



April 14, 2022

Ref: 117211

Via email

Dear Mayors, Chairs and Representatives:

Thank you to those that were able to join me and my colleague Roly Russell, Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Development, on April 8 to discuss the \$830M provincial/federal funding partnership announced in March, and the plan to connect the remaining underserved rural and Indigenous households in our province to high-speed internet by 2027. With the new program expected to roll out this summer, I wanted to follow up on a few questions asked, and remind everyone how to connect to currently available information.

Connecting Communities BC is the next generation of our connectivity program and a key part of StrongerBC and the Economic Plan. This funding partnership is great news for the underserved rural and Indigenous households that will be able to look forward to the construction of connectivity infrastructure in their community, using multiple technologies such as fibre, cable, and satellite. These investments ensure that rural, remote, and Indigenous communities and businesses have the connectivity they need to succeed in a post-pandemic economy. It means all of B.C.'s communities will have better opportunities to contribute to the success of this province, and that's good for all of us.

We appreciated hearing your questions and feedback as we shape the new Connecting Communities BC program. It was affirming to know our regional approach reflects your previous input, which was our intent. Our commitment to transparency, open dialogue and input will continue via avenues like the Request to Participate process and these roundtables. Our expectation is that the chairs continue to represent the area directors in this forum to share the needs and feedback of communities. We also appreciate the information and learning that the Regional Connectivity Knowledge Network sessions provide, as these meetings with area directors and staff continue to yield valuable insights into what is currently top of mind for communities.

We know that many districts have been working hard on connectivity and have created plans for their regions. My ministry staff have reviewed all publicly available plans and information shared directly by regional districts and this local knowledge has informed the current process.

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The data provided through the Request to Participate process provides an opportunity to engage or re-engage with your local internet service providers toward a shared understanding of gaps and potential options and solutions. Also, it is an opportunity to share with us any insights based on your understanding from local connectivity planning or feedback from your constituents by responding to the Request to Participate. The RTP is accessible via [BC Bid](#) (Number 13183). As requested, directions for obtaining a BCeID can be found [here](#). The deadline for input is April 25, 2022.

If you would like to discuss this further or receive additional information on the Province's activities to expand high-speed internet connectivity, please contact [Susan Stanford](#), Assistant Deputy Minister for Connectivity at 250-217-0026 and for enquiries around the RCKN group or other community planning questions, please contact [Jeanne Holliss](#), Executive Director, Connected Communities at 250-516-3848.

We all have a vested interest in achieving the goal of connecting the remaining underserved households in the Province by 2027 and continue to benefit from the insights each of you shared. Thank you for your participation, ongoing leadership, and collaboration as we collectively work towards a better future for British Columbians.

Sincerely,



Lisa Beare
Minister

pc: Roly Russell
Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Development
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