

# Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness

## Estimates 2023/2024

Section A - General / Financial Overview	
1.	Budget 2023/24
2.	Service Plan
3.	EMCR Mandate
4.	Fiscal Year-end
Section B - Disaster Recovery	
5.	Atmospheric River Costs and Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements
6.	Atmospheric River Recovery - Regional
7.	Indigenous Community Recovery - attributed Directly to AR
8.	Lytton Recovery
9.	Disaster Financial Assistance - Atmospheric River Event - Ops Metrics PUBLIC
10.	Disaster Financial Assistance - Atmospheric River Event - Ops Metrics PRIVATE
11.	Sumas Prairie Recovery
12.	Nooksack River Flooding and 4G MOU
13.	Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation Changes
14.	DFA Landslide Policy
15.	Highway 8 Mudslide
16.	Humanitarian Community Recovery Support Agencies – incl. CRC
17.	Post ESS Supports
Section C - Strategic Partnerships	
18.	First Nations Community Support – EMCR
19.	First Nations Emergency Management – Funding
20.	Tsilhqot'in National Government's Collaborative Emergency Management Agreement Renewal
21.	Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act – EMCR's Implementation
22.	Regional Partnerships and IDCBC
Section D - Disaster Risk Management	
23.	ClimateReadyBC Platform
24.	Disaster and Climate Risk and Resilience Assessment
25.	Community Emergency Preparedness Fund
26.	Disaster Mitigation Funding
27.	COVID-19 Lessons Learned Review – incl. Improvement Plan
28.	After Action Atmospheric River Review - incl. Improvement Plan
29.	Catastrophic Earthquake Preparedness - incl. PEIRS and ExCR

<b>Section E - Policy and Legislation</b>	
<b>30.</b>	Emergency Program Act Modernisation
<b>Section F - Regional Operations</b>	
<b>31.</b>	Extreme Heat Preparedness Initiatives
<b>32.</b>	Broadcast Intrusive Alerting
<b>33.</b>	ESS Program Overview- will include Extensions and Claims
<b>34.</b>	ESS Program Modernization – ERA
<b>35.</b>	Ombudsperson Review (ESS & DFA - Joint Note)
<b>36.</b>	Search and Rescue Program Overview - incl. Night Hoist/Vision
<b>37.</b>	Preparedness Response Posture
<b>38.</b>	Regional Flood Vulnerabilities
<b>39.</b>	Regional Landslide Vulnerabilities
<b>40.</b>	Avalanches
<b>Section G - Public Education</b>	
<b>41.</b>	Public Education – Online Emergency Information, Education & Digital Services

# Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness

## Estimates Briefing Notes 2023/24 Notes by Alphabetical Order

Atmospheric River Costs and Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements	5
Atmospheric River Recovery - Regional	6
Avalanches	40
Broadcast Intrusive Alerting	32
Budget 2023/24	1
Catastrophic Earthquake Preparedness - incl. PEIRS and ExCR	29
ClimateReadyBC Platform	23
Community Emergency Preparedness Fund	25
COVID-19 Lessons Learned Review – incl. Improvement Plan	27
Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act – EMCR’s Implementation	21
DFA Landslide Policy	14
Disaster and Climate Risk and Resilience Assessment	24
Disaster Financial Assistance - Atmospheric River Event - Ops Metrics PRIVATE	10
Disaster Financial Assistance - Atmospheric River Event - Ops Metrics PUBLIC	9
Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation Changes	13
Disaster Mitigation Funding	26
EMCR Mandate	3
Emergency Program Act Modernisation	30
ESS Program Modernization – ERA	34
ESS Program Overview- will include Extensions and Claims	33
Extreme Heat Preparedness Initiatives	31
First Nations Community Support – EMCR	18
First Nations Emergency Management – Funding	19
Fiscal Year End	4
Highway 8 Mudslide	15
Humanitarian Community Recovery Support Agencies – incl. CRC	16
Indigenous Community Recovery - attributed Directly to AR	7
Lytton Recovery	8
Nooksack River Flooding and 4G MOU	12
Ombudsperson Review (ESS & DFA - Joint Note)	35
Post ESS Supports	17
Preparedness Response Posture	37
Public Education – Online Emergency Information, Education & Digital Services	41
Regional Flood Vulnerabilities	38
Regional Landslide Vulnerabilities	39
Regional Partnerships and IDCBC	22
Search and Rescue Program Overview - incl. Night Hoist/Vision	36
Service Plan	2
Sumas Prairie Recovery	11
T̓silhqot’in National Government’s Collaborative Emergency Management Agreement Renewal	20

## **2023/24 BUDGET DAY NOTE**

### **Budget Overview**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- In recent years the Province has faced increasing challenges associated with weather related events including wildfires, atmospheric rivers, extreme heat and extreme cold. This has demonstrated the need to boost Provincial capacity to support communities and individuals recognizing climate change is expected to increase the frequency of such events.
- The Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMRC) has been established to lead cross-ministry coordination to enhance British Columbia's readiness and resilience towards climate and disaster risks and working towards a comprehensive and interconnected approach to achieving climate and disaster risk reduction.
- The Ministry leads provincial emergency management through the four-phased approach of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery in close collaboration with Indigenous Nations, local authorities, other provinces and territories, federal departments, industry, non-governmental organizations, and volunteers.
- *Budget 2023* provides new investment of \$85 million over three years: \$19.267M in 23/24, \$27.937M in 24/25, and \$37.537M in 25/26.
- This provides funding for about 60 permanent positions including 32 net new ones and the related program delivery costs which will allow EMCR to:
  - Provide a higher level of service to communities and First Nations including more focus on proactive preparation through base funding for formerly seasonal positions.
  - Increase permanent foundational capacity in the Disaster Financial Assistance program and community recovery branch so the Province can better support communities and individuals when they are impacted by events.
  - Expand the support for disaster risk reduction with dedicated staffing that will develop and deliver mitigation, preparedness capacity building funding programs.
  - Deliver the Disaster Climate Risk and Resilience Assessment and lead cross-ministry coordination for our government's work to enhance B.C.'s resilience by providing guidance to ministries and enhancing the public's access to information on existing risks and initiatives underway to improve resilience.



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- Work collaboratively with local government and First Nations to make communities more resilient as well as working with key partners and co-develop implementation plans for the modernized emergency legislation.
- Budget 2023 also includes a significant increase to EMRC's budget for disaster mitigation and preparation: \$5M in 2023/24, \$15M in 2024/25, and \$25M in 2025/26.

### Background:

- EMCR has two voted appropriations (reference Estimates page 67 – 70)
  - Ministry Operations (Vote 21) - This vote provides for the programs, operations, and other activities described in the voted appropriations under the following core business areas: Emergency Management and Climate Readiness and Executive Support Services.
  - Emergency Program Act (Vote 22) - This sub-vote provides for operations and operational support described in the Emergency Program Act, including response to and recovery from emergencies and disasters, and for hazard mitigation initiatives. This sub-vote allows for statutory appropriation.

## Financial Summary

Core Business	2022/23 Restated Estimates <sup>1</sup>	2023/24 Estimates	2024/25 Plan	2025/26 Plan
<b>Operating Expenses (\$000)</b>				
Emergency Management and Climate Readiness	31,636	50,844	63,013	72,613
Executive and Support Services	11,039	13,519	11,364	11,364
Emergency Program Act	436,420	36,420	36,420	36,420
<b>Total</b>	<b>479,095</b>	<b>100,783</b>	<b>110,797</b>	<b>120,397</b>
<b>Capital Expenditures (\$000)</b>				
Emergency Management and Climate Readiness	495	524	146	53
<b>Total</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>53</b>

<sup>1</sup> For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2022/23 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2023/24 *Estimates*.

\* Further information on program funding and vote recoveries is available in the [Estimates and Supplement to the Estimates](#)

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### Three Year Service Plan Comparison:

(\$millions)	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Last year's plan	\$481,011	\$80,887	\$81,780	nil
Current year's plan	\$479,095 <sup>1</sup>	\$100,783	\$110,797	\$120,397
Current Year – Last Year	<\$1,916>	\$19,896	\$29,107	\$120,397
Current Year/Last Year	99%	137%	136%	-
Current Year – Prior Year	-	<\$378,312> <sup>2</sup>	\$10,014	\$9,600
Current Year/Prior Year	-	21%	110%	109%

<sup>1</sup>The Office of the Fire Commissioner remained with the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General after the formation of the Ministry of Emergency Preparedness and Climate Readiness in December 2022.

<sup>2</sup>The Emergency Program Act voted appropriation decreased from \$436 million in 2022/23 to \$36 million in 2023/24 offset by a \$19 million budget increase the Ministry Operations voted appropriation in Budget 2023.

### Key Facts and Figures:

Budget 2023 provides additional funding of \$85 million over the next three years:

Initiative	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Totals
	(\$millions)			
<b>Foundational Capacity</b>	Cabinet Confidences; Government Financial Information			
<b>Disaster Mitigation</b>				
<b>Disaster Risk Assessment</b>				
<b>Disaster Resiliency</b>				
	Cabinet Confidences; Government Financial Information			
<b>Totals</b>	Cabinet Confidences; Government Financial Information			

- There is also \$500 million in 2023/24, and \$250 million in 2024/25 to support ongoing recovery efforts from climate-related disasters including the November 2021 flooding and other extreme-weather events.

### Prior Year budget decisions:

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Totals
	(\$millions)			
<b>Budget 2022</b>				
Wildfire Services and Prevention	\$6.538	\$7.431	\$7.431	\$21.400
CPAS	\$0.115			\$0.115
<b>Budget 2020</b>				
GSAR	\$6.433	\$6.433	\$6.433	\$19.299
<b>Totals</b>	\$13.086	\$13.865	\$13.865	\$40.816

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### Budget by expense type:

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Totals
	(\$millions)			
Salaries & benefits	\$34.847	\$36.268	\$36.268	\$107.383
Operating costs	\$13.329	\$10.922	\$10.522	\$34.773
Government Transfers	\$27.718	\$38.178	\$48.178	\$113.534
Other expenses	\$0.028	\$0.028	\$0.028	\$0.084
Recoveries	<\$11.019>	<\$11.019>	<\$11.019>	<\$33.057>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$64.363</b>	<b>\$74.377</b>	<b>\$83.977</b>	<b>\$222.717</b>

### Budget 2023 provides funding for an additional 60 (32 net new) FTEs:

	TB Decision	Net New	Focus
Foundational Capacity	Cabinet Confidences		Increasing EMCR's foundational capacity in key programs areas, modernizing emergency management service delivery, and expanding disaster mitigation & preparedness programming
Disaster Mitigation & Preparedness			See above
Disaster Risk Assessment			Lead the development of an integrated provincial disaster and climate risk assessment to ensure one assessment is used for planning and decision making
Disaster Resiliency			Lead cross-ministry coordination for our government's work to enhance B.C.'s resilience with the development of a disaster and climate risk reduction focused web hub tool and establishment of a resiliency secretariat
Modernized Legislation			Complete work to co-develop and introduce modernized emergency management legislation along with capacity building in First Nations and local authorities
Totals	60	32	

### Historic information:

The \$519 million in costs expended under the Emergency Program Act (EPA) voted appropriation in 2021/22 far exceed the previous years:

Emergency Program Act					
(\$millions)					
2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
\$128	\$276	\$275	\$108	\$149	\$519

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Prior to 2021, there were six major emergency events over the last five years to which EMCR coordinated response and recovery efforts. Table 1 details the estimated and actual response and recovery costs by event.

<b>Table 1</b>	<b>2020 Flooding</b>	<b>2018 Wildfires</b>	<b>2018 Flooding</b>	<b>2017 Wildfires</b>	<b>2017 Flooding</b>	<b>2016 Flooding</b>	<b>Total</b>
	(\$millions)						
Response	\$26	\$177	\$39	\$380	\$59	\$29	\$710
Recovery	\$195	\$3	\$198	\$22	\$57	\$111	\$586
Total	\$221	\$180	\$237	\$402	\$116	\$140	\$1,296

By comparison to these past events, EMCR's costs for the 2021 events are estimated at \$5.3 billion. Table 2 details the estimated response and recovery costs by event.

<b>Table 2</b>	<b>2021 Fall Atmospheric River Storm</b>	<b>2021 Summer Wildfires</b>	<b>2021 Spring Flooding</b>	<b>Total</b>
	(\$millions)			
Response	\$395	\$376	\$1	\$772
Recovery	\$2,985	\$54	\$1,460	\$4,499
Total	\$3,380	\$430	\$1,461	\$5,271

EMCR has historically depended on temporary auxiliary ("surge") staff funded through the EPA voted appropriation to respond and recover from emergency hazards. Table 3 provides an overview of EMCR's FTEs over the last five years and funded between its' operating budget and EPA statutory spending authority.

<b>Table 3 EMCR FTEs</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
	(#FTEs)				
Operating	Cabinet Confidences				
EPA					
Total					

<b>Contact:</b> Alex Chandler Corporate Support Services	Government Financial Phone: Information	Government Financial Mobile: Information
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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **Emergency Management and Climate Readiness Service Plan**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- The creation of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR) as a new ministry, with a dedicated service plan, demonstrates the Province's commitment to increasing support for climate readiness and the importance of emergency management and disaster and climate risk reduction in B.C.
- The 2023-24 – 2025/26 Service Plan is the Ministry's first service plan and is consistent with government's strategic priorities and EMCR's ministerial mandate.
- Key goals are:
  - Goal 1: B.C.'s strategies and systems reduce the impacts of climate driven hazards and other emergencies and disasters.
  - Goal 2: Indigenous Peoples are true partners and leaders in emergency and disaster risk management.
  - Goal 3: B.C. has modernized and enhanced emergency management in all four phases (prepare, mitigate, respond, and recover).
- Key activities to be undertaken to deliver on these goals include:
  - Leading provincial coordination for disaster risk reduction and climate readiness initiatives to improve awareness and transparency, increase resilience, and build back better from disasters (e.g. Climate Ready BC).
  - Championing evidence-based approaches across the B.C. government to identify and reduce disaster and climate risks and invest in disaster risk reduction (e.g. integrated provincial hazard risk vulnerability assessment).
  - Including First Nations during all phases of emergency management, including all levels of planning, decision making, and implementation.
  - Better shaping the delivery of services to Indigenous Peoples to consider both the needs and the cultural perspectives of individual members and communities.
  - Modernizing B.C.'s emergency and disaster risk management legislation.

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- Supporting Indigenous communities, local authorities, and individuals to access the tools and resources needed to manage emergencies and disasters in alignment with local conditions and needs.
- Supporting urgent coordinated government response and recovery to communities in times of emergency.

### **Background:**

- The *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act* (BTAA) provides the legislative framework for B.C. Government planning, reporting, and accounting, and requires three year-service plans and annual service plan reports be made public annually.
- The service plan's goals, objectives and key strategies focus on reducing the impacts of climate driven hazards and other emergencies and disasters, ensuring Indigenous Peoples are true partners and leaders in emergency and disaster risk management, and modernizing and enhancing emergency management.
- The service plan's three performance measures highlight measurable outcomes to support the Ministry's goals and mandate.
- Performance measures to support goals include:
  - Provincial and regional risk assessments developed and implemented.
  - Percentage of First Nations attending First Nations Emergency Management Partnership Tables.
  - Percentage of eligible communities onboarded and utilizing the Evacuee Registration and Assistance (ERA) tool.
- The Ministry has implemented internal processes to monitor and track progress towards achieving the service plan goals and performance measure targets.

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# **Emergency Management and Climate Readiness**

## **2023/24 – 2025/26 Service Plan**

**February 2023**



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Published by the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness



## Minister's Accountability Statement



The Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness 2023/24 – 2025/26 Service Plan was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bowinn".

Honourable Bowinn Ma  
Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness  
February 7, 2023

## Table of Contents

Minister's Accountability Statement.....	3
Strategic Direction .....	5
Purpose of the Ministry .....	5
Operating Environment.....	5
Economic Statement.....	6
Performance Planning.....	7
Financial Summary .....	18

## Strategic Direction

In 2023/24, the Government of British Columbia will continue our work to make life better for people in B.C., improve the services we all rely on, and ensure a sustainable province for future generations. Government will focus on building a secure, clean, and fair economy, and a province where everyone can find a good home – whether in a rural area, in a city, or in an Indigenous community. B.C. will continue working toward true and meaningful reconciliation by supporting opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to be full partners in an inclusive and sustainable province. The policies, programs and projects developed over the course of this service plan period will focus on results that people can see and feel in four key areas: attainable and affordable housing, strengthened health care, safer communities, and a secure, clean and fair economy that can withstand global economic headwinds.

This 2023/24 service plan outlines how the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness will support the government's priorities including the foundational principles listed above and selected action items identified in the [December 2022 Minister's Mandate Letter](#).

## Purpose of the Ministry

The Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (the Ministry) is responsible to British Columbians as the primary coordinating agency for mitigating climate risks and responding to provincial-level emergencies and disasters. The Ministry works to advance the vision of a disaster resilient British Columbia.

The mission of the Ministry is to lead provincial emergency and disaster risk management, build and foster collaborative relationships and partnerships, advance meaningful and lasting reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, and support all peoples in British Columbia to reduce climate and disaster risk.

The Ministry is responsible for providing cross-ministry coordination to enhance British Columbia's readiness and resilience towards climate and disaster risks and working towards a comprehensive and interconnected approach to achieving climate and disaster risk reduction. The Ministry leads provincial emergency management through the four-phased approach of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery in close collaboration with Indigenous Nations, local authorities, other provinces and territories, federal departments, industry, non-governmental organizations, and volunteers. Delivery of the Ministry's mandate is supported by the *Emergency Program Act*.

## Operating Environment

British Columbians continue to recover from and respond to the upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate related natural disasters. Climate risks and extreme weather events – including heat, flood, fire and drought – impact the health of people, damage infrastructure, and disrupt the economy. British Columbia is also at increased seismic risk

compared with other parts of the country and must be prepared to minimize devastating effects of a large earthquake or tsunami.

As the Province's lead for emergency preparedness and response, the Ministry's focus will continue to be on lessons learned from past emergencies and disasters, building capacity to recover and be resilient in the face of current disaster and climate risk, and preparing for hazards in a way that mitigates the risk of future emergencies.

The increased frequency of climate related natural hazards that heighten the risk of natural disasters in British Columbia requires public service employees with specialised and technical skill sets. In the context of a competitive labour market, the Ministry will need to effectively recruit and retain staff, while also building internal capacity by fostering a learning culture and development opportunities.

## Economic Statement

B.C.'s economy has been resilient to pandemic, geopolitical and climate-related disruptions. However, higher interest rates are expected to weigh on the economy in the coming years. Following a rapid recovery from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, high inflation led to successive interest rate increases from the Bank of Canada in 2022. The impact of higher interest rates has been evident in housing markets and there is uncertainty over its transmission to the rest of the economy in B.C. and among our trading partners. B.C. is heading into this challenging period in relatively strong position, with a low unemployment rate. The Economic Forecast Council (EFC) estimates that B.C. real GDP expanded by 3.0 per cent in 2022 and expects growth of 0.5 per cent in 2023 and 1.6 per cent in 2024. Meanwhile for Canada, the EFC estimates growth of 3.4 per cent in 2022 and projects national real GDP growth of 0.5 per cent in 2023 and 1.5 per cent in 2024. As such, B.C.'s economic growth is expected to be broadly in line with the national average in the coming years.

The risks to B.C.'s economic outlook center around interest rates and inflation, such as the risk of further inflationary supply chain disruptions, the potential for more interest rate increases than expected, and uncertainty around the depth and timing of the impact on housing markets. Further risks include ongoing uncertainty regarding global trade policies, the emergence of further COVID-19 variants of concern and lower commodity prices.

## Performance Planning

### **Goal 1: B.C.'s strategies and systems reduce the impacts of climate driven hazards and other emergencies and disasters.**

Effective systems and proactive strategies can help to reduce the impacts of climate related hazards and other emergencies and disasters on people, communities, infrastructure, the environment, and the economy when they occur.

#### **Objective 1.1: Lead provincial coordination for disaster risk reduction and climate readiness initiatives to improve awareness and transparency, increase resilience, and build back better from disasters.**

As the Province's lead agency responsible for climate readiness and disaster risk reduction, the Ministry coordinates across the provincial government and with external partners to bring together expertise in the development of plans and strategies to help ensure B.C.'s communities, economy, and infrastructure are prepared to meet the challenges of a changing climate and other emergency events. The Ministry will coordinate provincial efforts to enhance resilience, provide guidance and resources to individuals and communities, and apply lessons learned from past emergencies.

#### **Key Strategies**

- Lead cross-ministry coordination to develop a comprehensive, online resource for people and communities to access information on disaster and climate risks and initiatives to improve resilience.
- Provide guidance to ministries delivering risk reduction and resilience initiatives regarding prioritization of efforts to help ensure that investments align with risk assessments.
- Support the Ministry of Forests, in collaboration with local, federal and Indigenous governments, to strengthen the province's flood response through the completion of [B.C.'s Flood Strategy](#) and start the work to translate the strategy into action through the BC Flood Resilience Plan.
- Work across ministries to help maintain the overall provincial business continuity program, including ministry plans that address infrastructure and services that governments, citizens, businesses, and visitors rely on, and continuity of government operations following an emergency or disaster.

#### **Discussion**

Past emergencies, such as floods, wildfires, and the COVID-19 pandemic, have demonstrated the need to provide an accessible and central resource where people and communities can obtain information about the Province's disaster and climate readiness strategies and details

about funding and supports. In the upcoming year, the Ministry will coordinate across the provincial government to launch an online resource that brings this information together in a central, easy-to-navigate format. Feedback from communities and interest groups will shape the approach to ensure the information is relevant, useful, and timely.

