

Fire Services Act and Regulations

The Comox Valley Regional District board, on occasion, elects to support province-wide concerns and issues in the form of a board resolution. These resolutions are normally forwarded first to the Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities (AVICC) for consideration but may also be forwarded directly to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM). Based on the nature of the concern, UBCM will either endorse or not endorse the recommendation and if endorsed, will present the concern to the provincial or federal government on behalf of all BC municipalities and regional district.

Date of Board meeting: May 26, 2015

Board Resolution: WHEREAS the provincial government has

- a) effectively established regulatory regimes designed to inspect various installations and operations, such as gas, electrical, health, food safety, etc. aimed at protecting the public from potential hazards associated with public facilities through the BC Safety Authority, and various other provincial agencies such as the health authorities; and
- b) enacted various building and fire code regulations for public buildings, including the Fire Services Act, though has not provided for an accompanying, effective inspection and enforcement regime;

AND WHEREAS the provincial government is considering requiring regional districts to enforce the Fire Services Act and its regulations in the unincorporated areas of the province, including the obligation to provide for a regular system of inspection of hotels and public buildings though regional districts do not have the capacity to take on an inspection and enforcement role in the rural areas without significant additional financial and human resources:

THEREFORE be it resolved that the provincial government provide the resources necessary to inspect and enforce provincial safety regulations, including the Fire Services Act and its regulations, through either the Office of the Fire Commissioner or the BC Safety Authority rather than pursuing options to download the responsibility for inspections and enforcement of provincial regulations on local governments.

This resolution was referred to UBCM on May 27, 2015

A response was received on June 23, 2016

Response from UBCM: Motion was referred to similar motion from Squamish-Lillooet RD and was ENDORSED as follows:

“WHEREAS the provincial government has enacted various building and fire code regulations for public buildings, including the Fire Services Act and regulations under that Act;

AND WHEREAS the provincial government is considering requiring regional districts to enforce the Fire Services Act and its regulations in the unincorporated areas of the province, including the obligation to provide for a regular system of inspection of hotels and public buildings;

AND WHEREAS regional districts do not have the capacity to take on an inspection and enforcement role in the rural areas without significant additional financial and human resources:

THEREFORE be it resolved that the provincial government provide the resources necessary to inspect and enforce provincial safety regulations, including the Fire Services Act and its regulations, through either the Office of the Fire Commissioner or the BC Safety Authority rather than pursuing options to download the responsibility for inspections and enforcement of provincial regulations on local governments.”

Emergency Management BC response:

The current review of the existing Fire Services Act includes stakeholder input and feedback on possible options for each component of the Act. The province is committed to ensuring that public safety is addressed across BC, including the issue of compliance monitoring. The province will continue to consult with stakeholders as the process continues.