC

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government and industry on all of these highly important issues. The Coalition is in the planning stages for its Fall Forum which will focus on a more comprehensive and collaborative approach to resource development in northeastern British Columbia. The Forum will be structured to include presentations from policy makers, managers and practitioners to provide participants with overviews and information on how resource development decision-making processes and policies are being applied to various resource development initiatives and what can be done to improve these processes and practices for all relevant interests but with a specific focus on regional and community benefits."

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