The Ministry will work across the provincial government to advance emergency preparedness and risk reduction. This includes supporting the Ministry of Forests in starting the work to translate B.C.'s Flood Strategy into an action plan. In addition, the Ministry will work with the Ministry of Forests to support the BC Wildfire Service to reduce wildfire risk and prepare communities for wildfires. The Ministry will also support the Ministry of Agriculture and Food's work to enhance the sustainability and reliability of B.C.'s food systems during emergencies, recognizing the importance of the provincial food system to a secure, clean, and fair economy.

The Ministry will lead cross-ministry coordination to strengthen disaster risk governance and enhance B.C.'s resilience. This includes continuing to develop and monitor government-wide business continuity programs, promoting an all-hazard approach to emergency management planning in communities, and leading provincial training and exercises. Specific deliverables include an annual cross-government review of ministry business continuity programs and conducting an emergency management training needs assessment.

### **Objective 1.2: Champion evidence-based approaches across the B.C. government to identify and reduce disaster and climate risks and invest in disaster risk reduction.**

Every disaster provides the opportunity to learn, build capacity, and reduce future risk. Using global best practices and reliable data and information, the Ministry will lead cross-government efforts aimed at enhancing the province's ability to withstand future disasters and minimize impacts to people, communities, the economy, and the environment.

#### **Key Strategies**

- In partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, and in consultation with communities and Indigenous Peoples, advance B.C.'s commitments to the Sendai Framework by leading the development of an integrated provincial hazard risk vulnerability assessment that builds on B.C.'s Preliminary Strategic Climate Risk Assessment and integrates climate and disaster risk.
- Advance disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation in B.C. through modernized policies and programs and support First Nations and local authorities on emergency preparedness and mitigation through the Community Emergency Preparedness Fund.
- Develop formal partnerships with post-secondary institutions, Indigenous organizations, and other emergency management organizations and jurisdictions to support continuous improvement of the Province's emergency preparedness management and disaster risk reduction strategies.

## Discussion

This objective advances B.C.'s commitment to the [United Nations Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction](#) through development and application of disaster risk reduction policies, strategies, and programs to mitigate future disaster risk, reduce existing disaster risk, and manage residual risk.

Progress towards this objective requires modernizing disaster mitigation policies and programs. This includes considering climate change in policies and programs, integrating feedback from Indigenous communities, and bringing international best practices for disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation into future program design. To monitor progress, the Ministry will track the number of provincially funded disaster mitigation projects that include appropriate climate change considerations and the number of successful applications from Indigenous communities and organizations.

The Ministry will also continue to conduct strategic after-action reviews to leverage lessons learned that improve the effectiveness of government's emergency management programs. Over the forthcoming year, the Ministry will review provincial strategies and plans to determine how they address climate and disaster risks and build resiliency.

The Ministry will seek to strengthen existing relationships that enable data and information-sharing by establishing new partnerships that support evidence-based disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation decision making. Progress will be monitored by assessing the quality of data and information used in emergency management service delivery and disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation strategies and investments.

## Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
1.1 Provincial and regional risk assessments developed and implemented	Risk assessment methodology completed.	Initiate a joint provincial scale Disaster and Climate Risk and Resilience Assessment (DCRRA) in partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (ENV) and co-developed with Indigenous partners.	Complete and publish the provincial scale DCRRA in partnership with ENV and co-developed with Indigenous partners.  Initiate regional scale DCRRA in partnership with ENV and co-developed with Indigenous partners.	Complete and publish the regional scale DCRRA in partnership with ENV and co-developed with Indigenous partners.

Data source: Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness and Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, Manually compiled.

## Discussion

The mandate letters for the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR) and the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (ECCS) include a joint

mandate to advance B.C.'s commitments to the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction by integrating the assessment of climate and disaster risk to support the development of a subsequent province-wide disaster and climate risk reduction plan. Previously, the Province has used independent processes to conduct disaster and climate risk assessments. However, the Province recognizes that climate and natural hazard risk are interrelated and need to be addressed holistically by the whole of society. The Ministry will work with ECCS and its Indigenous partners to co-develop a risk assessment methodology that will lead to an accurate, shared understanding of risks and risk reduction priorities.

In addition to a provincial scale Disaster and Climate Risk Resilience Assessment, the Province continues to provide disaster risk reduction funding to local governments and First Nations through Federal-Provincial funding partnerships, provincial mitigation funding programs, and the provincially-funded Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF). The Disaster Risk Reduction-Climate Adaptation funding stream of CEPF supports communities' understanding of the natural hazards they face, the risks associated with a changing climate, and development and implementation of effective strategies to plan for, mitigate, and adapt to those risks.

## **Goal 2: Indigenous Peoples are true partners and leaders in emergency and disaster risk management.**

In line with the B.C. Government's commitments to true and lasting reconciliation, the Ministry will include First Nations in all four phases of emergency management and improve the cultural safety of emergency services provided to Indigenous Peoples.

### **Objective 2.1: Include First Nations during all phases of emergency management, including all levels of planning, decision making, and implementation.**

Effective emergency management requires involvement and expertise of First Nations across B.C. The Ministry will work with First Nations and through government-to-government relationships to foster shared leadership across all phases of emergency management, including mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery, to build their future resilience.

#### **Key Strategies**

- Continue to establish emergency management agreements and build relationships and partnerships with Indigenous communities and organizations to strengthen emergency and disaster risk management knowledge and practices across all jurisdictions.
- Enhance First Nations emergency management capacity by working with the federal government to replace the current bi-lateral service agreement for the delivery emergency management services on reserve lands with a more inclusive approach through a multi-lateral service agreement with representation from the First Nations Emergency Services Society (FNESS), the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC), and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC).



- Create an Indigenous engagement suite of tools to support internal staff and external partners that meet engagement, consultation, co-operation, and co-development requirements.
- Support the development of emergency management, capacity building, and disaster risk reduction partnerships that include Indigenous communities, local authorities, and the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness.
- Support Indigenous communities and local authorities with disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation funding programs as well as the advancement of Indigenous-led disaster risk management priorities that reduce risks to communities and consider future climate conditions.

## Discussion

Recognizing the importance of Indigenous knowledge to effective emergency management and the increased risk of climate-related emergencies in rural and remote communities, the Ministry will work to establish First Nations as true partners and encourage collaboration with local authorities across all phases of emergency management. These relationships will be based on a foundation of respect and humility, and cultural sensitivity.

Collaborative Emergency Management Agreements (CEMAs) create a structure for collaboration to ensure that First Nations are at the table and informing decisions that affect them, their families, and their territories, while prioritizing the importance of cultural safety and Indigenous knowledge in wildfire and emergency management. The Ministry will advance discussions with First Nations communities in high-risk areas that have an interest in entering into CEMAs or other types of agreements.

## **Objective 2.2: Better shape the delivery of services to Indigenous Peoples to consider both the needs and the cultural perspectives of individual members and communities.**

Actions and decisions taken by the Ministry will be guided by the B.C. Government's commitment to implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Ministry recognizes the diversity of First Nations in British Columbia and respects self-determination of Indigenous Peoples. Services, programs, and training will be sustained to improve cultural awareness and sensitivity.

## Key Strategies

- Deliver emergency management services and supports that incorporate cultural safety and humility and are guided by the B.C. *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.
- Facilitate an Indigenous Agency Working Group to promote situational awareness and support response to communities during emergency events.
- Work with Indigenous partners to develop new Emergency Support Services (ESS) policies and training to support culturally safe and inclusive approaches.

- Support self-determination and decision-making by working with Indigenous organizations to provide culturally safe emergency management services and supports to Indigenous communities that enable in-person connection with community leaders, knowledge keepers and recovery leads.
- Support capacity building and training through regional First Nations Emergency Management Partners Tables and FNESS as well as funding to address emergency preparedness and mitigation needs of First Nations communities.

## Discussion

Lessons learned following a series of concurrent and overlapping provincial emergencies have highlighted the importance of establishing First Nations as true partners and leaders during all phases of emergency management, including all levels of planning, decision making, implementing, and embedding cultural safety and humility practices. Examples include establishing emergency management agreements with First Nations as well as updates to policies, training materials, guides, and forms through a lived experience lens and increased in-person connections with community leaders, knowledge keepers, and recovery leads to demonstrate a comprehensive support model in emergency management.

The Ministry will continue to work in partnership to improve service delivery through strengthened linkages and partnerships with Indigenous support organizations such as ISC, FNESS, First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), Metis Nations BC (MNBC) and the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centers (BCAAFC). The Ministry will also continue to facilitate an Indigenous Agency Working Group (IAWG) to maintain situational awareness and timely response to emerging needs and issues.

## Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
2.1 Percentage of First Nations attending First Nations Emergency Management Partnership Tables	36%	41%	46%	51%

Data source: Strategic Partnerships, Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness

## Discussion

In 2018, the First Nations Emergency Management Partnership Tables were created as regional forums for First Nations and provincial agency emergency managers to share knowledge and provide guidance on emergency management issues and initiatives. As a key workplan deliverable under the current bilateral service agreement between Indigenous Services Canada and the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness, these meetings were developed with the intention of holding Partnership Tables annually.

Every First Nation community in B.C. is invited to participate, along with key support organizations, including FNESS, ISC, FNHA, BC Wildfire Service, and many other non-

governmental, provincial, or federal partners, as determined by First Nations. As part of continuous improvement efforts, support organizations and community representatives are encouraged to continue local and regional dialogue around emergency management topics between Partnership Tables, including through seasonal readiness calls/meetings, in-person community visits, and First Nations specific coordination calls. First Nations communities are faced with capacity challenges and competing priorities at the provincial and federal levels of government. As a result, targeted participation rates are anticipated to increase gradually over time as First Nations continue working toward building dedicated emergency management capacity in communities.

The Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness recognizes the limitations of a performance measure that merely measures the percentage of First Nations attending First Nations Emergency Management Partnership Tables and is committed to achieving truly meaningful engagement and shared decision-making with First Nations far beyond this quantitative metric. This will be realized through modernization of the emergency management system, including the creation of a new approach for the delivery of emergency management services in alignment with the multi-jurisdictional services agreement with ISC, FNLC and FNESS, and new legislation built in partnership with First Nations.

### **Goal 3: B.C. has modernized and enhanced emergency management in all four phases (prepare, mitigate, respond, and recover).**

Government is expected to follow modern and effective practices in emergency management. This goal addresses the Ministry's role in supporting Indigenous communities, local authorities, and individuals to prepare for emergencies, mitigate the risks of a changing climate, respond to disasters, and recover quickly after they occur.

#### **Objective 3.1: Modernize B.C.'s emergency and disaster risk management legislation.**

Modernizing the Province's emergency management legislation is a crucial step in implementing the Sendai Framework, emphasizing the importance of disaster risk reduction, and strengthening the four phases of emergency management – mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

#### **Key Strategies**

- In partnership with key ministries, complete work to co-develop and introduce modernized emergency management legislation that aligns with the B.C. Government's commitments to the United Nations Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.
- In accordance with the B.C. *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, complete co-development of modernized emergency management legislation with

First Nations and extend co-development to the development of regulations and implementation of the new legislation.

- Engage a wide cross-section of interest groups during the implementation of modernized emergency management legislation to promote effective coordination, collaboration, and information sharing among partners.

### **Discussion**

B.C.'s statutory framework for emergencies is set out in the *Emergency Program Act* (EPA) and its supporting regulations. As part of its adoption of the Sendai Framework, the government announced plans to repeal and replace the EPA with modernized legislation. Work is ongoing to develop modernized emergency and disaster risk management legislation, including significant engagement with the public and local authorities, co-development with First Nations, and engagement with Indigenous leadership organizations. Government intends to introduce modernized legislation in 2023 and, following Royal Assent, the Ministry will work with a broad range of interest groups during implementation to ensure that all parties are working together effectively.

### **Objective 3.2: Support Indigenous communities, local authorities, and individuals to access the tools and resources needed to manage emergencies and disasters in alignment with local conditions and needs.**

The Province plays a key role in providing programs, systems, and resources that people need to prepare themselves and their communities for disasters and manage emergencies when they occur.

### **Key Strategies**

- Deliver disaster mitigation and preparedness programs and funding that incorporate future climate scenarios, climate adaptation, and support development of local plans that reflect a changing climate.
- Expand public education initiatives, such as the PreparedBC program, and deepen engagement with partners to increase awareness of emergency preparedness across British Columbia, focusing on inclusive and culturally appropriate resources.
- Continue to evolve the public alerting system to enhance First Nations and local authority preparedness and response.
- Enhance catastrophic earthquake preparedness in collaboration with partners through the ongoing development of plans, training, exercises, public education, agreements, and investments in seismic mitigation and earthquake early warning.
- Support First Nations and local authorities in building preparedness, response, and recovery capacity through the Community Emergency Preparedness Fund and continue to enhance provincial coordination, liaison, and information sharing capacity.

## Discussion

Helping people and communities mitigate risks and prepare for emergencies is essential to reducing the impact of disasters when they occur. The Ministry's focus during the upcoming year will increase understanding and awareness of risks posed to communities as well as mitigating that risk through strategic investments and enhancements for community preparedness. The Ministry will integrate climate readiness with disaster mitigation strategies and policies to reduce hazard risks and work with communities to manage significant risks.

This work will include expanding and refreshing the PreparedBC program to increase public outreach through social and other channels, create interactive tools, tailor content to meet needs of specific populations, and translate household preparedness resources into multiple languages. The Ministry will also continue to evolve the public alerting system in collaboration with First Nations and local authorities to help people make informed decisions. The Ministry will continue to collaborate with federal-provincial-territorial alerting partners and help educate the public about the public alerting system.

Catastrophic earthquake preparedness will be advanced through continued investment in seismic upgrades of public buildings and infrastructure, provincial seismic risk management activities, and support for people and communities to manage seismic risk. This includes continuing to provide public education and raise awareness of earthquake early warning systems, training exercises, and support for the development and enhancement of seismic risk reduction measures. The Ministry will monitor the number of individuals and communities participating in programs and training and receiving funding to measure progress towards this objective.

## **Objective 3.3: Support urgent coordinated government response and recovery to communities in times of emergency.**

The Ministry will continue to apply lessons learned from past events, such as the 2021 wildfires, flooding, landslides, and the COVID-19 pandemic, to improve preparedness and the timeliness and coordination of response and recovery efforts.

## Key Strategies

- Continue to support the province-wide response and recovery from the widespread damage caused by severe events, such as wildfire, flooding, and landslides in B.C.
- Work with Indigenous, federal, and local authority partners, and non-governmental organizations to deliver programs such as Emergency Support Services and Disaster Financial Assistance as needed for communities and individuals impacted by disasters.
- Implement improvements enabled by modernized emergency management legislation and support emergency management program and service delivery enhancements through lessons learned, systems reviews, and by promoting a culture of continuous improvement.

- Continue to work closely with the Public Safety Lifeline Volunteer groups in support of response related efforts.
- Maintain specialized regional emergency management partnership agreements with local authorities, and cross-border arrangements and agreements with key interest groups, aimed at enhancing B.C.'s mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery efforts for disasters.

## **Discussion**

Climate related emergencies are growing in scope, scale, and duration in British Columbia, requiring greater emphasis on strong coordination among First Nations, local authorities, other government partners, and non-governmental organizations. Following provincial emergencies and disasters, the Ministry reviews lessons learned to improve programs and service delivery, including ongoing delivery of the enhanced public alerting program to manage emergency and public alerts, working in collaboration with Indigenous nations, local authorities, and provincial and federal partners.

Emergency Support Services (ESS) provides short-term basic support to people impacted by disasters. During an emergency event, support services such as temporary lodging, food, clothing, and incidentals may be offered to those eligible as determined by a case-by-case basis. Services may be available for an extended period depending on the emergency and the circumstances of an evacuation. This performance measure demonstrates the Ministry's progress on strengthening community resilience and providing rapid response when disasters occur.

Disaster Financial Assistance provides financial assistance to communities for damaged infrastructure and members of the public, small businesses, farms, and charitable organizations to restore uninsurable losses that are essential to homes, livelihoods, or community services, when applicable. Timely decision making about disaster financial assistance helps ensure that individuals, organizations, and communities impacted by eligible disasters can focus on recovery efforts, such as rebuilding infrastructure or replacing equipment.

The Ministry will continue to actively promote agreements and relationships that enhance coordination and information sharing during the four phases of emergency management. This includes ongoing work to support strategic planning and steering committee meetings for the Integrated Partnership for Regional Emergency Management in Metro Vancouver, which supports improved coordination of emergency management planning in the Metro Vancouver region and streamlined communication with municipalities in the Metro Vancouver region.

Similarly, work will continue to support the Regional Emergency Management Partnership in the Capital Region. Partners will promote the regional tsunami information portal and pursue cross-jurisdictional evacuation planning. Following these successful models, the Ministry will continue building regional partnerships with First Nations communities and local authorities to improve planning and response activities across regions.

The Ministry supports the Integrated Disaster Council of BC, a network of government and non-government agencies that work together to provide humanitarian aid to support First Nations and local authorities' emergency management following a disaster. This forum increases coordination of member agencies and enhances communication and information sharing.

Public Safety Lifeline Volunteer (PSLV) groups such as Search and Rescue, Emergency Support Services, Emergency Radio Communication, Provincial Emergency Program Air Volunteers, and Road Rescue are at the heart of emergency response in B.C. Thousands of volunteers across the province lead air and ground searches, help people in motor vehicle accidents, and coordinate services for victims of disasters.

## Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
3.1 Percentage of eligible communities onboarded and utilizing the Evacuee Registration and Assistance (ERA) tool	35%	50%	75%	100%

Data source: Regional Operations Division, Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness

## Discussion

In 2022-23, the Ministry enhanced Emergency Support Services (ESS) by introducing a new digital platform called Evacuee Registration and Assistance (ERA), which increases the efficiency and speed of service delivery and payments for evacuees. Modernized ESS service delivery reflects the need to respond to more complex and longer duration emergency events.

In 2023-24, the Ministry will continue to engage with communities to onboard and train on the ERA tool, including updated guides, resources, and support. The Ministry will also continue working with Indigenous communities and other partners to ensure the program is administered in a culturally safe manner and meets the needs of those receiving support.

## Financial Summary

Core Business	2022/23 Restated Estimates <sup>1</sup>	2023/24 Estimates	2024/25 Plan	2025/26 Plan
<b>Operating Expenses (\$000)</b>				
Emergency Management and Climate Readiness	31,636	50,844	63,013	72,613
Executive and Support Services	11,039	13,519	11,364	11,364
Emergency Program Act	436,420	36,420	36,420	36,420
<b>Total</b>	<b>479,095</b>	<b>100,783</b>	<b>110,797</b>	<b>120,397</b>
<b>Capital Expenditures (\$000)</b>				
Emergency Management and Climate Readiness	495	524	146	53
<b>Total</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>53</b>

<sup>1</sup> For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2022/23 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2023/24 Estimates.

\* Further information on program funding and vote recoveries is available in the [Estimates and Supplement to the Estimates](#)



## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **EMCR Mandate Letter Commitments – Progress Overview**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- This is the first time British Columbia has had a stand-alone ministry dedicated to leading and coordinating cross-government work on emergencies. The establishment of the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness acknowledges the significant challenges we face and the need for dedicated leadership to reduce disaster and climate risks.
- Since its creation in December last year, Emergency Management and Climate Readiness has made significant progress on delivering its mandate priorities by:
  - Supporting urgent coordinated government response to communities in times of emergency, including with Cowichan, Halalt, Penelakut, and Stz'uminus First Nations during winter 2022/2023 flooding.
  - Enhancing focus on preparedness to ensure communities are ready for urgent response and incorporating lessons learned from previous emergencies. Examples include the Covid-19 Lessons Learned Review and exercises like this year's Exercise Coastal Response, a catastrophic earthquake exercise involving multiple Provincial, federal, local, First Nations governments and critical infrastructure operators.
  - Partnering with Indigenous peoples at all stages and levels of our work. Including renewing our Letter of Understanding (LOU) with the First Nations Health Authority and developing a new LOU with the First Nations' Emergency Services Society.
  - Working towards introducing modernized emergency management legislation that aligns with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and is co-developed with Indigenous partners. This included sharing the draft legislation with interested First Nations in December and hosting feedback sessions in January this year, as well as ongoing discussions with organizations like the Alliance of BC Modern Treaty Nations and First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC).
  - Advancing B.C.'s commitments to the Sendai Framework by leading the development of a provincial Disaster and Climate Risk and Resilience Assessment in partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, and in consultation with communities and Indigenous Peoples, which will be publicly released in 2024.
  - Leading cross-ministry coordination for our government's work to enhance B.C.'s resilience, including through increasing funding to the Community Emergency Preparedness Fund by \$180M, and improving transparency and awareness of resilience initiatives and existing risks by launching the ClimateReadyBC website in February.

### **Background:**

- EMCR is leading on five mandate letter commitments and supporting on three additional commitments. This note provides an overview of progress to date.

#### 1. Emergency Response – Lead Ministry:

- EMCR was directed to prioritize supporting coordinated government emergency response to communities; reviewing emergency response systems to ensure they are prepared; and incorporating lessons learned from previous emergencies.
- Recent examples of supporting communities include:
  - Working with Cowichan, Halalt, Penelakut, and Stz'uminus First Nations during winter flooding to pre-position and install flood mitigation assets for emergency response to imminent threats resulting from a rain event, king tide and storm surges.
  - Supporting Dawson Creek and Hudson Hope on drought response planning, data collection, identifying risks and developing triggers for emergency response actions.
  - Overall, enhancing preparedness activities and leadership both with communities and within government (e.g. drought and water scarcity preparedness).
- Other response work being undertaken by EMCR includes:
  - EMCR worked with over 200 partners in Exercise Coastal Response to test B.C.'s preparedness for a large-scale emergency through a simulated earthquake exercise from February 7-9, 2023. Findings will inform future emergency management work.
  - Key programs such as Emergency Support Services, Search and Rescue, and Disaster Financial Assistance are undergoing reviews.
  - EMCR has created a new Strategic Review Branch focused on continuous improvement through conducting after-action reviews, such as the COVID-19 Lessons Learned Review and integrating learnings into all phases of emergency management in government.

