

## INCLUDE REGIONAL DISTRICTS IN COMMUNITY CHARTER

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:** August 23, 2007

**Board Resolution:** WHEREAS the provincial government has undertaken a full review of the Local Government Act and instituted the Community Charter, but has not substantially reviewed and updated the legislation under which regional districts operate;  
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities encourage the provincial government to work constructively towards including all regional districts fully in the Community Charter.

**This resolution was referred to UBCM on,** August 29, 2007

**A response was received on** December 6, 2007

**Response from UBCM:** Resolution (LR9- Include Regional Districts in Community Charter) was endorsed by the UBCM Executive on Nov 30, 2007. This resolution has been conveyed to the Ministry of Community Services and UBCM will keep the regional district apprised of any provincial response and/or decision on the matter.

**Additionally this resolution was referred to the Ministry of Community Services** The Ministry of Community Services (Ministry) appreciates the local government interest in bringing regional districts within the Community Charters. However, it is important to note that the regional district legislative provisions were extensively revised with the adoption of the Local Government Act (Act) in 2000. Subsequently, the Community Charter was adopted, and through consequential amendments in Bill 76 of 2003, the regional district legislation was connected to the new legislative framework, including some of the innovations in the Community Charter. The Ministry and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) have agreed, given the extensive changes to the Community Charter and the Act relating to regional districts over the past 7 years, that our efforts should be focused on making what we have work more effectively rather than introducing yet more new legislation. This in turn led to the well regarded Regional District Tool Kit. The Ministry is always interested in ensuring that the local government

legislative framework works effectively, while recognizing that legislative change has to be focused on resolving issues which matter to citizens. To be effective, legislative change needs to be based on a clear analysis of the issues or problems that it is meant to address and consensus on how to move forward . One step in that process was the regional district workshop held at the 2006 UBCM Convention. This provided an opportunity for discussion and responses to questions related to: thinking regionally; building inter-jurisdictional relations; connecting regional districts to their members; and providing assistance and advice. The information has proven to be available in assisting the Ministry and the UBM in choosing courses of action. One of the areas where there was a high degree of agreement on actions was the need to develop custom solutions for the unique challenges facing individual regional districts.

This focus on custom solutions for diverse regions led to the Province of British Columbia's commitment to three projects to test custom solutions. These were: the splitting of the Comox Strathcona Regional District into two regional districts; the integration of the Town of Fort Nelson and the Northern Rockies Regional District into a single tier "regional municipality"; and an examination of ways to respond to region wide challenges and opportunities like water supply, air quality and transportation in the Okanagan Valley.

The Ministry remains committed to working with the UBCM on making our regional government system more effective and we are engaged in discussions with UBCM on how that can be carried out.