



## **News Release: UBCM releases election priorities**

*Gaps in provincial services, increasing regulatory requirements and emergency management costs are stretching local budgets*

**Victoria, B.C. (September 12, 2024)** - The Union of B.C. Municipalities is calling on all parties in the provincial election to consider the growing financial pressures on local governments.

The call to action is set out in *Stretched to the Limit*, which highlights the cost pressures local governments face due to gaps in provincial services, new housing mandates, and new responsibilities for emergency management during B.C.'s intensifying flood and fire seasons.

“Local governments are dealing with a trifecta of cost pressures that are overwhelming the capacity of the property tax,” said Councillor Trish Mandewo, UBCM president. “Gaps in provincial services to address homelessness have created significant costs for local government. New mandates to increase housing supply require more infrastructure investment to support growth. And recent legislation is requiring more of our resources to manage emergencies during extreme weather events.”

Impacts related to these three cost areas impact local government, including:

- Over a four-year period, Kelowna spent \$20 million to support homeless individuals and address gaps in provincial service delivery.
- Upgrades to Burnaby's underground services are estimated to be \$1 million for every 100 metres of development to support small-scale, multi-housing units in single family neighbourhoods.
- The Regional District of East Kootenay spent almost \$1 million in staffing costs and materials responding to floods and fires within their boundaries in 2020.

UBCM is calling for the next provincial government to respond to these issues by increasing provincial transfers to local governments across the province as follows:

- Provide \$650 million in additional infrastructure funding annually.
- Transfer an annual percentage from the Provincial Property Transfer Tax to support local efforts in subsidizing affordable housing supply and homelessness responses.
- Transfer an annual percentage of the growth in the provincial carbon tax to support local climate action projects and emergency management planning and responses.

UBCM is meeting with leadership from the three main parties to discuss these priorities and will monitor campaigns for commitments that respond to the cost pressures outlined in its priorities.

**Additional Resources**

Read *Stretched to the Limit* [here](#)

Read the one page summary [here](#)

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