#### 2. Partner with Indigenous Peoples – Lead Ministry:

- EMCR was directed to prioritize including First Nations from the beginning of its work at all levels of planning, decision making, and implementation.
- EMCR is in the final stages of renewing its LOU with the First Nations Health Authority. It is expected that the renewed LOU will be signed in April 2023. This collaboration has helped to incorporate cultural safety and humility into EMCR policies and service delivery and led to the development of a Multi-Agency Support Team to strengthen agency coordination.
- EMCR and the BC Wildfire Service are developing a LOU with the First Nations Emergency Services Society to strengthen cross-agency collaboration, improve service to Indigenous peoples, and to advance Indigenous-led approaches in emergency management. The LOU is anticipated to be signed in spring 2023.

## ***Confidential***

- In accordance with the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Action Plan, EMCR is actively co-developing modernized emergency management legislation with Indigenous partners, and will also be co-developing guidance materials for internal and external audiences to support meeting Indigenous engagement requirements.

### 3. Emergency Management Legislation – Lead Ministry:

- EMCR was directed to prioritize introducing co-developed emergency management legislation that aligns with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Cabinet Confidences; Intergovernmental Communications

### 4. Provincial Disaster and Climate Risk and Resilience Assessment – Lead Ministry:

- EMCR was directed to prioritize leading the co-development of a provincial-level disaster and climate risk assessment that integrates climate and disaster risk, in conjunction with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (ENV). This assessment will support a subsequent province-wide risk reduction plan and subsequent regional assessments.
- EMCR and ENV have begun outreach to Indigenous partners on co-development, and have contracts in place to support co-development, create the methodology and framework for conducting the assessment, and ensure diversity, equity and inclusion considerations are addressed.

### 5. Enhance Resilience through Building Back Better, Coordination and Information Sharing – Lead Ministry:

- EMCR was directed to prioritize leading cross-ministry coordination of provincial work to enhance B.C.'s resilience, including building back better from recent disasters, providing guidance to ministries on prioritizing risk reduction and resilience initiatives, and developing new tools for the public on existing risks and work to improve resilience.
- On February 21, 2023 Minister Ma announced an additional \$180M in funding for the Community Emergency Preparedness Fund which supports mitigation and preparedness

March 7, 2023

## **Confidential**

initiatives, for a total contribution of about \$370M since it was established in 2017.

- Also announced was the launch of ClimateReadyBC. This publicly-accessible information portal centralizes climate and disaster risk data and resources to help communities understand risks they face and how to address them.

### 6. Emergency Preparedness and Food Security Strategy – Support Ministry:

- The Ministry of Agriculture and Food (AF) mandate letter directed AF to prioritize working with EMCR to develop an emergency preparedness strategy for food security.
- Actions to support the strategy are under development. AF staff are working closely with partner ministries, including EMCR, to ensure a coordinated approach to developing the strategy. Questions on this topic should be referred to AF.

### 7. Wildfire Prevention and Management & Flood Strategy and Plan – Support Ministry:

- The Ministry of Forests (FOR) had two mandate letter commitments that EMCR is supporting on:
  - Strengthening BC Wildfire Services' focus on wildfire prevention and management, including cultural and prescribed fire.
  - Strengthening the province's flood response through completing B.C.'s Flood Strategy and starting work to create a BC Flood Resilience Plan.
- FOR staff are working closely with partner ministries, including EMCR, on these files. Questions should be referred to FOR.

<b>Contact:</b> Kathryn Forge Disaster Risk Management Division	Phone: 778-584-4250	Mobile: 778-584-4250
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December 7, 2022

Honourable Bowinn Ma  
Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Ma:

Thank you for agreeing to serve as Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness. I trust in your leadership at this critical time to deliver results for the people of British Columbia.

British Columbians continue to recover from and respond to the upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate related natural disasters, while global inflation is driving up costs for more households and the world's economic outlook is concerning. Now more than ever, we need to focus on building a secure, low emission, sustainable economy, and a province where everyone can find a good home – whether you live in a rural area, in a city, or in an Indigenous community. We will continue working toward true and meaningful reconciliation by supporting opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to be full partners in the inclusive and sustainable province we are building together.

Our government is committed to delivering on the mandate British Columbians gave us in 2020. Together we can make life better for people in B.C., improve the services we all rely on, and ensure a sustainable province for future generations.

As we renew our work, my priority as Premier is to deliver results that people can see and feel in four key areas:

- **Attainable and affordable housing:** In the wake of soaring prices and record migration to B.C., we will take on the important work of building new homes that are actually attainable for the middle class, while continuing our work to address the housing crisis for those in distress on our streets.

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**Office of the  
Premier**

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Victoria

- **Safer communities:** To address concerns about public safety, both for the people struggling with mental health and addiction on our streets, as well as the feeling that downtown centres are not as safe as they were before the pandemic, we will work with our partners at all levels of government, the justice and health care systems, the non-profit sector, and community leaders to find solutions for this complex challenge facing our province, and work overtime to seize the assets of high-level criminals.
- **Improved health care:** Amid unprecedented pressures we will continue to work to strengthen our public health care system, from family doctors to new hospitals, so care is there for each of us when we need it.
- **A sustainable, clean, secure, and fair economy:** We will continue our work investing in British Columbians, fighting racism and promoting equity, and building a clean economy that addresses our obligations to combat climate change by driving down emissions, while creating good, family supporting jobs.

British Columbia has been disproportionately impacted by climate change disasters, from unprecedented forest fire seasons, including the historic fire in Lytton, to atmospheric rivers that washed out our highway system and almost overwhelmed the pump and dyke system in Abbotsford, impacting directly the livelihoods of many farmers in the Fraser Valley.

Beyond climate change, British Columbians are also aware we are at increased seismic risk compared with other parts of the country – a large earthquake or tsunami could have devastating effects on our province if we fail to prepare and to build in a way that withstands these types of disasters.

We need to continue to learn the lessons of past emergencies, build our capacity to be resilient in the face of recent emergencies, and prepare in a way that mitigates the risk of future emergencies. Your role as the first Minister of this new Ministry will be to lead and coordinate the ongoing cross-government work needed to learn from, respond to, and prepare for emergencies using the best data and information available.

Since 2020, our government has made considerable progress on important initiatives including:

- Overseeing the COVID-19 state of emergency and supporting people, businesses, and communities through the pandemic response and recovery.
- Responding to unprecedented extreme weather events, including heat, flood, fire, and drought, and working with communities to rebuild and recover.
- Initiating important work to reduce risks from disasters, including investments in the Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy and the move to a year-round wildfire service.

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As a new ministry with responsibility to oversee delivery of our government's work on these important files, over the remaining period of this mandate I expect you to prioritize making progress on the following:

- Support urgent coordinated government response to communities in times of emergency and review systems to ensure they are prepared for urgent response, incorporating lessons learned from previous emergencies.
- Complete work to co-develop and introduce modernized emergency management legislation that aligns with our government's commitments to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, to strengthen our ability to protect people and communities from disasters and emergencies.
- In partnership with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, and in consultation with communities and Indigenous Peoples, advance B.C.'s commitments to the Sendai Framework by leading the development of a provincial hazard risk vulnerability assessment that builds on B.C.'s Preliminary Strategic Climate Risk Assessment and integrates climate and disaster risk. This will support development of a subsequent province-wide disaster and climate risk reduction plan that assesses risk priorities and systematically coordinates and implements cross-government interventions consistent with those priorities.
- Establish Indigenous Peoples as true partners and leaders in emergency management by including First Nations from the beginning and at all levels of planning, decision making, and implementation.
- Lead cross-ministry coordination for our government's work to enhance B.C.'s resilience, such as our work through the Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy, the BC Flood Strategy, and other cross-government efforts, including work to build back better from recent disasters by:
  - Providing guidance to ministries delivering risk reduction and resilience initiatives regarding prioritization of efforts to help ensure that investments align with risk assessments; and
  - Improving transparency and awareness of these initiatives and their impacts by developing new tools for the public to access information on existing risks and work to improve resilience.

Our work together must continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of people in this province. Issues not contemplated by this letter will come forward for government action and I ask you to bring such matters forward for consideration by the Planning and Priorities Committee of Cabinet, with the expectation that any proposed initiatives will be subject to the usual Cabinet and Treasury Board oversight and include measurable outcomes for British Columbians. Your ministry's priorities must reflect our government's overall strategic plan as determined by Cabinet.

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British Columbians expect their elected representatives to work together to advance the public good. That means seeking out, fostering, and championing good ideas regardless of their origin. I expect you to reach out to elected members from all parties as you deliver on your mandate. Further, you will build thoughtful and sustained relationships both with title holders and through public and stakeholder engagement plans that incorporate diverse perspectives early in the policy development process. Federal partnerships and resources will be particularly important and, on behalf of our government, you will engage with the federal government on advancing priorities to improve the lives of British Columbians.

As a Cabinet, we will uphold the highest standards of ethics, collaboration, and good conduct in service of the public, and as a Minister of the Crown, you are expected to review, understand, and act according to the *Members' Conflict of Interest Act*. You will establish a collaborative working relationship with your Deputy Minister, and the public servants under their direction, who provide the professional, non-partisan advice that is fundamental to delivering on our government's priorities. Your Minister's Office must meet the highest standards for integrity and provide a respectful, rewarding environment for all staff.

The rural and urban challenges that we face are urgent and complex. In response, we must be forward-thinking, strategic, and ready to work across disciplines and old divisions in new ways. Labour shortages are a major issue globally, and British Columbia is no exception, including in the public service. Maintaining the BC Public Service as an employer of excellence will be key to retaining and recruiting the diverse professionals we rely on to deliver essential services, advice, and analysis.

At the core of this work is listening and responding to the priorities of people in B.C. Together, we can deliver results in very real ways – ways that people can see, feel, and touch, and that change their lives for the better. Thank you for doing this important work with me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Eby', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

David Eby, KC  
Premier



## 2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE

### Fiscal Year End Spending

#### Key Messages/Suggested Response:

- Intergovernmental Communications
- These grants will be announced over the next few months.
- Further details will be disclosed in the release of Public Accounts in the summer.

#### Background:

- \$369 million has been provided to UBCM in support of the Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF) since it was established in 2017 including a \$180 million announced in Budget 2023. This funding supports the Province's Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy. With a record investment in CEPF, more funding will be available for communities under each of the fund's seven streams.
- There is significant existing demand among local authorities and First Nations for the limited mitigation and preparedness funding available demonstrated by the strong response to various mitigation program intakes in recent years. This demand continues to grow as communities are impacted by climate change related events. EMCR's mitigation unit is aware of unfunded First Nations and local authorities' priorities totalling over \$300 million.
- BC's programs are in significant demand as a result: in the 2021 Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund intake, BC had 52 applications for a total of just over \$700 million, and in the 2022 intake, BC had 46 applications for just over \$1 billion in project costs.
- Public Safety Canada's recent evaluation of the National Disaster Mitigation Program's investments across Canada estimated for every \$1 spent on mitigation, \$7 to \$10 was saved in post-disaster response and recovery costs.

<b>Contact:</b> Alex Chandler Corporate Support Services	<b>Phone:</b> <small>Government Financial Information</small>	<b>Mobile:</b> <small>Government Financial Information</small>
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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **Atmospheric River Costs (ARE) and Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA)**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

##### 2021 DFAA Event Related Costs:

- Cost associated with the 3 weather events which impacted BC in 2021 are forecasted at \$5.3 billion and represents about 80% of the total estimated costs of all 9 events.
  - 2021 Atmospheric River Event (ARE) - \$3.4B
  - 2021 Wildfires - \$430M
  - 2021 Spring Flood and Landslides - \$1.5B
- As of FY 22/23-Q3, BC has spent approximately \$703 million responding to and recovering from the 2021 Atmospheric River Event.

##### Active DFAA Claims:

- The Province has 9 active DFAA claims for events dating back to 2016.
- The estimated provincial expenditure associated with the response and recovery from these events is \$6.6 billion. Of this amount, the Province expects up to \$5.6 billion (85%) will be recovered from the federal government, through cost sharing from the DFAA program.

#### **Background:**

##### DFAA Overview:

- The Province submits advance and interim payment requests to the federal government as recovery work progresses. An advance payment of up to 50% of the eligible federal share can be received within the first year of an event and then an interim payment request can provide up to 60% of the total federal share. These advance and interim payment requests are assessed by Public Safety Canada against the Province's estimate of the total eligible event costs.
- Once the federal government determines the eligibility of a disaster event through the issuance of an Order in Council (OIC), British Columbia has five years from the date of the OIC, to submit its final claim and confirm the amount of remaining federal cost-share eligible for reimbursement based on an audit of costs submitted.

## Confidential

- Under DFAA, the federal government partially reimburses provincial costs associated with response and recovery activities. This includes both direct provincial costs and supports provided through provincial disaster relief programs such as Disaster Financial Assistance and the Canada-BC Flood Recovery Program for Food Security, supporting the agriculture sector.

### ARE Costs:

- The initial provincial cost estimates in February 2022 for the ARE was over \$4 billion. As of FY 22/23-Q3, the provincial cost is forecasted to be \$3.4 billion, of which \$3 billion (88%) may be eligible for reimbursement from the federal government through the DFAA program. The total cost will continue to be refined as the Province determines the scope of the specific recovery projects required to recover critical infrastructure impacted by this event.
- The majority of the costs from the ARE relate to ongoing recovery activities to repair or rebuild critical highway infrastructure (\$3 billion), debris removal and clean-up from watercourses and to support local governments and First Nations, citizens, small businesses, farms and charitable organizations with assistance to recover.
- Response costs incurred to date from the ARE is approximately \$400 million for emergency response activities and supporting evacuees.
- The federal government's \$5 billion commitment to B.C. back in early 2022 was in support of four DFAA-eligible disasters in British Columbia: the 2021 November Rainstorm, the 2021 Wildfire, 2020 and 2021 Spring Floods and Landslides.
- As of March 31, 2023, the federal government has provided BC with \$1.026 billion in advance payments through DFAA for the atmospheric river recovery efforts and a further \$612 million for the other 3 events: 2021 Wildfire, 2020 and 2021 Spring Flood and Landslides.

	(In Millions)		
Event	1 <sup>st</sup> Advance Payment	2 <sup>nd</sup> Advance Payment	DFAA Funding Received
2021 November Rainstorm	\$469	\$557	\$1.026
2021 Wildfire	\$208		\$208
2021 Spring Flood and Landslides	\$355		\$355
2020 Spring Flood and Landslides	\$49		\$49
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1.081</b>	<b>\$557</b>	<b>\$1.638</b>

} \$612

**DFAA Forecasted Costs and Federal Funding Received:**

<b>DFAA Event Name</b>	<b>(In Millions)</b>			
	<b>Total Estimated Cost of Event</b>	<b>Federal Share</b>	<b>Provincial Share</b>	<b>Advance/ Interim Received</b>
2021 Atmospheric River Event (Nov Rainstorm)	3.380	2.991	389	1.026
2021 Wildfires	430	353	77	208
2021 Spring Flood and Landslides	1.461	1.281	180	355
2020 Spring Flood and Landslides	220	165	55	49
2018 Wildfires	180	130	50	66
2018 Spring Freshet	238	183	55	
2017 Wildfires	403	332	71	192
2017 Spring Freshet	115	73	42	
2016 June Floods	140	96	44	42
<b>TOTAL FORECAST EVENTS</b>	<b>\$6.567</b>	<b>\$5.604</b>	<b>\$963</b>	<b>\$1.938</b>

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **Atmospheric River Recovery - Regional**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- EMCR is actively supporting communities impacted by the 2021 Atmospheric River Event through a holistic and community-led approach to recovery.
- EMCR provides direct support to individuals and communities after disaster events through its existing programs such as funding response activities, cost-sharing repair and rebuild of public infrastructure, and direct financial assistance to homeowners, businesses, farms, and charitable organizations through Disaster Financial Assistance.
- Outside of EMCR's established programs, the province has also provided funding to communities recovering from the Atmospheric River Event to ensure key recovery and resiliency activities are supported. This includes \$1.23 million provided for Community Recovery Managers in impacted communities, interim housing solutions and flood mitigation studies in Merritt and Princeton.
- Outside of government programming, evacuees continue to receive financial assistance for basic needs and temporary accommodation as well as case management through the Canadian Red Cross.
- Many impacted communities are transitioning from acute and short-term recovery actions to longer term recovery and resiliency planning with a focus on mitigation and climate readiness. This includes:
  - Updating flood mapping (i.e., City of Hope, Semiahmoo First Nation)
  - Developing comprehensive flood mitigation plans (i.e., Merritt and Princeton)
  - Supporting regional partnerships focused on watershed and flood resiliency strategies (i.e., Hatzic Lake regional watershed recovery table)
  - Developing medium and long- term multi-sectoral recovery plans
  -

#### **City of Abbotsford:**

Over \$86 million has been committed to the City and residents of Abbotsford through provincial recovery programs and one-time funding		
\$12.7 million	Direct financial support to homeowners, tenants, small businesses, charitable organization, and farms through DFA	EMCR
\$5.4 million	19 infrastructure projects approved through DFA	
\$62 million	Build a new well and water-treatment system ensuring reliable water service for more than 165,000 people.	MUNI
\$6.85 million	Complete flood recovery activities	

February 28, 2023

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### City of Merritt:

Over \$38 million has been committed to the City and residents of Merritt through provincial recovery programs and one-time funding		
\$9.9 million	Direct financial support to homeowners, tenants, small businesses, charitable organization, and farms through DFA	EMCR
\$3.9 million	15 infrastructure projects approved through DFA	
\$329,000	Flood mitigation studies	
\$24.25 million	Interim Flood Support Funding inclusive of \$11.75 million for interim housing for flood impacted residents.	MUNI

### City of Princeton:

Over \$15 has been committed to the City and residents of Princeton through provincial recovery programs and one-time funding		
\$2.58 million	Direct financial support to homeowners, tenants, small businesses, charitable organization, and farms through DFA	EMCR
\$1.15million	1 infrastructure project approved through DFA	
\$100,000	Emergency flood hazard assessment of the Tulameen and Similkameen rivers and flood mitigation plan	
\$11.9 million	Interim Flood Support Funding inclusive of \$1.4 million for interim housing for flood impacted residents.	MUNI

### **Background:**

- The Atmospheric River Event (ARE) in November 2021 caused floods and landslides with unprecedented impacts to critical infrastructure such as roads and bridges, extensive losses to the agricultural sector, the evacuation of over 17,000 people, and the tragic loss of five lives. Damage was most acute in the Fraser Valley and the southern interior of the province (Merritt, Princeton).
- Recovery is community led. EMCR works closely with communities to support them in understanding what supports are available through DFA. As a community develops its recovery plan EMCR continues to work closely with staff to identify how activities may be funded existing government programs, non-governmental organizations and other funding channels.

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **Indigenous Community Recovery (Central Region, Southwest Region, and Vancouver Island Coastal Region)**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- EMCR continues to support many First Nations communities in the Fraser Valley, the Central Interior and on Vancouver Island to advance their recovery from the 2021 Atmospheric River Event.
- Significant funding has been approved through EMCR in support of recovery activities in communities in the Central, Southwest and Vancouver Island Coastal Regions.
- Indigenous Community Recovery Managers positions have been established and filled for Chawathil, Halalt, Leq'a:mel, Matsqui, Seabird, and Sema:th First Nations and Nooaitch Indian Band with funding provided by EMCR. With the support of recovery managers, First Nations are transitioning from Short-term Recovery into Mid and Long-Term Recovery and orienting more towards mitigation and preparedness.
- Many Indigenous communities have benefited from debris and sediment removal work. A total of \$177.9 million has been spent or has been committed, to remove or address debris and sediment issues in rivers and streams impacted by the event. Approximately \$7.6 million has been paid to First Nations contractors - \$5.5 million in the Central Region and \$2.1 million in the Southwest/Vancouver Island.

#### **Background:**

- The Atmospheric River Event (ARE) in November 2021 caused floods and landslides with unprecedented impacts to critical infrastructure such as roads and bridges, losses in the agricultural sector, the evacuation of over 17,000 people, and the tragic loss of five lives. Damage was most acute in the Fraser Valley (SWE) and the Southern Interior (CTL) of the province (Merritt, Princeton).
- Several First Nations are still facing recovery issues, such as flood damage to homes and infrastructure, as well as issues around debris and land recovery.
- The flood events magnified systemic issues that were already present for many Indigenous communities impacting their recovery efforts. Many First Nation communities did not have the capacity to thoroughly assess recovery needs or manage large scale recovery efforts. Impacts from the event included flood damage to homes, infrastructure, cultural losses, loss

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of traditional food sources as well as issues around debris and land recovery. These issues are often exacerbated by unacceptable pre-existing conditions.

Intergovernmental Communications

Intergovernmental Communications

EMCR recovery staff work

directly with communities to identify funding pathways for identified recovery needs including support for completing their cost-recovery plans for eligibility under the Disaster Financial Assistance program.

- A number of these communities in the Central Interior (CTL) and on Vancouver Island (VIC) were in recovery from previous events (wildfire and flooding respectively) when the November 2021 ARE happened.
- EMCR continues to work with partner agencies such as Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), First Nations Emergency Services Society of BC (FNESS), First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), Canadian Red Cross (CRC), non-profits and other Provincial Ministries to support community recovery, and to identify and address unmet needs in a manner that counters systemic issues.

### **Central Region (CTL):**

- Provincial flood plain mapping program underway for affected Indigenous and non-indigenous communities along Highway 8 and Highway 5 to develop a flood hazard map to support the funding for mitigative works.
- Significant anthropogenic and woody debris removals were completed by Ministry of Environment/PricewaterhouseCoopers as part of the Debris Management project. The total funding committed to debris removal along the Tulameen, Coldwater and Nicola rivers is \$63.9 million. Up to \$800,000 of this funding is being made available to First Nations in the Central area to support their participation debris removal decision making.
- Land loss and erosion continue to be an issue for several reserves along the Nicola and Coldwater Rivers. ISC and Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation are working with these communities.

### **Suggested Response – CTL:**

- Recovery work by First Nations has been affected by the compounding emergency events in 2021 (Wildfire and ARE) resulting in capacity issues. Positions and personnel are now largely in place for those communities that were most impacted.
- Most First Nations communities in the Central Region have transitioned to mid- to long-term recovery.
- Significant contributions have been made to address identified funding gaps, which should aid in the delivery of complex recovery efforts in several areas (Highway 8, Merritt and Princeton).



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### **Southwest Region (SWE):**

- EMRC has been working with 15 Indigenous communities over the past year that were affected by the November 2021 ARE. As of February 15, 2023, active recovery discussions are happening with six First Nations (Chawathil, Leq'a:mel, Matsqui, Seabird Island, Sema:th and Skwah First Nations). Community Recovery Manager positions have been funded for these Nations.
- Debris removal along the Fraser River has been completed with \$15 million spent. Sediment management work totalling \$91 million has been completed or is underway in several areas with the involvement and oversight of First Nations. \$375,000 in capacity funding will be provided to First Nations by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy.
- In 2022, EMCR provided \$60,000 to support the Building Back Better Together Collaborative, an Indigenous-led group of organizations, to bring together local governments, First Nations communities and non-government organizations to engage on a regional approach to recovery and mitigation efforts in the Fraser Valley.

### **Suggested Response – SWE:**

- Recovery work by First Nations has been affected by capacity issues. Positions and personnel are now largely in place for those communities that were most impacted.

### **Vancouver Island Region (VIC):**

- EMRC has been working with seven Indigenous communities affected by the November 2021 ARE – six on Vancouver Island and one on the Central Coast of B.C.
- A community recovery manager position has been supported to assist with the delivery of recovery for Halalt First Nation.
- \$7.2 million of sediment work has been largely completed along the Chemainus River (Halalt and Penelakut First Nations) and is in progress in Kingcome Inlet (Dzawada'enuxw First Nation).

Active recovery work is happening with Halalt, Penelakut, Stz'uminus, Cowichan Tribes, Dzawada'enuxw, Tsartlip and Tsawout First Nations.

### **Suggested Response – VIC:**

- Recovery work by First Nations on Vancouver Island has been affected by compounding events such as ongoing recovery from a 2020 flood event, complex systemic issues, capacity issues, and a shortage of contractors.

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- Continuing to build strong relationships with First Nations while also building high functioning collaborative networks with partner organizations and ministries will be an integral part of supporting mid and long-term recovery and climate readiness.

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **Lytton Recovery**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- The Lytton Creek fire caused catastrophic loss of public and private infrastructure for the community of Lytton (including the Village and Lytton First Nation) and the surrounding Regional District; many residents remain displaced but planning for rebuilding is beginning.
- Province has committed **\$56.418M** in financial support to Village of Lytton to aid in its response and recovery efforts. This specifically includes:
  - \$2.6M in response efforts, plus \$0.07M in Emergency Support Services (ESS) already sent to the Village of Lytton.
  - Up to \$21 million to support enabling services such as housing for essential service workers, infrastructure assessments, staffing and planning to rebuild.
  - \$23.4 million for debris removal, soil remediation and protection of archaeological resources for municipal and uninsured or underinsured private properties.
  - \$8.3 million to support ongoing Village operations and early recovery activities.
  - \$1 million for longer-term economic development.
  - \$48,000 in Disaster Financial Assistance.
  - This funding does not include costs incurred by the Province for recovery operations, such as fencing erected for Lytton by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure along Highway 1, and the BC Hydro electrification of Main Street, which were not transferred through the Village.
- Additionally, Lytton First Nation, with the support of the Nlaka'pamux Tribal Council has demonstrated tremendous leadership in seeking regional recovery solutions and providing support and guidance for archaeological considerations.
- Several rebuilding milestones have already been met; for example, Lytton First Nation has installed interim housing, a temporary band office and community hall, and an interim grocery store. The Village site is clear of all debris, and BC Hydro has energized power lines along the Main Street.

#### **Background:**

- The Village of Lytton has a population of approximately 275 residents with an additional 4,500 people living in the surrounding rural area that rely on it as service hub. On June 30, 2021, a wildfire swept through the village and across Nlaka'pamux territory, prompting an immediate evacuation.

*Updated March 27, 2023*

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- Approximately 90% of the Village was destroyed including the town hall, police station, ambulance station, public library, and other infrastructure, with some additional structures lost in the surrounding Regional District. The Lytton First Nation Band Office was also lost, along with several home on IR18, which is immediately adjacent to the Village.
- Many Village residents remain evacuated. Some Nlaka'pamux members, including those from the adjacent Lytton First Nation, have returned to interim housing.
- The Nlaka'pamux Nation is made up of sixteen Indigenous communities spanning the Fraser, Thompson, and Nicola Rivers region. The Nlaka'pamux Nation Tribal Council is a governing entity which currently represents interests for four of those Nations: Boothroyd, Lytton, Oregon Jack Creek, and Skuppah.
- On July 11, 2021, B.C. and Canada respectively wrote letters of commitment to Nlaka'pamux Nation Tribal Council outlining expectations related to wildfire recovery and rail safety, including the establishment of an Implementation Coordination Task Force. The Province continues to participate in that Task Force and on related Working Groups.
- The Province has an ongoing agreement with the Canadian Red Cross to provide monthly housing and other recovery services to 2021 wildfire evacuees. This agreement is funded through the Provincial 2021 Wildfire Donation Matching contribution. The Canadian Red Cross may also complement these supports with funds received from the federal government and private donations.

### **Community Recovery**

- Throughout the wildfire response, EMCR was the Provincial lead agency supporting operations in the Village and Lytton First Nation; the EMCR Community Recovery branch continues to play a coordinating role in Village- and Nation- led recovery.
- While the Province committed to fund the debris removal and remediation of the Village site, some delays were encountered due to impacts of the 2021 Atmospheric River event, the need to consider the Village's status as a heritage site, and due to contamination concerns.
- The Province has provided financial support for a number of positions for the Village's community recovery team and has been working closely with partner agencies and other ministries to support the return of essential functions and services.
  - Interior Health Authority, along with First Nations Health Authority, have re-established temporary primary health care services in the region. Health services are currently being provided by the Lytton First Nation Health Centre. Interior Health Authority plans to establish a temporary primary care facility in the spring, is launching a new online engagement platform, and is planning a face-to-face session

*Updated March 27, 2023*

## Confidential

- in community to support longer-term service delivery planning.
- BC Ambulance Service plans to put a modular ambulance station and accommodation at the Lytton First Nation Health Centre and, until the modular station is installed, the area is being serviced by Ashcroft, Lillooet, and Boston Bar ambulance services.
  - Canada Post is providing service five days a week in Lytton at a temporary location, and the RCMP have a portable detachment and up to five more officers in the Lytton region.
  - The Kumsheen Heritage Committee continues to oversee archaeological work, while respecting *Heritage Conservation Act* requirements. The Kumsheen Heritage Committee is a partnership of the Province's Archaeology Branch, EMCR, Nlaka'pamux Nation Tribal Council, Lytton First Nation, and the Village of Lytton.
  - The Province holds a Heritage Investigation permit designed for multiple proponents including the archaeological firm, A.E.W. Limited Partnership, with whom the village has contracted. A companion Alteration permit allows for specific site disturbance, such as subsurface testing to better define archaeological site boundaries.
  - Clearing of surface debris in the Village is complete, and contractors are sifting and removing the final contaminated soil areas. Archaeological work has been undertaken in parallel with remediation, and dozens of archaeological sites have been uncovered throughout the Village.

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA) - Atmospheric River Event - Operations Metrics – Public Sector**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- DFA programs operate under the *Emergency Program Act* (EPA) and the ensuing Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation (Regulation). Public sector programs provide communities with reimbursement of their eligible infrastructure repairs from damages directly resulting from the event.
- The 2021 Atmospheric River Event (ARE) is the single largest DFA eligible event in BC's history. The ARE generated 52 applications from communities, requesting approval of 394 infrastructure projects to date.
- As of March 22, 2023, 168 projects have received a decision on eligibility. Of that, 92 projects are closed providing just over \$1M to communities. 76 projects have been approved in principle for \$13.9M, which will remain open until communities have completed their infrastructure repairs and request reimbursement of eligible costs through the DFA program.
- Of the 52 applications received, 24 are from indigenous communities who have applied to the program. Specific stats have been highlighted below:
  - Under the 10-year bi-lateral agreement with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) Indigenous communities are provided equivalent emergency management services.
  - As of March 22, 2023, 37 projects have received a decision on eligibility; 4 projects are closed providing \$335K to communities; and 14 projects have been approved in principle for over \$1.7M, which will remain open until communities complete their infrastructure repairs and request reimbursement of eligible costs.
- Abbotsford and Merritt have received the most approvals for ARE at 18 and 16 respectively.
- Requests to support infrastructure recovery projects have been received from every region of the province. The requests came from communities in Southwest (257), Vancouver Island (79), Central (53), and the Southeast (5).

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### **Background:**

#### Eligibility for DFA

- Each project must meet certain requirements to qualify for DFA including confirmed ownership of the infrastructure, proof the damage is directly related to the event, and the damage must be to critical infrastructure.
- The key stages of handling an application are to: (1) receive a completed Infrastructure Cost Recovery Plan from the community, along with supporting documentation; (2) confirm project eligibility and provide approval in principle where appropriate; (3) remain engaged with the community through to the 18-month project completion deadline; and (4) adjudicate and issue payment for submitted claims based on project eligibility.
- There are a wide variety of reasons that a project may be found to be ineligible for DFA. Reasons may include that the damages were not eligible. For example, land erosion; pre-existing damage; mitigation projects; and damage to non-essential infrastructure.

#### Claim Amounts and Eligible Expenses

- The intent of the regulation is to provide communities with funding to support the lowest cost option the following options: to rebuild, replace, the assessed value, or cost to repair the public facility to the condition it was in immediately before the disaster. This is required by Section 25 of the Regulation.
- Depending on the type of applicant, eligible claims may be reimbursed at a flat rate or at a tiered cost per capita. This is outlined in Section 28 of the Regulation.
- The Regulation defines eligible local government body expenses, which may be defined as eligible costs incurred or required materials, structures, and public works.
  - Common projects supported by the DFA program includes bridges, roadways, water courses, parks, sewage systems, insurance deductibles, and compensation.
  - A local government body is obligated to provide compensation for personal property that was damaged or lost due to being acquired or used during response to a disaster.
  - Requests have been made from communities in the Central and Southwest regions to support compensation claims; currently these communities are still completing assessments.
- Regulation changes were implemented in 2022 to better support those impacted by the Atmospheric River event:
  - The rate of reimbursement of eligible claims for local government bodies was updated from a flat 80% to provide greater rates of reimbursement, dependent on the type and population of the local government body.

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- Local government bodies may also request advance payment of up to 50% of approved project costs to assist with financial liquidity.
- Supplemental initiatives were developed to strengthen supports and address gaps. These included:
  - Updates to DFA operational policies to support local governments in building back better (BBB) with combined funding opportunities.
  - A program review of the effectiveness of Disaster Financial Assistance including exploring opportunities to better align program policy and delivery with Sendai resilience / BBB principles.
  - Engaging with Indigenous Services Canada to provide wrap around support to on-reserve indigenous communities, reducing the governmental touchpoints and number of assessments.

Table 1: Data Highlights (as of March 22, 2023)

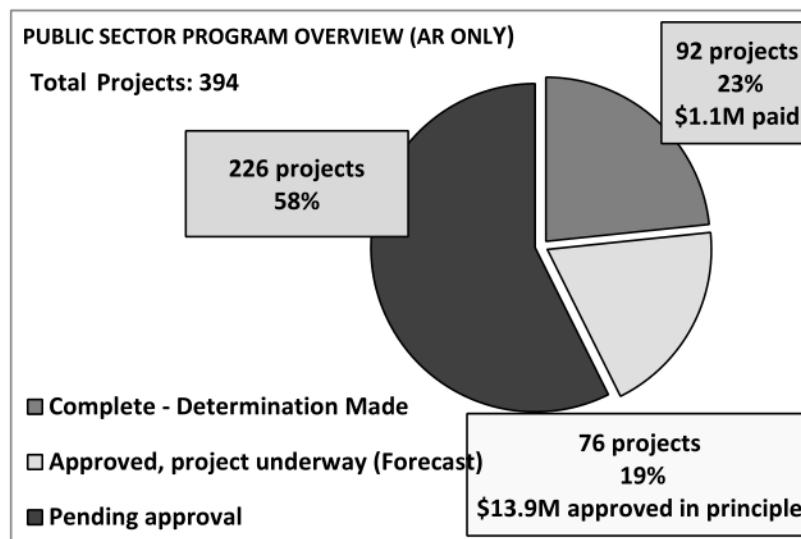


Table 2: Public Sector Payment Data by Region (as of March 22, 2023)

Region	Total \$ of CRP approval (100%)
Central	\$6,227,676
Southwest	\$8,429,328
Vancouver Island	\$319,619
Total	\$14,976,624

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA) - Atmospheric River Event - Operational Metrics – Private Sector**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- DFA operates under the *Emergency Program Act* (EPA) and the Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation (Regulation). Compensation under DFA is not intended to provide for losses in the same way as insurance and not all property owners will meet the DFA eligibility criteria as defined in the Act and Regulation.
- The 2021 Atmospheric River event is the single largest event in the DFA program's history. The program received 2298 applications for the Atmospheric River event.
- As of March 22, 2023, 2289 applications have been adjudicated with 1080 with payments issued for over \$32.8 million paid to applicants across BC.
- Listed in order of volume of applications received, the private sector applicant categories are Homeowners (1,340); Residential Tenants (439); Small Businesses (336); Farm Owners (158); and Charitable Organizations (25).
  - Farm owners are being assisted with their farm business related damages through the Canada-BC 2021 Canada-British Columbia Flood Recovery Program for Food Security.
- Four applicants received the maximum payable amount of \$400,000.
- Applications have been received from every region of the province, with the largest number of applications received from Abbotsford (683); Merritt (491); Chilliwack (239); and Princeton (190).

#### **Background:**

##### Eligibility for DFA

- Each application must meet certain requirements to qualify for DFA including having eligible damages, an eligible structure, materials or expenses and the damages must be uninsurable losses.

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- Each application category also has eligibility criteria specific to the category such as meeting the definition of a principal residence or minimum income thresholds for small businesses.
- The key stages of handling an application are to (1) confirm an applicant's basic eligibility, (2) refer the applicant's file to the provincially-funded evaluator who prepares an estimate of damages recommended for payment under the DFA program (based on a site visit in most circumstances), and (3) make a determination on the application, issuing a payment assuming the applicant is confirmed to have eligible damages.
- There are a wide variety of reasons that an applicant may be found to be ineligible for DFA. Reasons may include that the damages were not eligible. For example, land erosion; pre-existing damage; damage to non-essential items, insurable damages; and damages valued at less than the \$1,000 deductible.

### Claim amounts and eligible expenses

- Section 12 of the Regulation requires the payment of the least cost option out of the cost to:
  - a) repair the structure to the condition it was in immediately before the disaster;
  - b) the cost to rebuild the structure;
  - c) the cost to replace the structure; or
  - d) the assessed value of the structure.
- The amount of assistance payable in respect of any private sector applicant's claim is 80% of the amount by which the amount of the accepted claim exceeds \$1,000, to a maximum payable under this Part for an accepted claim of \$400,000.
- The Regulation defines eligible expenses for each category of private sector applicant, which are limited to what the Regulation defines as essential items. The amount compensated for damaged or destroyed contents is limited to the value of a basic model replacement of the damaged item.

### Data Highlights

*Table 1: Private Sector Application Statistics as of March 22, 2023*

Summary – volume & status of applications	March 22, 2023	Percentage
Currently open and under assessment	9	~0%
Closed with payment (eligible)	1080	47%
Closed without payment (ineligible or withdrawn)	1037	45%
Transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food to be assessed under the 2021 Canada-British Columbia Flood Recovery Program for Food Security	172	8%
TOTAL	2298	100%

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Table 2: Private Sector Payment Data by Applicant Category (as of March 22, 2023)

Category	Home Owner	Residential Tenant	Small Business	Charitable Organization	Farm Operation	Total
<b>Total applications received</b>	1,340 (58%)	439 (19%)	336 (15%)	25 (1%)	158 (7%)	2298 (100%)
<b>Total paid and closed</b>	751	196	122	10	1	1080
<b>Total value paid and closed</b>	\$24.2M	\$1.2M	\$6.4M	\$501,000	N/A	\$32.8M
<b>Average payment</b>	\$32,299	\$6,373	\$52,747	\$50,188	N/A	-
<b>Min. &amp; max. payments to date</b>	\$364 & \$400,000	\$152 & \$25,583	\$152 & \$400,000	\$995 & \$179,120	N/A	-
<b>Total closed – not eligible or withdrawn</b>	585	243	189	15	5	1037
<b>Open – in process</b>	4	0	5	0	0	9
<b>Transferred to AF</b>	-	-	20	-	152	172

### Notes on the above data

- To assist in protecting personal privacy, no payment information is provided in the table for applications where fewer than five applications have been closed and paid.
- More than 170 applications for DFA were closed and transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food for support under the Canada-BC 2021 Canada-British Columbia Flood Recovery Program for Food Security.

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **Sumas Prairie Recovery**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA) is a provincial program, administered by the Ministry of Emergency Management & Climate Readiness, to help individuals and local government bodies recover from uninsurable losses in a disaster.
- The 2021 Atmospheric River extreme weather event is the single largest event in the DFA program's history.
- The Atmospheric River was declared a DFA eligible event on November 15, 2021.
- DFA representatives were on site at the Abbotsford Resilience Centre from November 25, 2021, to February 25, 2022, to assist those impacted by the disaster with information and support with their DFA application. DFA evaluation services set up a remote office in this region with 19 evaluators to undertake site visits.
- The DFA program area received 683 private sector applications for financial assistance from applicants in the Abbotsford (Sumas Prairie) area. As of March 22, 2023, 307 payments have been issued for just under \$13 million, 114 applications were transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food to be assessed under the 2021 Canada-British Columbia Flood Recovery Program for Food Security, 258 applications were closed ineligible or withdrawn, and 4 applications are still under review.
- The DFA program area has received applications from three local government bodies which have projects in the Sumas Prairie: City of Abbotsford, Sumas First Nation, and Fraser Valley Regional District.

#### **Background:**

- DFA programs are delivered under the *Emergency Program Act* and the ensuing Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation. DFA programs, in effect since 1995, are obliged to provide compensation in compliance with this legislation.
- When DFA has been authorized for an event, DFA programs can pay 80 percent of the amount by which the accepted claim exceeds \$1,000 up to a maximum of \$400,000 to individuals.

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- For local government bodies with a population estimate issued under the *Statistics Act*, reimbursement is 90% of total project cost, or amount of assistance payable is based on a tiered cost per capita calculation, or whichever is greater. For local government bodies to which this cannot apply, reimbursement of eligible costs is 95% of the amount which exceeds the first \$1,000.
- There are a wide variety of reasons that an applicant may be found to be ineligible for DFA. Reasons may include:
  - that the damages were not eligible (such as land erosion);
  - there was pre-existing damage;
  - damage was to non-essential items and/or insurable damages; or
  - damages were valued at less than the \$1,000 deductible.
- Non-essential infrastructure and mitigation projects are also not eligible for local government bodies such as garbage cans and landscaping.
- Regulation changes were implemented in 2022 to better support those impacted by the Atmospheric River event. These included:
  - Increasing the number of small businesses eligible for assistance.
  - Replacing the existing major source of income rule with a requirement that a small business must have between \$10,000 and \$2 million per year in gross revenue from the business.
  - Increasing the limit to assistance from \$300,000 to \$400,000 for private sector applicants
  - The rate of reimbursement of eligible claims for local government bodies was updated from a flat 80% to provide greater rates of reimbursement, dependent on the type and population of the local government body.
  - Local government bodies may also request advance payments of up to 50% of approved project costs to assist with financial liquidity.
- Supplemental initiatives were developed to strengthen supports and address gaps. These included:
  - Changes to the Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation (Regulation)
  - Updates to DFA operational policies to support local governments in building back better (BBB) with combined funding opportunities.

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- A program review of the effectiveness of DFA including exploring opportunities to better align program policy and delivery with Sendai resilience / BBB principles.

### Data Highlights

Table 1: Private Sector Application Sumas Prairie Statistics as of March 22, 2023

Summary – volume & status of applications	Applications	Percentage
Currently open and under assessment	4	.5%
Closed with payment (eligible)	307	45%
Closed without payment (ineligible or withdrawn)	258	38%
Transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food to be assessed under the 2021 Canada-British Columbia Flood Recovery Program for Food Security	114	16.5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>683</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2: 2021 Atmospheric River Private Sector Data Highlights Abbotsford up to March 22, 2023

Category	Home Owner	Residential Tenant	Small Business	Charitable Organization	Farm Operation	Total
Total applications received	274	164	145	5	95	683
Total paid and closed	179	71	53	3	1	307
Total value paid and closed	\$8,354,031	\$555,469	\$3,409,747	\$203,580	\$389,971	\$12,912,798
Average payment	\$46,671	\$7,824	\$64,335	\$67,860	\$389,971	\$42,061
Total closed – not eligible or withdrawn	93	93	70	2	0	258
Open – in process	2	0	2	0	0	4
Transferred to AFF*	N/A	N/A	20	N/A	94	114

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Table 3: 2021 Atmospheric River Sumas Prairie Public Sector Highlights up to March 22, 2023

Community Name	Number of Projects in Sumas Prairie	Community Estimated Cost	Projects Approved	Amount claimed to date	Status
City of Abbotsford	33*	\$29,465,915	8	\$2,160,915	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14 projects pending approval</li> <li>11 projects closed withdrawn</li> <li>4 closed with payment</li> <li>1 claims pending adjudication</li> <li>3 projects approved-construction underway.</li> </ul>
Sumas First Nation	2	\$26,391	2	\$26,391	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closed with payment</li> </ul>
Fraser Valley Regional District	1*	\$3,390	0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pending approval</li> </ul>

\*Assessments still being completed. Not all projects may be identified.

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **Sumas Prairie Flood Mitigation tables: 4G MOU and Nooksack Transboundary Flood Initiative**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- Since the devastating flooding of the November 2021 Atmospheric River event (ARE), the province has been working collaboratively with the City of Abbotsford, Sumas First Nation, Leq'á:me1 First Nation, and Matsqui First Nation to develop flood mitigation options for the Sumas Prairie.
- This is complex work due to the transboundary overflow risk from the Nooksack River, Washington State communities' interests in management of the Nooksack watershed, and the diversity of land uses and interests in the Sumas Prairie.
- Efforts are underway to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the province, Nations, City, and federal government. This 4-orders of Government MOU is anticipated to guide the framing of common values and interests, process, and commitments of the parties towards reducing and mitigating the risk of flooding in the Sumas Prairie.
- Together, with Washington State we are working on a Nooksack Transboundary Flood Initiative(NTFI) that will:
  - Respond to more frequent and severe flooding of the Nooksack River caused by climate change.
  - Bring together the necessary resources and the relevant experts to help identify, evaluate and advance solutions.
  - Drive the design of projects and programs and identify sources of funding.
- We understand the urgency and concerns communities have regarding increased flooding risk. A collaboratively developed plan will be expected to achieve multiple community and provincial values such as improved fish habitat and water quality, food security and reliable major transportation corridors while reducing flood impacts.
- This work will continue for the next fiscal year, with capacity funding provided to support the City, and Nations. Where agreed upon options can move forward, efforts will be taken to expedite actions which will help to reduce the risk of devastating flooding impacts.



## ***Confidential***

### **Background:**

- There are several Provincial government initiatives which have linkages to the flood mitigation planning work in the Sumas Prairie; those initiatives are:
  - FOR – B.C. Flood Strategy
  - MOTI - Fraser Valley Highway 1 Corridor Improvement Program
  - MUNI - Fraser Valley Regional Growth Strategy
  - Housing – Provincial housing strategy
  - AFF – Food security and regenerative agriculture
- December 2021, the federal government through its December 2021 *Economic and Fiscal Update* announced it had budget up to \$5 billion for its share of recovery costs under the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements as well as other costs related to 2021 natural disaster in British Columbia. The Sumas Prairie flood mitigation initiative is seeking to build a plan which will access this federal commitment of funding.

### **4G MOU**

- B.C. Parties to the MOU have been meeting roughly biweekly for the past six months.
  - A draft MOU is currently under review by the B.C. Parties.
  - Federal government participation is still to be confirmed.
  - The MOU scope includes to:
    - Collaboratively define values and principles to advance flood mitigation planning and support reconciliation through inclusion, cooperation, and capacity for First Nations.
    - Leverage Abbotsford initiated flood mitigation options to collaboratively develop new or revised options.
    - Support B.C./Canada coordinated feedback in the NTFI as well as incorporating outputs from this work into Sumas flood mitigation planning.
    - Inform recovery planning projects to effectively manage future flood related impacts.
- It is proposed that the partnering governments under the 4G MOU are organized within three layers of governance (aligned with NTFI structure) to direct flood mitigation planning:
  - Leadership Governing Body provides overall decision-making and strategic direction.

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- Steering committee comprised of senior leaders from signatory and other appropriate organizations that provide direction on process, strategic decision-making, establish working groups, and make recommendations to leadership table.
- Working Groups to generate operational, technical and administrative advice and recommendations to the steering committee.
- Key deliverables or factors for success include:
  - Finalizing the 4G MOU and confirming all partners as signatories from First Nations, local governments, provincial and federal ministries.
  - Developing a set of flood planning and mitigation pathways through shared leadership, coordination, and direction on mutual priorities.
  - Developing a Sumas River Flood Mitigation Plan, including considerations for implementation.

### Nooksack Transboundary Flood Initiative (NTFI)

- Organized with three layers of governance (as per the 4G MOU) with varying representation from B.C. (EMCR/FOR/AF/IGRS), City of Abbotsford, City of Chilliwack, Sumas, Leq'a:mel, and Matsqui First Nations, Washington State Governor's Office and Department of Ecology, Lummi Nation, Nooksack Indian Tribe, and Whatcom County. The US Geological Survey and Army Corps of Engineers have been active participants at the Technical table.
- Nooksack Steering Committee and Technical tables have been meeting bi-monthly over the past six months. It is anticipated that the Leadership table will meet at least annually (first meeting targeted for May/June 2023).
- Parties are currently drafting a framework for collaborative transboundary flood management in the Nooksack and Sumas watersheds to identify and pursue flood risk reduction actions for collective benefit.
- MLA Glumac was appointed by the Premier as liaison to Washington State. MLA Glumac has participated in several meetings and technical site visits of the Nooksack River and Sumas Prairie.

### **Key Facts and Figures:**

- Sumas Lake was drained in 1924 with the completion of the Sumas Pump Station, and the Chilliwack River was diverted to the Vedder Canal. The resulting agricultural land was sold to increase agricultural settlement of the valley. In 1984, the Sumas Pump Station was replaced with the Barrowtown Pump Station.

*February 24, 2023*

## ***Confidential***

- Today there is close to \$1 billion in annual farm receipts, \$4.7 billion in farm capital and over 5,500 agricultural jobs spread over 1,300 farms in the Abbotsford area.
- 40kms of flood protection dikes and 16 pumps in the Sumas Prairie are designed to assist with flood mitigation.

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation Changes**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- The Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation (Regulation) sets out the core parameters for how disaster financial assistance (DFA) is provided.
- The Regulation was most recently amended on September 20, 2022, to include increases to the limits on payment of assistance on accepted claims (increasing the maximum amount payable from \$300,000 to \$400,000).
- This amendment followed amendments from April 2022, also aimed at enabling a broader range of assistance to governments, individuals, and businesses affected by the 2021 atmospheric river event.
- The entire Regulation will be reviewed and modernized as part of the modernization of the *Emergency Program Act* (EPA).

#### **Background:**

- The EPA was enacted in 1993, and the Regulation came into force in 1995. Emergency events occurring in Canada and worldwide have increased in scope and scale since the Regulation came into force.
- The November 2021 atmospheric river and extreme weather event is expected to be the most expensive disaster in BC history.
- To address the scope and scale of the November 2021 atmospheric river and extreme weather event, priority amendments to the DFA Regulation took effect on April 28, 2022. Transition rules allowed these changes to benefit public sector entities, families, and small businesses with claims arising out of the 2021 atmospheric river event and from all subsequent DFA-eligible emergencies.
- The April 28, 2022, amendments to the Regulation included:
  - Replacing the existing 80% / 20% cost-share formula for public sector entities with contribution rules that are more generous to public sector claimants.

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- Allowing DFA programs to provide up to 50% of a project's estimated costs upfront to all eligible public sector entities.
- Clarifying the definition of "small business," replacing the "major source of income" rule with a requirement that a small business must have at least \$10,000 per year in revenue from the business. This will increase certainty and allow more small businesses to qualify for DFA.
- Increasing the maximum annual revenue threshold in the definition of "small business" to match the federal cap of \$2 million.
- For homes owned by corporations, allowing occupants to apply for DFA if they have a defined connection to the corporation and use the home as a primary residence.

### **Facts and Figures:**

- Since the increased limit on payments of assistance came into effect in September 2022, four claims have been processed for the maximum \$400,000 amount and one additional claim has been processed for \$389,971 (for a total of \$489,971 provided under the new limit).
- The April 2022 amendments aligned with an announcement from the Province re-opening small business applications to the DFA program for an additional 4 months (from April 28, 2022 to July 27, 2022). Based on this extension, 18 eligible applications were processed and a total of \$1,078,969.90 in DFA was paid.

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **Disaster Financial Assistance Landslide Policy**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- The November 2021 Atmospheric River (AR) event caused unprecedented damage to several communities, including extensive damage to homes.
- Following the AR event, the Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA) program received over 50 landslide-related homeowner claims citing landslides as the cause of damage.
- The DFA program's landslide policy guides decisions on eligibility for landslide-related claims in disaster events. Recognizing that landslides are an uninsurable cause of damage and reflecting on the unprecedented magnitude of the destruction stemming from the 2021 AR, EMCR obtained direction to review the DFA landslide policy.
- The ministry is exploring alternative funding opportunities to support recovery, mitigative enhancements or safe alternatives in situations where applicants are not eligible for DFA.

#### **Background:**

- Once a DFA event has been declared, the DFA program assists qualifying applicants who have sustained eligible and uninsurable losses as a result of certain types of disasters. The DFA program may provide applicants with financial assistance to restore uninsurable losses that are essential to a home, livelihood, or community service.
- The DFA program operates under the *Emergency Program Act* (EPA) and the ensuing Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation (CDFAR). The regulation does not allow DFA for homes that did not sustain direct physical damage. This raises concerns over people continuing to live in unsafe homes/high-risk areas for future landslides.
- Of the 55 claims, 6 claims were for homes in the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD), which did not suffer direct physical damage to the structure yet were deemed unsafe to continue occupying. Subsequent geotechnical reports have confirmed that the homes are no longer safe to inhabit and mitigative works are likely to be cost-prohibitive or ineffective.
- DFA cannot be provided to these 6 FVRD properties because the homes did not sustain physical damage (which is a requirement under the regulation).

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- EMCR is actively collaborating with the FVRD, non-profit organizations, and other ministries to explore alternative funding opportunities to support recovery, mitigative enhancements, or safe alternatives.

### **Key Facts and Figures:**

- When required by the regulation, BC Assessment values are used in calculating DFA. Assistance for structural damage is limited to the lesser of the costs to repair, rebuild, or replace, and assessed value of the structure.
- Assessed value of structures only applies to eligible structures on the property (i.e., does not include land) and may not include all the improvements as indicated on the notice of assessment.
- DFA is provided for each accepted claim at 80% of the amount of total eligible damage less \$1,000, to a maximum of \$400,000 (private sector, i.e., homes).
- The breakdown of the 55 landslide claims is as follows:
  - 17 claims determined Eligible for DFA,
  - 29 claims determined Not Eligible (e.g. there was no structural damage or was not a principle residence), and
  - 9 claims were withdrawn.

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **August 23, 2022, Highway 8 Mudslide**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- The Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA) Program is a provincial program that assists local governments and individuals impacted by disasters, cope with the cost of recovery from uninsurable losses for those events specifically designated as eligible for Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA). In general, those events that qualify for DFA are major events with significant losses that were unforeseen and not predictable.
- Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR) has made the determination that DFA does not apply to the August 23, 2022, mudslide along Highway 8.
- The decision to determine an event eligible for DFA is a two-part process:
  - The event must first meet the definition of a “disaster” under the Emergency Program Act (Act) which states a “disaster means a calamity that (a) is caused by accident, fire, explosion or technical failure or by the forces of nature, and (b) has resulted in serious harm to the health, safety or welfare of people, or in widespread damage to property.”
  - Second, a decision must be made if it is a disaster for which DFA will be provided under the Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation.
- The mudslide did not meet the criteria of a “disaster” as defined in the Act.
- Various indicators considered include social, economic, public safety and public health.
- The mudslide primarily damaged agriculture land, fencing, equipment and outbuildings of up to six properties with estimated recovery cost of \$400,000.
- EMCR has been actively working with TNRD, CRC, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Foods (AF) to identify potential solutions. As of March 23, 2023, AF intends to disburse a \$400,000 grant to the BC Cattlemen’s Association through fiscal year end funding to support debris removal efforts for eligible ranchers. EMCR will continue working with partners to identify if further debris removal support is required, outside of the AF funding source, for homeowners or other private sector entities.

*Updated March 23, 2023*



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### Background:

#### Event Overview

- On August 23, 2022, a severe thunderstorm developed over highway 8 between Shackan Indian Band and Nooaitch Indian Band, 32 km north-west of Merritt, resulting in a series of mudslides that impacted several portions of highway 8 and up to six properties.
- The mudslide impacts stranded several workers and stranded a number of Shackan (6) band members in Merritt.
- Roads (single lane) and BC Hydro power were restored just over 24 hours after the event.
- Thomson Nicola Regional District (TNRD) did not declare a State of Local Emergency (SOLE); however, Shackan Indian Band passed a resolution to declare a SOLE and evacuation order for two properties.
- Eligible farm properties along Highway 8 are receiving assistance from past wildfire and Atmospheric River events through the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.
- The recovery expenses for the farms impacted by the highway 8 mudslide would be eligible under the existing AgriStability support program claim calculation if the farms had enrolled in AgriStability for the 2022 program year. The six property owners did not enroll in AgriStability for 2022.
- AgriStability is a program that provides support when eligible farms experience larger income losses. Eligible farms can participate in the program annually by applying before April 30<sup>th</sup> of each year (the 2022 program year was extended to June 30, 2022). Further extension of the application deadline for 2022 is not-yet determined. The program is voluntary and there is a participation fee regardless of whether assistance is needed in the program year.

#### Geotechnical Reports

- MOTI, MOF and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) have conducted a number of studies (Lidar, geotechnical, water) in this area and along the highway and are working to ensure all information is available.
- MOF is currently undertaking a detailed post wildfire report for this area.

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Updated March 23, 2023

## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **Humanitarian Community Recovery Support Agencies including Canadian Red Cross**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- The Canadian Red Cross (CRC) has been the primary Non-Governmental Organization providing Humanitarian Support Services in response to large scale events throughout the Province, including wildfire and flooding.
- Climate emergencies are increasing in frequency and severity, which is anticipated to result in impacts to individuals and communities. The Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR) is working to broaden the options for Humanitarian Support Services beyond the Canadian Red Cross.
- EMCR has been working to establish a list of suppliers of commonly required Humanitarian Support Services, with an initial focus on:
  - Group Lodging;
  - Case Management;
  - Community Recovery Managers; and
  - Donation Management.
- It is expected this work will result in a broader range of options being available to the Province, local government and First Nations to address humanitarian related needs during and after emergency events.

#### **Background:**

##### CRC Relationship

- Since 2017, the Province of British Columbia has provided over \$160M to the CRC in support of Emergency Response and Recovery related programming delivered in BC.
- Services which have been provided by CRC include, but are not limited to:
  - Distributing financial assistance payments to households impacted by evacuation orders based on geographic eligibility criteria;

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- operating emergency reception centres and group lodging facilities;
  - providing liaison officers to Provincial and Regional Emergency Operations Centres to support emergency response; and
  - delivering case management informed support including the provision of financial assistance to those impacted by emergency events (i.e. assistance navigating the insurance process, assistance with clean-up, temporary accommodation, debris removal, self-recovery and other emergency related needs).
- Advice/Recommendations
  - Government Financial Information
  - The CRC remains interested in establishing ongoing Humanitarian Services Agreement (HSA) with the Province. EMCR has communicated further planning work was required to determine what range of services may be required from the CRC through such an arrangement.
  - The CRC has noted without an annual provincial contribution that would support the establishment of standing BC based capacity.<sup>Advice/Recommendations</sup>  
<sup>Advice/Recommendations</sup> in response to emergencies in impacted communities.

### Longer Term Approach to Humanitarian Support Services

- The existing emergency management model relies heavily on Public Safety Lifeline Volunteers such as those who deliver Emergency Support Services for evacuees. Many local governments and the CRC have noted it is becoming more difficult to recruit and retain volunteers due to changing demographics.
- Additionally, it is challenging to rely on community-based volunteer capacity to sustainably deliver supports for longer events. In recent years, the Province has had extended wildfire seasons with subsequent events, such as atmospheric river. Having high turnover with volunteers leads to evacuee fatigue and at times re-traumatizes evacuees.
- Informed by the lesson learned from the response and recovery from previous events

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including 2021 wildfires and flooding, EMCR has identified provincial and community emergency management needs. Through a procurement process EMCR will explore what community based and private sector organizations would be able-to and/or interested in addressing these needs with the objective of establishing Corporate Supply Arrangements (CSAs) which could be accessed by the Province, and Broader Public Sector organizations, including but not limited to, local governments and Indigenous communities.

- By establishing CSAs the procurement for Humanitarian Support Services is expected to broaden the range of emergency management supports available to the Province, Local Governments, Indigenous Governing Bodies, and the citizens of BC. Information sharing and other key requirements are being incorporated in the procurement which is anticipated to lead to more effective supports being delivered to those impacted by emergency events.
- EMCR anticipates the CSA will be posted in the Spring of 2023.

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **Post-Emergency Support Services (ESS) Supports**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- When individuals are displaced from their homes due to disasters, Emergency Support Services (ESS) is typically available for 72 hours. ESS extensions beyond 72 hours are considered on an as-needed basis, with the ESS Program Guide generally limiting the term of ESS to three months and significant justification required after one month.
- In instances where a primary residence is no longer occupiable after the expiration of ESS, there is no current program available to ensure accommodations for displaced persons in these circumstances.
- It is clear there is a gap in medium to longer-term support services for British Columbians impacted by a disaster which is further exacerbated by the already limited housing supply in the province.
- EMCR is leading the development of interim housing options beyond the supports provided by ESS.  
Advice/Recommendations  
Advice/Recommendations

#### **Background:**

- Several recent residential fires across the province have highlighted the need for an interim disaster housing policy specific to individuals who are displaced following disasters. Some lower income renters have struggled to find suitable accommodations due to factors including increased rental prices, decreased vacancy rates and global inflation.
- While a strong web of supports is in place to provide assistance after a disaster, for example interim housing funding provided by Canadian Red Cross following the 2021 wildfire and Atmospheric River events, further work is underway to improve coordination of services between provincial ministries, local authorities, First Nation Governments and NGOs when evacuees cannot return home.

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- EMCR is leading the development of an interim housing approach to address needs beyond the supports provided by ESS to specifically support evacuees following a disaster and/or emergency. The Ministry of Housing and BC Housing are focused on the broader challenges associated with the critical housing shortages across the province.

### **Key Facts and Figures:**

- In June 2022, the Evacuee Registration and Assistance (ERA) tool was upgraded to include additional reporting capabilities. For events that used ERA to deliver ESS (some communities still use paper-based referrals) between June 2022 to February 23, 2023:
  - Of the 430 events entered into ERA, 66 (or 14%) extended beyond 72 hours, and 11 (or 2%) extended for over 30 days.
  - Of the 11 events that extended beyond 30 days, five were apartment fires and six were wildfires.

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **First Nations Community Support**

#### **Suggested Response:**

- Indigenous, community-led emergency management programs and partnership agreements support First Nations' self-determination and resilience and emphasize the importance of disaster risk reduction.
- The Province sees the development of new partnership agreements as an integral factor in advancing reconciliation and implementing the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) because these agreements support and honour Indigenous self-determination.
- The Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR) currently has several key agreements that support the delivery of emergency management services and supports to First Nations communities across the Province. Examples include:
  - a 10-year \$29.6 million bi-lateral service agreement with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) signed in April 2017 for the delivery of emergency management services for First Nations reserves;
  - a Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ISC, EMCR, the BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) and the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) with the goal of collectively advancing shared decision-making and capacity of First Nations within all phases of emergency management (i.e., mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery), and
  - a Letter of Understanding (LoU) between the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) and EMCR, committing the parties to work together to improve emergency management services and supports for First Nations communities.
- EMCR is also in the process of developing an LoU between EMCR, BCWS and the First Nations Emergency Services Society (FNESS) to strengthen collaboration across joint operational and strategic emergency management priorities supported by a culturally safe and community-centric approach.

## ***Confidential***

### **Background:**

#### Indigenous Agreements

- EMCR is preparing for negotiations with Canada and FNLC to broaden the bi-lateral service agreement to a multilateral agreement that includes Indigenous partners.
- In 2022, the FNLC received a mandate to engage with First Nations, ISC, EMCR and FNESS to develop a negotiation model for a multilateral agreement.
- Once the negotiations model is endorsed by B.C. First Nations, ISC will lead negotiations towards a new tri-lateral agreement.
- In addition to the multi-lateral agreement, EMCR anticipates that the appetite for additional government-to-government agreements with Indigenous governing bodies will increase, due to the success of the T̓silhqot'in National Government Collaborative Emergency Management Agreement and the new agreements framework proposed under the anticipated new provincial emergency management legislation.

#### Service Delivery

- FNESS provides emergency management services and supports to First Nations communities and collaborates with EMCR to improve and inform programs, services and tools that benefit First Nations communities.
- EMCR regularly engages with First Nations and Indigenous partners organizations at three levels:
  - Operational/Technical Level: FNHA, FNESS, and ISC representatives are integrated into Provincial Regional Operations Centres (PREOCs) to support the coordination of response efforts and supports to impacted First Nations communities.
  - Strategic Level: the cross-agency and cross-ministry Indigenous Agency Working Group (IAWG) addresses emerging issues in a timely and coordinated way through shared leadership and includes representation from the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres and Metis Nation BC.
  - Political Level: through the Tripartite MoU, EMCR meets with the political level of the FNLC and Canada to support ongoing dialogue and decision making related to priority First Nations emergency management issues/concerns.



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- EMCR collaborates closely with the FNHA, which is responsible for planning and management of service delivery and funding of health programs to First Nations in B.C. This collaboration was particularly important during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic due to the intersections of emergency management decision-making with public health considerations.

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **First Nations Emergency Management - Funding**

#### **Suggested Response:**

##### Bilateral Service Agreement

- The Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR) delivers emergency management services for First Nations communities on behalf of the federal government.
- This arrangement is supported by a 10-year, \$29.6 million bilateral service agreement with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) which runs from 2017 – 2027. In 2023/24, EMCR will receive \$3.04 million from ISC to deliver the services provided for under this agreement.
- Similar to the approach taken with local governments, the Province reimburses First Nations for the incremental costs associated with response and recovery actions they undertake. These costs are subsequently reimbursed by ISC.
- We have heard from First Nations that to be true partners in emergency management this agreement should be renegotiated and become a multilateral service agreement. The Province welcomes Indigenous partners to the negotiations of a new multilateral service agreement.
- From 2022 to 2023, EMCR provided \$555,000 to the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) to support engagement and preparations for negotiations between the FNLC, B.C., Canada, and the FNESS to develop a new multilateral service agreement.

##### Funding for Indigenous Emergency Management

- Although the federal government has responsibility for funding emergency management-related expenditures on reserve lands, the Province has taken on a leadership role in addressing funding gaps through the Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF), which is open to both First Nations and local governments to support preparedness and mitigation priorities.
- Further, EMCR works closely with the First Nations Emergency Services Society (FNESS) to support First Nations in developing their applications for CEPF funding.
- In February 2022, the Province provided \$10 million to FNESS to support First Nations-directed emergency management priorities. This funding has supported First Nations communities with improved technology, training, grant writing support and direct community capacity funding.

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### **Background:**

#### ISC Funding

- The federal government, through ISC, provides First Nations funding for community emergency management priorities through the following funding programs:
  - the Emergency Management Assistance Program (EMAP), which supports preparedness mitigation, response, and recovery up to a maximum of \$15 million annually per recipient;
  - the First Nations Infrastructure Fund, which provides up to \$10 million per recipient towards structural mitigation projects, and
  - the Indigenous Communities Support Funding (ICSF), which provides support to Indigenous organizations and communities to address and mitigate the ongoing impacts of COVID-19. In 2022, an investment of \$240.5 million was made to the program to support community-based initiatives.

#### Community Emergency Preparedness Fund

- In February 2023, the Province provided an additional \$180 million to Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF). This brings total contributions to the CEPF since its establishment to \$369 million.
- CEPF funding has been provided to 12 communities to enhance cultural safety and humility in the delivery of community-based emergency management programs, including training, tools, and activities to enhance partnerships with, and for, Indigenous communities during emergency mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **T̓silhqot̓in National Government's Collaborative Emergency Management Agreement Renewal**

#### **Suggested Response:**

- A renewed, five-year Collaborative Emergency Management Agreement between the Ministry, BC Wildfire Service, the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR), Indigenous Services Canada, and the T̓silhqot̓in (sill-ko-teen) National Government was signed in 2022.
- The renewed agreement is aligned with the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, and the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- Implementation of the renewed agreement is improving the relationship between government and Indigenous peoples as the proposed outcomes focus on Indigenous community-led emergency management, Indigenous self-determination, and community resilience.
- As we are approaching the first anniversary of the new agreement, current priorities for implementation include capacity building, training opportunities, enhancing cultural safety in service delivery, and seasonal readiness.
- In 2022, my Ministry provided \$280,000 to support the implementation of the T̓silhqot̓in (sill-ko-teen) Collaborative Emergency Management Agreement.

#### **Background:**

- In 2018, the Province, as represented by the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR), the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR), and the BC Wildfire Service, with Indigenous Services Canada, and the T̓silhqot̓in National Government entered the three-year Collaborative Emergency Management Agreement.
- The original agreement expired in February 2021, but a one-year extension allowed time to draft a renewed agreement, since signed on July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022.
- Since Spring 2021, sub-committees were developed to advance the shared goals of the agreement, and the Calls to Action in *The Fires Awakened Us* (post-2017 wildfire report) and *Dada Nentsen Gha Yatastiig* (COVID-19 report).

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- In January 2022, B.C. and Canada received a funding request from the T̓silhqot̓in National Government that outlines their resource and capacity needs to operationalize the agreement<sup>Intergovernmental Communications</sup>
- Indigenous Services Canada committed \$250,000 per fiscal year for the term of the agreement.
- On March 31, 2022, EMCR provided the T̓silhqot̓in National Government with \$80,000 for 2022/23 to fund \$30,000 for training and \$50,000 for Collaborative Emergency Management Agreement secretariat support.
- In July 2022, EMCR provided \$200,000 in funding for general agreement implementation in 2022/23.

Intergovernmental Communications

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **EMCR's Implementation of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act***

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- In November 2019, the Province enacted the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act).
- The five-year “Declaration Act Action Plan” (Action Plan), released in March 2022, identifies two key priorities for the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR):
  - 1.10 Co-develop modernized emergency management legislation with First Nations, and
  - 2.11 Integrate traditional practices and cultural uses of fire into wildfire prevention and land management practices and support the reintroduction of strategized burning.
- EMCR is applying a distinctions-based approach to co-develop modernized emergency management legislation. This approach demonstrates that the Province acknowledges the specific rights, interests, priorities and concerns of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people while honouring their unique cultures, histories, rights, laws and governments.
- As part of the distinctions-based approach, EMCR has met regularly with co-development partners since January 2022, including the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC), Modern Treaty Nations, First Nations Rights and Title Holders, Métis Nation BC (MNBC), the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCA AFC), Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), and the First Nations Emergency Services Society (FNESS).

#### **Background:**

- Cabinet Confidences
- To support Indigenous partners in this distinctions-based approach, in 2022/23 the Province provided \$225,000 to FNLC, \$100,000 to the Alliance of Modern Treaty Nations, \$55,000 to Métis Nation BC and \$35,000 to the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres.

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- In fall 2022, EMCR staff attended the First Nations Emergency Management Partnership tables to provide legislation and policy updates to attendees. An in-person session was also arranged with the Emergency Planning Secretariat to engage mainland Coast Salish communities.

- Intergovernmental Communications

- On February 8, 2023, Minister Ma met with the First Nations Leadership Council and reaffirmed that EMCR is committed to getting the legislation right, through collaboration with Indigenous partners.
- EMCR plans to co-develop guidance materials for internal and external partners to support their ability to uphold Indigenous engagement requirements under the proposed legislation. A technical table of First Nations, local governments, and critical infrastructure emergency managers will be meeting on March 14-15, 2023, to develop an interim guidance framework.
- Key policy changes that have emerged through the co-development of the legislation include:
  - affirming Indigenous peoples as decision-makers, not stakeholders;
  - requiring regulated entities (including local governments and critical infrastructure operators) to consult and cooperate with Indigenous governing bodies;
  - incorporating definitions shaped by Indigenous peoples and aligned with DRIPA;
  - promoting cultural safety, including in emergency management plans, and
  - integrating Indigenous knowledge and worldviews in emergency management.

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **Regional Partnerships and the Integrated Disaster Council of British Columbia**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- The Province's partnerships with local governments and non-governmental organizations are critical to the provincial emergency management system.
- Regional partnerships support multi-jurisdictional emergency management planning initiatives such as training, exercising and relationship building.
- These types of partnerships also strengthen collaboration between the Province and local governments and support continuous improvement for local emergency management practitioners.
- Regional partnership examples include the Integrated Partnership for Regional Emergency Management (IPREM) which covers the Metro Vancouver region and the Regional Emergency Management Partnership (REMP) in the Capital region.
- The Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR) also works with many non-government organizations to support emergency management capacity within local communities.
- EMCR leads the Integrated Disaster Council of British Columbia (IDCBC), an inter-agency partnership with a variety of unique not-for-profit, non-governmental organizations, and charities that offer a wide range of services during and in the aftermath of disasters.

#### **Background:**

##### Regional Partnerships

- EMCR's regional partnerships support cross-jurisdictional emergency management capacity by integrating plans and processes for each region. The partnerships include cost-sharing arrangements that respect the autonomy of each signatory and focus on strengthening regional emergency management.
- IPREM was established in April 2009 with the Metro Vancouver Regional District on behalf of 21 municipalities, one Treaty First Nation, and one electoral area. IPREM serves the most densely populated region of the Province with 2.6 million residents across several jurisdictions.
- REMP was established in March 2016 through a memorandum of understanding with the Capital Regional District (CRD) on behalf of 13 municipalities and three electoral areas on Southern Vancouver Island, serving nearly 440,000 residents.



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- EMCR's regional partnerships provide opportunities for the Ministry to engage an aggregation of local governments in the most populous areas of the Province. EMCR has engaged both IPREM and REMP several times during the development of the modernized legislation and in January 2023, IPREM and REMP hosted multiple regional forums on the development of new emergency management regulations.

### IDCBC

- The mandate of the IDCBC is to increase coordination amongst participating agencies by creating a forum for communication and information sharing. IDCBC's primary objective is to provide an integrated approach to disaster-related human consequence initiatives and enhance services delivered throughout British Columbia.
- IDCBC is governed by a Terms of Reference, each partner retains the responsibility to deliver services according to their own mandates and to raise and/or acquire funds for their own purposes. During emergencies, EMCR liaises closely with IDCBC members who may provide supports to assist people and communities impacted by disasters.
- Pursuant to the British Columbia Emergency Management System (BCEMS), EMCR's partnerships with non-government organizations and charities are coordinated through the IDCBC.

### **Key Facts and Figures:**

- The Province's contribution for 2023-24 towards regional partnerships are:

<b>Partnership</b>	<b>2023/24 Contribution</b>
IPREM	\$173,000
REMP	\$125,000

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **ClimateReadyBC Platform**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- Significant disasters are becoming more frequent – from floods, to wildfires, to extreme heat – and increasing in complexity as climate change persists.
- Through these challenges, communities and partner organizations have called for a data and information portal to bring together all disaster and climate risk reduction initiatives.
- To help answer this call, the Province launched ClimateReadyBC – a one-stop, online platform, which includes a variety of tools, funding programs and functions, to help guide communities on our climate and emergency strategies and supports, and those of our partners.
- Ongoing collaboration and engagement with First Nations, local governments and other partners will drive the platform's expansion and evolution and strengthen the province's ability to mitigate, prepare for and respond to increasingly severe climate-related events and other disasters.
- The February launch of ClimateReadyBC was paired with a \$180 million boost to the Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF). The fund helps First Nations and local governments prepare communities for the risks of natural hazards and lessen the effects before disasters happen.

#### **Background:**

- It can be difficult for First Nations and local governments to understand their hazards and risks, and to navigate the disaster and climate risk supports available.
- Information about risks and risk reduction opportunities has been spread across multiple government ministries and web pages, making it challenging to find, interpret and use.
- The mandate of the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR) includes the need to improve transparency and awareness of risk reduction and resilience initiatives by developing new tools for the public to access information on existing risks and work to improve resilience.

*Feb 28, 2023*

## ***Confidential***

- ClimateReadyBC was developed and delivered through the work of existing provincial staff and resources. The 2023/2024 budget includes funding for two staff to provide ongoing maintenance and improvements for the platform.

### Indigenous Considerations:

- First Nations and Indigenous organizations have repeatedly called for a data and information portal which brings together all disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation-related initiatives and information.
- The BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan calls for the sharing of climate data and information and strengthening of First Nations data governance.
- The First Nations' Emergency Services Society has developed their own platform called Lightship, funded by EMCR, which uses the same ArcGIS platform as ClimateReadyBC. This allows these platforms to be interoperable.

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **Disaster and Climate Risk and Resilience Assessment**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- People across the province are experiencing the escalating impacts of climate change emergencies – from unprecedented wildfire seasons to catastrophic flooding – and the Province is committed to mitigating the impacts these disasters have on people and communities across British Columbia
- We know that every dollar spent on disaster and climate risk mitigation now can help save \$10 or more on recovery costs down the road, but to be effective, we first need to assess disaster and climate risks to prioritize our investments.
- The Disaster and Climate Risk and Resilience Assessment (DCRRA) is a joint mandate of the Ministries of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness and Environment and Climate Change Strategy.
  - The DCRRA will be completed in 2024 and will inform a subsequent provincial disaster and climate risk reduction plan.
  - Data, analysis and other products of the DCRRA will be made available to the public and decision-makers through ClimateReadyBC – a one-stop, online platform designed to help guide the public and communities on disaster and climate readiness strategies and supports.
- The assessment will be co-developed with Indigenous Partners, and informed through engagement with local governments, industry, critical infrastructure owners, academia, non-governmental organizations, and other key provincial parties.

#### **Background:**

- An updated and modernized assessment of provincial-scale disaster and climate risks is critical for the Province to strategically prioritize risk reduction and climate adaptation investments and develop policies and programs to strengthen the Province's resilience.
- A Preliminary Strategic Climate Risk Assessment for B.C. was published in 2019. This was the first provincial-scale assessment of climate risks in Canada, and the first assessment of risks in BC since the Provincial Hazard, Risk, and Vulnerability Assessment in 1997.

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- The approach used for the DCRRA will improve upon the 2019 climate risk assessment by including co-development, equity-focused analysis, engagement with key partners and diverse populations and outputs that provide value to communities.
- The Provincial DCRRA will be followed by regional risk and resilience assessments to be completed in 2026, to enhance information available to First Nations, local authorities, critical infrastructure owners and others for local risk mitigation planning and action.
- The Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness and the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy have aligned legislative and government commitments:
  - In 2018, BC adopted the United Nations Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction that provides guidance for using an all-hazards approach and considering climate change when assessing risk and resilience.
  - The modernized Emergency Management legislation will require all regulated entities to undertake risk assessments using the best available local and Indigenous knowledge and climate science. The methodology used to develop a provincial disaster and climate risk and resilience assessment is intended to be adapted for use by regulated entities.
  - The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy is responsible for meeting the Climate Change Accountability Act requirements of assessing and publicly reporting on climate risks every five years. The next provincial assessment of climate risks is due in 2025.

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **Community Emergency Preparedness Fund**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- The Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF) is a suite of funding streams intended to enhance the resiliency of local governments, First Nations and communities to reduce the risks of disasters in their communities through investments in disaster preparedness and mitigation.
- In February 2023, the Province committed a further \$180 million to the CEPF to support projects that help local governments and First Nations prepare communities for the risks of natural hazards and lessen the effects before disasters happen. The new contribution brings CEPF's total investment to \$369 million since its establishment in 2017.
- The increased funding will support a new funding stream to assist communities in dealing with and preparing for the effects of extreme cold, in addition to extreme heat. Additionally, the funding stream for disaster-risk reduction and climate adaptation will support larger structural projects, such as dikes and pump stations, increasing the funding limit for structural projects from \$2 million to \$5 million.
- Since 2017, First Nations and local governments have been approved for more than \$111 million through CEPF for more than 1,300 projects that help communities mitigate and prepare for disasters and climate-related emergencies.
- The Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) administers the CEPF in partnership with the Province.

#### **Background:**

- The CEPF funding streams, as of February 21, 2023, are:
  - Emergency Operations Centres & Training
  - Emergency Support Services
  - Indigenous Cultural Safety & Cultural Humility Training
  - Public Notification & Evacuation Route Planning
  - Volunteer & Composite Fire Departments Equipment & Training
  - Disaster Risk Reduction – Climate Adaptation
    - § Foundations (e.g. risk mapping, planning, design work)
    - § Non-Structural (e.g. bylaw development, community engagement)
    - § Structural (up to \$5 million)
  - Extreme Temperature Risk Mapping, Assessment, and Planning

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- Previous streams including Structural Flood Mitigation, and Flood Risk Assessment, Flood Mapping & Flood Mitigation Planning have been folded into the Disaster Risk Reduction – Climate Adaptation funding streams in response to feedback and in greater alignment with provincial commitments such as the Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy and the Sendai Framework.
- The CEPF is administered by the UBCM for an administration fee of up to 5% of the total funding amount.
- Ongoing engagement with First Nations, local governments, and other partners will continue to inform the development and administration of disaster risk reduction funding programs.
- See Appendix 1 for further fund description and a funding summary.

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**Appendix 1 – Community Emergency Preparedness Fund Funding Summary**

<b>Funding Stream</b>	<b>Number of Approved Projects</b>	<b>Total Value</b>
<b>1. Flood Risk Assessment, Mapping, and Mitigation Planning</b> To ensure communities have accurate knowledge of the flood hazards they face and to develop effective strategies to mitigate and prepare for those risks.	130	\$17.9M
<b>2. Emergency Support Services</b> To build local capacity to provide emergency support services through training, volunteer recruitment and retention, and the purchase of ESS equipment.	318	\$9.0M
<b>3. Emergency Operations Centres &amp; Training*</b> To build local capacity through the purchase of equipment and supplies required to maintain or improve an EOC and to enhance EOC capacity through training and exercises.	385	\$10.3M
<b>4. Structural Flood Mitigation</b> To prevent, eliminate or reduce the impact of flood and geological hazards through construction of structural mitigation projects (e.g. floodways, dikes, pump stations).	52	\$33.4M
<b>5. Evacuation Route Planning</b> To develop Evacuation Route Plans that provide information for local governments, First Nations and community members on the recommended evacuation routes for the community in the event of an emergency. The 2023 intake of this stream includes Public Notification & Evacuation Route Planning.	99	\$2.9M
<b>6. Extreme Heat</b> To ensure eligible applicants have accurate knowledge of the risks associated with extreme heat and how these risks will change over time, and to develop effective response plans and strategies to prepare, mitigate, and adapt to those risks.	39	\$2.1M
<b>6. Volunteer &amp; Composite Fire Department Equipment &amp; Training</b> To build the resiliency of volunteer and composite fire departments in preparing for and responding to emergencies through the purchase of new or replacement equipment and to facilitate the delivery of training.	220	\$11.1M
<b>7. Indigenous Cultural Safety &amp; Cultural Humility Training</b> To support eligible applicants to enhance cultural safety and humility in the delivery of local emergency management programs and services.	23	\$887,056
<b>9. Disaster Risk Reduction – Climate Adaptation</b> To support eligible applicants to reduce risks from future disasters due to natural hazards and climate-related risks through the development and implementation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accurate foundational knowledge of the natural hazards they face and the risks associated with BC's changing climate</li> <li>• Effective strategies to prepare for, mitigate, and adapt to those risks</li> </ul>	49 applications, 69 projects  <u>Projects</u> Category 1: 37 Category 2: 20 Category 3: 12	\$23.4M
<b>Total</b>	<b>1358</b>	<b>\$112M</b>



## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **Disaster Mitigation Funding**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- The Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR) supports First Nations and local authorities to advance disaster risk reduction through several funding programs, including provincial programs and federal/provincial cost share programs.
- For every \$1 invested in mitigation, up to \$10 can be avoided in post-disaster recovery costs.
- In February 2023, the province provided an additional investment of \$180 million to the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) for the Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF) to support Indigenous and local governments in preparing for and mitigating current and future disaster risk. This investment nearly doubles the CEPF to \$369 million.
- In Budget 2023, the province also increased EMCR's disaster mitigation funding program to provide consistent, long-term mitigation funding for communities. This funding will enable the Province to better support communities to address risks from climate change and natural disasters, and fill gaps not addressed by other funding programs.
- The province has also funded disaster risk reduction through provincial grants, and joint federal-provincial funding programs such as the National Disaster Mitigation Program, and the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program's (ICIP) Adaptation, Resilience, and Disaster Mitigation (ARDM) stream.
- Since 2016, EMBC's Disaster Mitigation Program has funded over 1,500 disaster risk reduction projects for over \$310 million. This includes \$270 million to over 400 flood risk reduction projects (as of Feb 21, 2023).

#### **Background:**

- Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (see Appendix 1 for CEPF investments to date)
  - In February 2023, the Province committed a further \$180 million to the CEPF.
  - In total, since 2017, the Province has contributed a total of \$369 million to the CEPF which is administered by UBCM. To date, First Nations and local governments have been approved for more than \$111 million through CEPF for more than 1,300 projects that help communities mitigate and prepare for disasters and climate-related emergencies.
  - Funding provided in February 2023 will support the continued intakes and the establishment of a new funding stream to assist communities in dealing with and preparing for the effects of extreme cold, in addition to extreme heat. Additionally, the funding stream for disaster-risk reduction and climate adaptation will support larger

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structural projects, such as dikes and pump stations, increasing the funding limit for structural projects from \$2 million to \$5 million.

- Investing in Canada's Infrastructure Program – Adaptation, Resilience, and Disaster Mitigation Stream
  - The ARDM sub-stream of the Green Infrastructure ICIP stream is to support projects that increase structural and/or natural capacity to adapt to climate change impacts, natural disasters, or extreme weather events.
  - COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Sub-Stream: Launched in 2020, the program has funded 24 projects totaling \$56.2 million (provincial funding of \$10 million) under the COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream.
  - Green Infrastructure Sub-Stream: Launched in summer of 2022, the program will fund flood mitigation infrastructure projects for individual communities (up to \$10 million), and joint applications submitted by multiple communities (up to \$20 million). The program has a total of \$81.865 million federal and provincial dollars.
- EMCR's Disaster Mitigation Program Grants
  - Since 2016, the program has funded 57 projects totaling approximately \$93 million in provincial funding. Funded projects include flood mapping, structural flood mitigation (dikes, pump stations, etc.), seismic projects (microzonation mapping, and earthquake early warning), and avalanche risk assessments.
  - In *Budget 2023*, the province increased EMCR's base mitigation budget to enable the Province to provide consistent, long-term mitigation funding programming for communities and enable the province to better support communities to address risks from climate change and natural disasters, and fill gaps not addressed by other programs.
- National Disaster Mitigation Program (NDMP)
  - The Province partnered with Public Safety Canada to cost-share 109 flood risk reduction projects totaling approximately \$55 million (provincial funding of \$21.5 million) through the NDMP which was established in 2016. No further intakes of the NDMP are expected at this time.
  - The NDMP provided funding for projects in various categories including non-structural mitigation (including flood risk assessments, flood mapping, and mitigation planning) or for small-scale structural mitigation, such as upgrading existing diking structures to improve flood resilience.
- EMCR also works closely with other ministries and levels of government to support their disaster risk reduction programs including Infrastructure Canada's - Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund (DMAF).

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# Mitigation Funding Programs in BC

Provincial Snapshot - February 2023

Prepared by Disaster Mitigation Branch



Ministry of  
Emergency Management  
and Climate Readiness

CURRENT DISASTER MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION FUNDING PROGRAMS												
Funding Breakdown	INVESTING IN CANADA INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM (ICIP)					COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FUND (CEPF) - 2022 onwards (\$110 + \$180M)						
	ARDM (CVRIS)	ARDM (Green Infrastructure)	NDMP Intake 6	DMU Grants EMBC - DMU	End of Year Grants EMBC - DMU	Disaster Risk Reduction - Climate Adaptation	Emergency Operations Centres & Training	Emergency Support Services	Extreme Temperature, Risk Mapping, Assessment, and Planning	Indigenous Cultural Safety & Cultural Training	Public Notification & Evacuation Route Planning	Volunteer & Composite Fire Departments
	\$56.25M (\$45M fed / \$11.25M prov)	\$81.865M (\$44.365 M fed / \$37.5M prov)	\$20M - fed 21/22 nationally (50/50 fed-prov split)	\$6.94M DMU base budget Other EOY grants	as available	\$243M	\$11M	\$9M	\$4M	\$3M	\$5	\$15M
	All allocated	Approved in Principle, not allocated	All allocated	Allocated Annually	Allocated based on funding availability	\$23.4M	\$2.4M	0	\$2.1M	\$562,013	0	\$6.4M
	\$10M max	\$10M-20M max	\$3M max	undetermined	historically \$150K-\$10M	\$150,000 - \$5M max	\$30,000 max	\$30,000 max	\$30,000 max	\$30,000 max	\$30,000 max	\$30,000 max
	Structural and natural infrastructure projects to address the impacts of flooding and flood- related hazards	Build or modify infrastructure (including natural) to prevent, mitigate and protect against floods and flood-related hazards	Flood Risk Assessments, Mapping, Mitig. Planning, Non-Structural Mitigation	Cost share NDMP flood projects and non-eligible ARDM project expenses	Provincial priority disaster risk reduction projects, including seismic projects	Risk mapping, risk assessments, planning, non-structural projects, small-scale structural projects.	Purchase of equipment and supplies required to maintain or improve EOCs, EOC training and exercises.	Volunteer recruitment, retention and training, including in-house training, and the purchase of ESS equipment.	Extreme heat risk mapping, assessments, planning.	Cultural safety & humility training, adapting emergency management tools to be inclusive of Indigenous peoples, & activities related to partnering with, or providing assistance to, Indigenous communities during emergency mitigation, preparedness, response, & recovery.	Public notification and evacuation route planning.	Purchase of new or replacement equipment and to facilitate the delivery of training.
	Intake closed Jan 11; 24 Approved projects underway	17 BC Approved in Principle projects have been notified	24 projects underway - project extended to Mar 2023	DMU budget allocation to priority disaster mitigation projects	Acceleration of BC DRR projects, as funding allows	Announcement May 2023 for intake 2	Announcement June 2023 for intake 1	Announcement April 2023 for intake 1	Funding announcement September 14, 2022	Funding announcement February 2023	Advice/Recommendations	Funding announcement February 2023 for intake 1
	None	None	None	N/A	N/A	Feb 24, 2023 deadline	March 31, 2023 deadline	TBD	TBD	TBD	April 28, 2023 deadline	TBD
Approvals	Apr 2021	Federal approvals Fall 2023	Apr 2021	Ongoing	Ongoing	Various						
Sunset Date	Dec 2024	Dec 2027	Mar 2023	Ongoing	Ongoing	June 2029						

Funding Sources without futher commitment

Currently accepting applications

Funding sources either open or has a commitment to reopen

## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **COVID-19 Lessons Learned Review**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- Government is committed to protecting British Columbians and keeping people, businesses, and communities safe during emergencies, whether it be a local wildfire or global pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic was an unprecedented situation, and the provincial government moved quickly to keep people safe and stop the spread of the virus.
- The Province commissioned the COVID-19 Lessons Learned Review so that government could continue to strengthen its emergency management protocols for future province-wide emergencies.
- The review found that overall, the province effectively managed response activities throughout the pandemic. The findings in the COVID-19 Lessons Learned Review report are consistent with government's understanding of what worked well and the areas of focus for improvement.
- By incorporating lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic into emergency planning and response, the Province will be better positioned and more prepared for future emergencies and disasters.

#### **Background:**

- On March 16, 2022, the provincial government publicly announced the launch of an independent review and public consultation on government's operational response to the COVID-19 pandemic to capture lessons learned.
- An independent project team of former senior leaders of the BC Public Service were appointed by the Honourable Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General to under-take the review. The Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR) was the lead agency in government for the initiative and supported the independent project team through an EMCR-staffed secretariat.

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- The project team looked at best practices and engaged extensively with government agencies, First Nations, Indigenous organizations, stakeholders, partners and independent regulators involved in responding to the pandemic.
  - The project team spoke with over 200 people representing about 145 groups and organizations in over 70 engagement sessions.
- The COVID-19 Lessons Learned Review was publicly released on December 2, 2022. The 144-page report looked at preparations for the pandemic, the processes used to make decisions, government communication related to pandemic response, and the implementation of response measures.
- The COVID-19 Lessons Learned Review contains 26 comprehensive findings, encompassing six themes - trust, preparation, decision-making, communications, implementation, and Indigenous impacts.
  - While the findings are not framed as recommendations, each finding has a conclusion about where government effort is needed.
- Many of the findings of the review reflect work that is underway to prepare BC for future provincewide emergencies. For example:
  - This review will aid the Province as it continues work to modernize emergency management legislation – expected to be introduced this year.
  - The Ministries of Health and EMCR have begun work to identify how the Provincial Pandemic Coordination Plan could be updated. The plan was last updated in March 2020.
- In February 2023, EMCR and partners participated in Exercise Coastal Response – a simulation of a major disaster in the province – to hone emergency response activities, such as cross-government coordination and supply chain management.

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **2021 Atmospheric River After Action Review**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- Government is committed to protecting British Columbians and keeping people, businesses, and communities safe during emergencies and disasters.
- The November 2021 atmospheric river event was unprecedented in its magnitude and the extent of damage it caused, including catastrophic impacts to communities, the economy, and critical infrastructure.
- The Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR) conducted a review of government's operational response to the flooding and landslides resulting from the atmospheric river to improve the provincial government's ability to plan and respond to future disasters.
- The review found that the provincial government's response to the 2021 atmospheric river event demonstrated strong leadership, effective and innovative policy development, and agility within the public service to co-ordinate and implement response measures.
- The review identified several lessons learned and areas for continuous improvement that will help the Province prepare and respond to the impacts from extreme weather events. An improvement plan has been proposed to address the findings of the review and is being coordinated through EMCR.
- To date, a number of improvements have been implemented in response to the event and lessons learned. For example:
  - EMCR now provides weekly Provincial Hazard Briefings to emergency management partners on a year-round basis.
  - Staffing at the River Forecast Centre has increased and the centre is now issuing increased and advanced information about expected river flows; and
  - A transboundary initiative between British Columbia and Washington State has commenced to enhance flood mitigation and response associated with the Nooksack River.

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### **Background:**

- The November 2021 atmospheric river event was the most expensive natural disaster in BC's history with catastrophic impacts to communities, the economy, and critical infrastructure – requiring multi-year recovery.
- The event's flooding and landslides contributed to loss of life, income, severe damage to highway infrastructure, power outages, agricultural devastation, natural gas interruption, and supply chain impacts due to road, rail, and port interruptions and closures.
- On November 17, 2021, a Provincial State of Emergency was declared to mitigate impacts on transportation networks, facilitate movement of essential goods and supplies, and to support the provincial response and recovery from the widespread damage caused by severe flooding and landslides.
  - First Nations and local authorities issued evacuation orders affecting more than 6,750 properties and 13,500 persons.
- An internal to government after-action report identifies 17 findings related to four themes: governance, policy and legislation, coordination, and communication.
  - The findings reflect lessons learned and areas for continuous improvement to help government continue to strengthen and improve preparedness and response to future disasters.
- The review involved BC provincial ministries and agencies that fulfilled a key role in the operational response to the 2021 atmospheric river event. Mitigation and recovery actions were out of scope as this work is ongoing through other bodies, such as the Recovery and Resiliency Secretariat.

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **Catastrophic Earthquake Preparedness**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- The Province continues to ensure that BC is resilient and prepared for earthquakes and tsunamis. The Province, led by the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR), enhances catastrophic earthquake preparedness in collaboration with partners through the ongoing development of plans, training, exercising, public education, agreements, and investments in seismic mitigation.
- In October 2022, the Province released an updated Provincial Earthquake Immediate Response Strategy (PEIRS). The PEIRS details how the Province will lead and coordinate immediately following a catastrophic earthquake and articulates the roles and responsibilities of the provincial government and emergency management partners across key functions.
- The Province builds and maintains response capabilities for a catastrophic earthquake through regular earthquake exercises with First Nations, local and Federal governments, and non-government organizations. In February 2023, EMCR led Exercise Coastal Response, a large-scale, earthquake exercise involving over 200 participants. Lessons learned from this exercise will enhance preparedness and response for future disasters.
- Natural Resources Canada (NRCAN) is leading the development of a national Earthquake Early Warning (EEW) system and anticipates having a fully operational system in spring 2024. EMCR are committed partners in the national network and are the cross-ministerial provincial lead for implementation of the system. EEW systems can detect an earthquake beginning before the shaking starts and will provide several seconds of warning to allow people and the Province to take protective measures. The first sensor for the EEW system was installed in BC in March 2022 with the 100th sensor installed in January 2023.
- Additionally, the province has approved more than \$1.3 billion for seismic upgrades or replacements at 60 schools since 2017 and more than \$5 million annually for seismic retrofits and upgrades to existing structures and new bridges and highways.

#### **Background:**

- The Province is committed to planning for catastrophic seismic events in BC following the release of the Office of the Auditor General's Catastrophic Earthquake Preparedness Report (2014) and the BC Earthquake Consultation Report (2014), both of which identified shortcomings in BC's earthquake preparedness.



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- The PEIRS includes revised scenarios for major, shallow earthquakes impacting Greater Victoria and the Lower Mainland based on modelling from NRCan, and addresses topics including governance, roles and responsibilities, situational awareness, humanitarian assistance, logistics, critical infrastructure, strategic communications, surge capacity, and recovery. Engagement with all ministries, federal partners, First Nations, local authorities, NGOs, and other key partners was conducted as part of the revision process.
- In 2016, EMCR established a multi-year exercise program to improve preparedness for complex emergency events that require a multi-jurisdictional response. This program focuses on enhancing provincial coordination with partners from all levels of government, industry, and non-government organizations. Successful exercises were conducted in 2016, 2017, and 2018. Exercise Coastal Response 2023 validated numerous response and decision-making structures. The exercise program for the five-year period from 2023 to 2028 is under development and will include a continuation of tabletop and live play activities to improve provincial disaster preparedness.
- In 2019, EMCR developed the Interim Provincial Disaster Recovery Framework to outline how the Province plans to re-establish the social, cultural, physical, economic, personal, and community wellbeing through inclusive measures that reduce vulnerability, while enhancing sustainability and resilience, before and after a disaster. This Framework is in the process of being reviewed and updated to incorporate lessons learned from recent recovery efforts following the 2021 wildfire and atmospheric river flooding events.
- In April 2022 the Province updated the Tsunami Notification Process Plan based on lessons observed following tsunami advisory alerts resulting from the January 15, 2022 Tongan volcano eruption. The Plan describes the roles, responsibilities and general procedures used by international, federal, provincial, and key partner agencies in the dissemination of tsunami messages within BC that originate from the National Tsunami Warning Center in Palmer, Alaska.

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### ***Emergency Program Act Modernization***

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- We are working to modernize BC's emergency management legislation as a crucial step in implementing the UN Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction.
- Compared to the response-focused EPA, the new legislation will better position BC to address climate change impacts and will reflect that emergency management consists of four phases: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.
- EMCR has been co-developing the legislation with First Nations and engaging with other Indigenous organizations, including Métis Nation BC, and service providers. This work has helped to highlight issues such as the importance of linking evolving climate-driven risks to emergency management plans, ensuring our practices promote cultural safety, and recognizing the authority of First Nations within a co-managed emergency management environment. EMCR consulted extensively with other emergency management partners, such as local authorities and critical infrastructure owners, and stakeholders.
- EMCR is in the final stages of legislative drafting and is aiming to table the legislation in spring 2023.
- EMCR has identified several priority regulations for depositing over 2023 and 2024. These regulations will be co-developed with First Nations and will be informed by public consultations.
- Our new proposed legislation will include a mandate for a review in five years to take stock of what is working well and any needed amendments. We understand there is an ongoing need to hear from British Columbians.

#### **Background:**

- In fall 2018, Cabinet directed EMBC to prepare new emergency management legislation to align with the UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.
- Lessons learned from the 2017 and 2018 flood and wildfire seasons, the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 heat dome, wildfire season, and atmospheric river event are being incorporated into the new legislation.

*March 21, 2023*

## ***Confidential***

- In 2022, the government announced that the legislation would be targeted at the spring 2023 legislative session, ahead of the 2023 hazard season.

### Consultation and Engagement

- In 2019, EMBC issued a discussion paper: *Modernizing BC's Emergency Management Legislation*
  - Feedback was accepted until January 31, 2020, from the public, other ministries and levels of government, communities, First Nations, businesses and industries, as well as from non-profit and volunteer organizations and emergency management practitioners.
- In 2020, a *What We Heard* report was released to describe the feedback and to outline the path forward.
- In 2022, co-development with First Nations began. This included:
  - Co-development with rights and title holders through a series of regional sessions, and through the sharing and discussion of a consultation draft.
  - Co-development with First Nations leadership organizations (the First Nations Leadership Council and Alliance of BC Modern Treaty Nations) through co-developing a request for legislation and draft legislation.
  - Engagement with other Indigenous organizations, including Métis Nation BC, and service providers through high-level policy discussions.
  - A breakout session at the November 2022 First Nations Leadership Gathering.
- Also in 2022, there was an engagement “reset” with other partners and stakeholders and we have continued that engagement into 2023. This included:
  - Ongoing connections with local governments through the UBCM Flood and Wildfire Committee and UBCM Community Safety Committee, as well as presentations at the September 2022 UBCM Convention.
  - Status updates to various service provider and stakeholder organizations.
  - A presentation at the November 2022 Emergency Preparedness and Business Continuity conference.
  - Most recent engagements have included presentations at the 5 regional local government leadership academies and the Regional District Chairs and Chief Administrative Officers Forum

March 21, 2023

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### Key Policy Shifts

- Key policy shifts within the modernized legislation include:
  - An updated definition of emergency (to recognize threats like diseases, toxins, and security threats, and to reflect the need to protect heritage sites and objects), and a principle recognizing the linkage between climate change and emergency management.
  - A reflection of the four phases of emergency management.
  - Enhanced powers for response and recovery, including longer durations for states of emergency, new common-sense powers like the ability to order one local authority to support another local authority, and the introduction of the “recovery period” concept to allow for some powers to continue to be used to facilitate recovery after a state of emergency ends.
  - A recognition of how Indigenous rights give rise to authority in emergency management, and the enabling of a range of agreements to promote cooperation, coordination, and inclusion.
  - Policies that reflect cultural safety and intersectionality, including requirements for these concepts to be addressed in planning materials.
  - Policies to promote dialogue and cooperation, including requirements for governments and critical infrastructure owners to consult and cooperate with Indigenous governing bodies, requirements for governments to consult and coordinate with each other, and the enabling of cooperative multijurisdictional emergency management organizations.
  - A recognition of the important role that volunteers play by including volunteers in the legislative framework.
  - A recognition of the role of critical infrastructure owners in disaster risk and emergency management.
  - Increased transparency, including new reporting requirements and a mandate for a five-year review of the legislation.

### **Appendix 1: Overview of New Emergency Management Legislation**

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# EM Legislation Modernization

## Overview for Local Governments



Ministry of  
Emergency Management  
and Climate Readiness

The *Emergency Program Act (EPA)* has been largely unchanged since 1993. In 2018, the Province committed to repealing and replacing the EPA, following the Abbott-Chapman report (*Addressing the New Normal: 21st Century Disaster Management in British Columbia*).

### Recent government commitments:

#### → Throne Speech (February 2023)

"In this spring session, a new Emergency and Disaster Management Act will be introduced to better improve B.C.'s ability to respond and recover from whatever might be in store."

#### → Mandate letter for the Honourable Bowinn Ma (December 2022)

"Complete work to co-develop and introduce modernized emergency management legislation that aligns with our government's commitments to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, to strengthen our ability to protect people and communities from disasters and emergencies."

#### → Declaration Act Action Plan (March 2022)

"Co-develop modernized emergency management legislation (replacing the Emergency Program Act) with First Nations."

### The goals of the modernized emergency management legislation include:

#### → Integrating the UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction:

In 2018, B.C. became the first Canadian jurisdiction to adopt the Sendai Framework. Modernized legislation will support the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR) in implementing the Framework's four priority actions: understanding disaster risk; strengthening disaster risk governance; investing in disaster risk reduction; identifying and addressing risks posed by climate change and enhancing disaster preparedness and "Building Back Better" in recovery. In doing so, it will address gaps in the EPA, take an all-of-society approach and integrate the four pillars of emergency management: mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

#### → Aligning with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP):

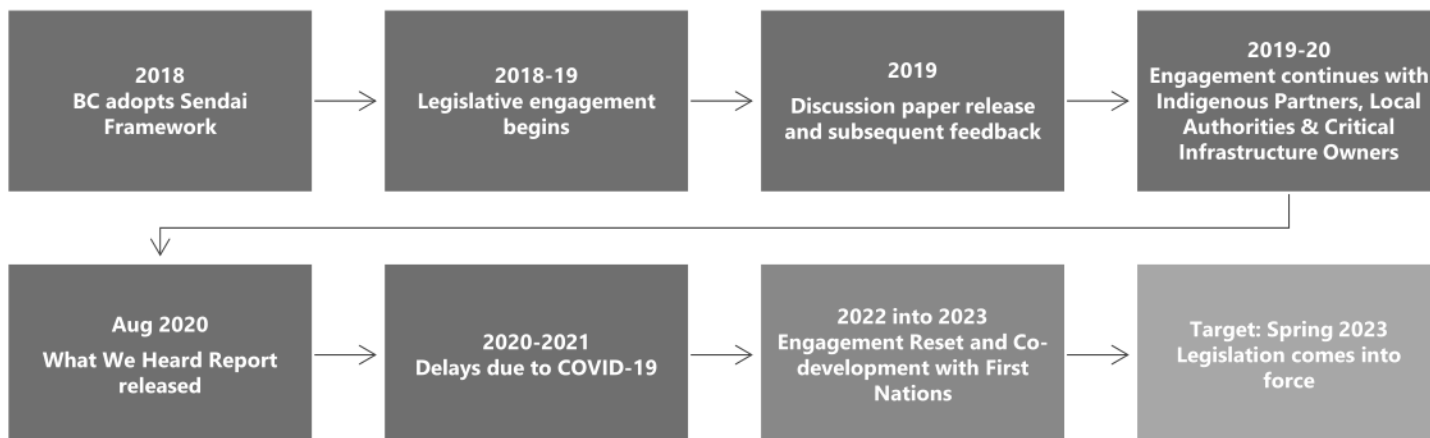
The *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (the Declaration Act) was passed unanimously in the B.C. Legislature in 2019, making B.C. the first Canadian jurisdiction to adopt UNDRIP. Consistent with the Declaration Act, modernized legislation is being developed through co-development with First Nations to ensure consistency between the laws of B.C. and UNDRIP. In doing so, it will address gaps in the EPA, including recognition of First Nations rights and the decision-making role played by First Nations in emergency management.

### → Adopting lessons learned from recent events:

Modernized legislation will also be informed by lessons learned from recent experiences, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and climate-driven events such as the 2021 heat dome, wildfires and atmospheric rivers, as well as the evolving threat landscape.

## → Timeline

The emergency management legislation is in the final stages of drafting. This timeline below shows how we got here.



## → Key Policy Areas

The modernized legislation will reflect several policy shifts that are the outcome of hard work by partners throughout the engagement and co-development processes. Several key policy shifts are identified below. More information on the policy direction of the modernized legislation can be found [here](#).

### Four phase framework

- The new legislation will reflect and enable all four phases of an emergency: mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.
- The new legislation will articulate the activities, powers, and responsibilities associated with each phase. Shifting to a four phase framework will ensure that a new emphasis is placed on mitigating and preparing for emergencies.

### Inclusion of Indigenous Peoples

- The new legislation will recognize the rights, authority and stewardship of Indigenous peoples in emergency management. It will affirm the importance of Indigenous knowledge and create pathways for it to be reflected in risk assessments and emergency management plans.
- There will be clear requirements for the Province, local authorities, and critical infrastructure owners to consult and cooperate with Indigenous governing bodies in all phases of emergency management.

- The inclusion of a robust agreements framework will help clarify roles and promote cooperation and shared decision-making between the Province, Indigenous governing bodies as defined by the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, and local authorities.

### **Embedded “all-of-society” approach**

- Adopted from the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the legislation will take an “all-of-society” approach in recognizing co-management roles played by the Province, local authorities, and Indigenous governing bodies.
- The guiding principles will speak to the importance of collaboration between different decision-makers and all emergency management partners. The legislation will also further clarify the roles of entities currently not addressed under the *Emergency Program Act*, such as critical infrastructure owners.
- The legislation will require emergency management plans to reflect the disproportionate impacts disasters have on people of various intersecting identities, recognizing that systemic and social processes create inequities that impact how people experience disasters.

### **Clear hazard-focused risk assessment and emergency management planning requirements**

- The legislation will clearly identify what considerations need to inform risk assessments and emergency management plans. The legislation creates a new expectation that emergency management plans are informed by risk assessments. Further details of both will be outlined in regulation.

### **Increased opportunities for collaboration**

- The legislation will support the type of dialogue and cooperation necessary for effective emergency management. There will be an expectation for local authorities to engage and coordinate with neighboring local authorities to harmonize plans. The Province, local authorities, and critical infrastructure owners will need to consult and cooperate with Indigenous governing bodies for various activities.
- The legislation will include a framework for the development of multi-jurisdictional emergency management organizations (MJEMOs). This framework will allow for any combination of local authorities, Indigenous governing bodies and the Province to create an emergency management organization together and complete any or all related requirements in tandem. This is a new construct, but will reflect what many communities are already doing. MJEMOs will also be able to leverage capacity from all parties to respond to emergency events. The coordination capacities of an MJEMO can be used in all phases of emergency management. The intention is to address capacity issues and allow for similar and neighboring local authorities to collaborate on requirements.

### **Enhanced response and recovery powers**

- While the new legislation will include response powers similar to those in the *Emergency Program Act*, it will also include new provincial powers such as procurement and distribution powers related to emergency resources, a power to order that assistance be provided (e.g., that facilities be used to provide shelter), to temporarily suspend or modify requirements in provincial legislation, and to order business closures.

- ➔ The maximum duration of states of emergency will be longer, with a provincially-declared emergency lasting up to 14 days (if declared by the minister) or up to 28 days (if declared by the Lieutenant Governor in Council), before any extension is required, and with a locally-declared emergency lasting up to 14 days before any extension is required.
- ➔ "Recovery periods" will be established and available to the provincial government and local authorities to recognize the transition between response and recovery. When recovery periods are authorized by the provincial government, specific emergency powers necessary to support recoveries will remain available for renewable 90-day periods following a state of provincial or local emergency.

## Statute vs Regulation

The new statute, or Act, and its related requirements are best understood in context of the entire legislative package. Current work has focused on the statute, but over 2023 and 2024 modernized regulations will be developed. Once these core legislative pieces are in place, future work will include updating operational policies and guidelines, such as the guide for local authorities and First Nations on financial assistance for emergency response and recovery costs.

Provincial statutes, or acts, are laws enacted by the Legislative Assembly, which consists of all elected members. In general, the fundamental frameworks for provincial laws are contained in these statutes, which also authorize the making of regulations.

Regulations are a form of legislation made by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, acting on the advice of Cabinet. Generally, regulations provide fine details. For example, the emergency management statute could require a person seeking disaster financial assistance to provide records with their claim, and the regulations would specify the type of records to be provided.

Policy, along with operational plans and procedures, can be used to assist people with understanding the statute and regulations, or to help guide them in performing duties and fulfilling obligations created by the legislation.

## ➔ Regulations

Modernized legislation will include updates to existing regulations as well as the introduction of new regulations. Regulations pertaining to five core subject areas are being prioritized for 2023 and 2024, with specific timelines to be determined. Additional areas for regulation may be identified for future development. Regulations will be co-developed with First Nations and will involve engagement with local authorities and other emergency management partners.

There are three main regulations under the existing *Emergency Program Act*, which will be modernized:

1. Emergency Program Management Regulation
2. Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation
3. Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation

In addition to the modernization of existing regulations, two new subject areas are proposed:

1. Compliance and Enforcement
2. Critical Infrastructure



### **Emergency Program Management Regulation (EPMR)**

The EPMR outlines the roles of ministers and government corporations in relation to hazards, emergencies, or disasters to ensure disaster risk and emergency management is embedded across all provincial government roles and responsibilities.

### **Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation (LAEMR)**

The LAEMR focuses on the requirements for local emergency programs and the powers and duties of local authorities. This includes risk assessments, emergency management plans, and emergency management systems. The modernized regulation will provide greater detail on these requirements and powers.

### **Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation (CDFAR)**

The CDFAR establishes frameworks for compensation and disaster financial assistance. It applies to both the private and public sector. Improvements to the regulation will seek to establish defensible eligibility standards, processes, thresholds, and appeal mechanisms.

### **Critical Infrastructure Regulation (CIR) New**

The CIR will identify critical infrastructure owners with legal responsibilities including requirements for risk assessments, business continuity plans, and emergency management plans.

### **Compliance and Enforcement Regulation (CER) New**

The CER will outline the framework for administrative monetary penalties carried over from the COVID-19 Related Measures Act.

## **→ Local Authority Engagement**

Summary of any engagement activities between EMCR and “partner group” to go here.

Include points like:

- Have any committees/working groups been formed? If so, when did this start and have there been meetings?
- Any summary documents on discussions?
- Any learnings and/or actions from what was learned in meetings/discussions?

## **Engagement Activities to Date**

Specific meetings/activities can be outlined here.

### **Meeting type: date/date range**

- High level summary of meeting topic/s, who was host, etc.

### **Next meeting type: date/range**

- Next summary

**Continue as required...**

## Future Engagement Opportunities

Short summary here of whether further engagement opportunities been. Just a general concept (ie. Engagement opportunities through summer/fall 2023 to discuss X (regulation development, identification of issues to address, timelines, etc.

### Identify specific outputs (if applicable) on engagement

- Describe what output is (report, briefing note, paper, etc and what is the general goal of output.

### Feedback period (if applicable)

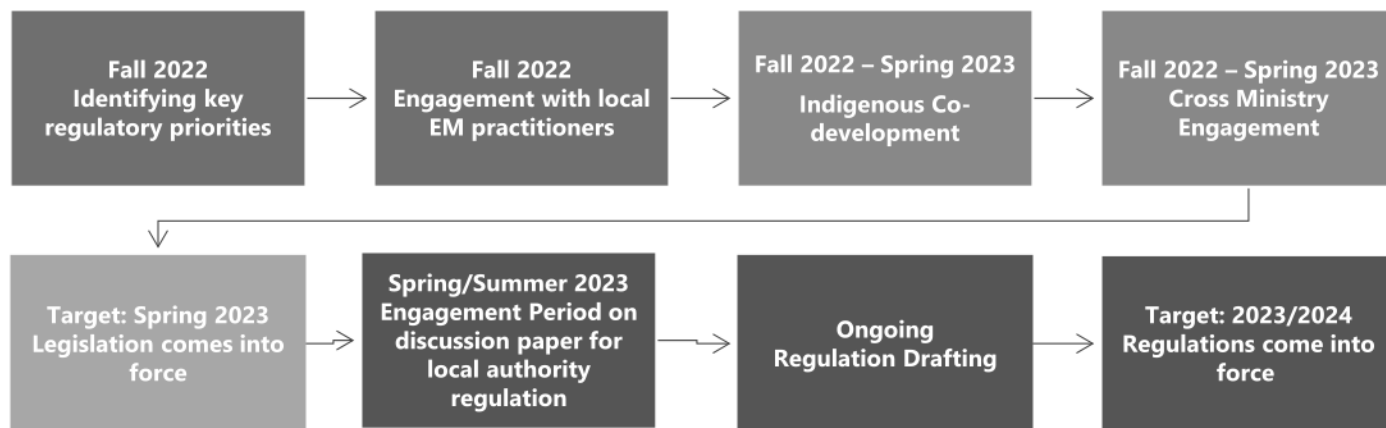
- What feedback process happens in relation to outputs mentioned above; further meetings? How is feedback to be used/incorporated? .
- **SAMPLE:** It is proposed that EMCR will host engagement sessions with "*Partner group*" during the feedback period to answer questions and discuss potential policy directions. These sessions may be in person or virtual.
- The feedback received in this period will directly inform the development of the regulation.

### Specific engagement topic/issue described here

**SAMPLE:** "*Partner group*" will be engaged for their input on the functioning of the existing/planned regulation and on the proposed policy direction of the regulatory update/development.

## Tentative Engagement Timeline

The following timeline indicates where we have been in the regulatory development process for the LAEMR and where we are going next. The LAEMR update is currently targeted to come into force in late 2023. Blue indicates a past phase, green is where we are now, yellow is a major target or milestone, and purple is future.



## → Key Policy Shifts for Local Authorities

The legislation will carry forward many of the existing powers, duties, and tools available to local authorities, including bringing forward powers and duties from the regulation into the statute. There will also be several new or expanded tools and requirements.

### Tools and Powers

#### Multi-jurisdictional Emergency Management Organizations (MJEMOs)

- Local authorities will now be able to choose to establish or join a multijurisdictional emergency management organization. These can include local authorities, Indigenous Governing Bodies and the Province.
- This will allow for local authorities to complete planning and response requirements together and exercise emergency powers collaboratively, such as emergency management plans and risk assessments.

#### Recovery Powers

- Local authorities will now be able to declare a Recovery Period and use recovery powers, if required, following a state of local emergency.

### Responsibilities

#### Prepare and maintain a risk assessment with respect to the hazards within their jurisdiction.

- This is an expansion of an existing requirement of emergency management plans under the LAEMR. This requirement will be codified in the new Act and the LAEMR will provide further detail.
- Risk assessments requirements will align with many existing hazard, risk, and vulnerability assessment practices familiar to local authority emergency managers.
- Risk assessment will need to identify the likelihood of hazards and their potential consequences, including consequences to sites of heritage value, and to people who might be equity denied and disproportionately impacted by the effects of emergency. These can be based on and surveys in addition to available Indigenous knowledge and local knowledge. There will be requirement to consider how a changing climate may affect both the likelihood and the impact of a hazard.

- The scope of risk assessments for regional districts will be prescribed in regulation.

### **Prepare and maintain a business continuity plan**

- Similar to risk assessments, business continuity plans are an existing regulatory requirement of emergency management plans, which will be codified in the new Act. Further details will be provided in the LAEMR.
- Business continuity plans must describe measures to be taken to ensure the continued delivery of leadership and services necessary for the effective functioning of the local authority during an emergency.

### **Emergency Management Plans**

- Emergency management plans are an existing requirement for local authorities and will be expanded to include all four phases of emergency management. Plans will need to articulate activities for mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery phases. Plans will need to reflect risks identified in risk assessments.
- Plans will also need to include measures to mitigate any adverse effects of an emergency or disaster on persons who may experience intersectional disadvantage.

### **Consultation and Cooperation**

- All regulated entities, including local authorities, will be subject to new consultation and cooperation requirements with Indigenous governing bodies in emergency management planning, risk assessment development, evacuation planning, and throughout response and recovery phases.
- Local authorities will be required to consult with Indigenous governing bodies whose traditional territory includes an area that is within the jurisdiction of a local authority.
- Further details on consultation and cooperation may be prescribed in regulations under the Act.

## **→ Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What are the details of the new requirements for local authorities and what are the specific expectations related to risk assessments and emergency management plans?**

- The Act will identify what needs to inform a risk assessment and an emergency management plan for all regulated entities. Detailed requirements for local authorities will be outlined within regulations. Through the engagement process, EMCR will work with local authorities to develop regulations that are informed by practice and lessons learned in emergency management operations.

### **We have concerns about our capacity to implement the new legislation. Will there be funding provided to local authorities?**

- We have heard concerns regarding funding and capacity to implement the legislation and understand the weight of these concerns. Feedback we have received from local authorities is being shared across government to help ensure local authorities are supported and resourced to meet their emergency management obligations.

### **How can the new emergency management legislation be implemented by local authorities without prior understanding of what a funding package will look like?**

- ➔ The new requirements for local authorities under the new emergency management legislation will be introduced using a phased approach. New powers and tools will be available to local authorities immediately when the Act comes into force. New requirements will come into force when the Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation is updated. The regulation will also provide more detail on timelines for the completion of new requirements.

**My local government already includes many of the new required elements in our emergency management plans. How will the new requirements impact us?**

- ➔ The new legislation articulates a standard for emergency management that all parties will be expected to meet. Some local authorities may already be well on their way to implementing new requirements. Due to the age of the existing EPA, in many areas the legislation is catching up to existing practices.

**The unincorporated areas of many regional districts cover huge amounts of land, some of which is largely unpopulated. Will risk assessments be required for these areas?**

- ➔ We have heard concerns from regional districts regarding their capacity to manage risk assessments and emergency management plans for sparsely populated or uninhabited areas of unincorporated areas. In response to this, the area for which regional districts must complete risk assessments and emergency management plans will be defined in regulation. Further consultation with regional districts during the regulation development process will inform how these areas are defined.

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## **More Information**

For additional background, visit our modernized legislation engagement hub at <http://ow.ly/AXMy30rIrKr> or send a note to [modernizeEM@gov.bc.ca](mailto:modernizeEM@gov.bc.ca).

## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **Extreme Heat Preparedness Initiatives**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- The Province recognizes that the tragic loss of life associated with the extreme heat event of 2021 requires better preparedness and response for these events and a changing climate.
- In addition to investments to enhance emergency response, such as \$148 million announced in Budget 2022 to increase the number of paramedics and dispatchers, the Province developed a response system to communicate and coordinate for extreme heat emergencies, developed public education materials, and invested in funding opportunities to support communities in preparing for an extreme heat event.
- To prepare and respond to future extreme heat events, the Province introduced three key initiatives in 2022:
  - BC Provincial Heat Alert and Response System (HARS): 2022, including the capability to issue broadcast intrusive alerts through AlertReady for extreme heat emergencies;
  - Prepared BC Extreme Heat Preparedness Guide; and
  - An Extreme Heat Risk Mapping, Assessment and Planning Stream through the Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF) which provided \$2.1 million toward 39 projects to assist First Nations and Local Authorities.
- While the Province did not see the temperatures rise in 2022 to the levels that would trigger an extreme heat emergency, there were periods when Environment and Climate Change Canada issued Heat Warnings. During this time, the BC Health Effects of Anomalous Temperatures (HEAT) Coordinating Committee met regularly monitoring both the temperature levels and duration, knowing that there can be cumulative impacts due to long periods of high temperatures resulting in increased hospitalizations.
- Additionally, during periods of Environment and Climate Change Canada Heat Warnings, EMCR works directly with First Nations and Local Authorities to support cooling centres as requested.

**Background:**

- The extreme heat weather event in 2021 saw temperatures spike to record highs across B.C. resulting in 740 excess deaths than would be expected in a normal summer according to the BC Centre for Disease Control.
- The BC Coroners Service identified more than 600 deaths as being heat-related during the 2021 heat dome. The BC Coroners Service convened a heat-related Death Review Panel on April 20, 2022, to review the circumstances around these deaths to identify actions to improve public safety and prevent future deaths. Their report, *Extreme Heat and Human Mortality: A Review of Heat-Related Deaths in B.C. in Summer 2021*, was publicly released on June 7, 2022 and included a number of recommendations specific to EMCR: assignment of EMCR as the lead agency to coordinate government response to non-health related impacts of extreme heat emergency; issuance of a Broadcast Instructive Alert for an extreme heat emergency; and distribution of the Prepared BC Extreme Heat Preparedness Guide.

BC Provincial Heat Alert and Response System (HARS): 2022

- The Ministry of Health and the BC Centre for Disease Control co-chair the BC Health Effects of Anomalous Temperatures (HEAT) Coordinating Committee, a group of public health experts from all health authorities that support planning and response efforts related to public health impacts for extreme heat events.
- The initial objective of the BC HEAT Coordinating Committee was to ensure public health coordination was in place by summer 2022. This was addressed by:
  - Developing the BC Heat Alert and Response System which details the triggers for two alert levels: heat warning and extreme heat emergency;
  - Identifying public health actions when heat warnings and extreme heat emergency alerts are issued by Environment and Climate Change Canada; and
  - Identifying public health messaging that can reduce heat-related illness and mortality.
- The BC Provincial Heat Alert and Response System (HARS): 2022 acknowledges the need for further consultation with First Nations and community partners. The rapid development of the Heat Alert and Response System was to ensure a system was in place for the 2022 heat season.
- On the advice of the BC HEAT Coordinating Committee, EMCR will issue a Broadcast Intrusive Alert for an Extreme Heat Emergency.

Feb 16, 2023

## ***Confidential***

### Prepared BC Extreme Heat Preparedness Guide

- A Prepared BC Extreme Heat Preparedness Guide was released prior to summer 2022. The guide was developed in partnership with the Ministry of Health, the BC Centre for Disease Control, and Environment and Climate Change Canada. The guide includes a foreword from Dr. Bonnie Henry and is meant to help British Columbians understand the risks associated with extreme heat, how to prepare their residences, and how to cope once temperatures rise.
- The guide is available in hardcopy or by download from [www.PreparedBC.ca](http://www.PreparedBC.ca). It is also available in multiple languages: English, French, Punjabi, Traditional Chinese and Simplified Chinese.

### Community Emergency Preparedness Fund Heat-related Funding Stream

- On May 6, 2022, the Province announced additional funding under the Community Emergency Preparedness Fund for First Nations and Local Authorities. Included in this announcement was a new Extreme Heat Risk Mapping, Assessment and Planning stream. This funding program was developed by EMBC, the Ministry of Health, the BC Climate Action Secretariat, and the Union of BC Municipalities.
- The intent of this funding stream was to support First Nations and Local Authorities in better understanding the risks associated with extreme heat. \$2.1 million will fund 39 projects supporting communities to develop effective response plans and strategies to prepare, mitigate and adapt to extreme heat risks.

### Extreme Heat: Preparedness for Provincial Ministries and Agencies

- In 2022, the Province provided extreme heat-related planning guidance to provincial ministries and agencies. Developed by a cross-ministry working group established in 2022 and co-led by EMCR and the Ministry of Health, this guide:
  - Summarizes the impacts of extreme heat on public health and other sectors;
  - Introduces a Heat Alert and Response System; and
  - Describes Provincial-level actions in response to an extreme heat event.

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **Broadcast Intrusive Alerting**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- As of Spring 2022, B.C. First Nations and local authorities can request broadcast intrusive alerts through EMCR for flooding and wildfire events as of Spring 2022, an expansion of the system which also includes alerts for extreme weather events, Amber, and police incident alerts.
- In addition, in Summer 2022, the Province expanded its use of broadcast intrusive public alerting to include extreme heat emergency events.
- EMCR will be using the lessons learned from 2022 to strengthen the public alerting program, working with communities and partners to ensure they have the training to use this tool effectively during the upcoming 2023 natural hazard season.

#### **Background:**

- A Broadcast Intrusive public alert is for an imminent threat to public life or safety and is issued through radio, television and/or wireless devices and governed by the National Public Alerting System, a collaborative Federal-Provincial-Territorial initiative.
- The Canadian Radio-TV and Telecommunications Commission mandates that all radio, television and cellular providers transmit Broadcast Intrusive alerts.
- In 2015, the Alert Ready (public facing brand) Broadcast Intrusive public alerting system was launched in Canada and adopted in B.C. to issue radio and television alerts. In 2018, B.C. added the ability to deliver Broadcast Intrusive alerts to compatible wireless devices.
- Under the National Public Alerting System:
  - The Federal Government through Environment and Climate change Canada is the authorized issuer of Broadcast Intrusive alerts for extreme weather events such as tornado and thunderstorms; and
  - The Province is the primary authorized issuer of all other Broadcast Intrusive alerts in B.C. except for Amber and Police Incident alerts, which are issued in B.C. by the RCMP under the delegated authority of the Province.

*Feb 22, 2023*

## Confidential

- There are also many subscription-based, non-Broadcast Intrusive alert products in use across Canada and B.C. by local governments and First Nations (e.g., Alertable, Voyent). Many of these systems include applications for mobile devices and will receive and re-broadcast Broadcast Intrusive alerts.
- Under the *Emergency Program Act's* Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation, local governments have the responsibility to “establish procedures by which those persons who may be harmed or who may suffer loss are notified of an emergency.”
- Local government alerting systems may include subscription-based phone, email or text systems, sirens and individuals going door-to-door. These systems are important during tsunami events as local effects can vary greatly based on area geography.
- For tsunamis, the Province uses the Provincial Emergency Notification System to alert local governments, key partner agencies and media outlets by phone, email and fax. Through this system, a Broadcast Intrusive public alert can also be issued for tsunami warnings.
- The Ministry of Health and the BC Centre for Disease Control co-chair a committee of public health experts in all health authorities to support planning and response efforts related to public health impacts for significant heat events.
  - The BC Heat Alert Response System (HARS) details the triggers for two alert levels: heat warning and extreme heat emergency.
  - The aforementioned committee will recommend a broadcast intrusive alert for an extreme heat emergency through the EMCR Regional Operations.

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **Emergency Support Services (ESS) Program Overview & Trends**

#### **Key Messages / Suggested Response:**

- Emergency Support Services (ESS) is a provincial program delivered by First Nations communities and Local Authorities to meet the basic and immediate needs of British Columbians impacted by disasters ranging from single housefires to larger events such as wildfire and floods on a needs basis.
- Supports include food, accommodation, clothing, incidentals, and transportation and are provided by Interac e-Transfer using the Evacuee Registration and Assistance (ERA) tool or by referral to local businesses. See Estimates note entitled *Emergency Support Services Modernization*.
- The ESS Program works with a broad network of NGOs and partners to support well-being and meet other needs such as mental health supports and cultural supports including deployment upon request of the Provincial Disaster Psychosocial Services (DPS) team and the reimbursement of cultural supports such as Community Navigators and First Nation Community Navigators and the establishment of Cultural Activity Locations
- ESS is typically provided for a period of 72-hours based on a needs assessment by an ESS responder and extensions beyond 72-hours may be granted on a case-by-case basis to a maximum of three months.
  - Recently communities have requested extensions to ESS beyond 72 hours to support people evacuated following apartment or house fires who are unable to find new accommodation due to a lack of available affordable housing.
- EMCR is working with other government partners to develop options beyond ESS to better address the gap in support to those impacted by emergencies who cannot return home for extended lengths of time.

#### **Background:**

##### ESS Extensions beyond 72-hours

- ESS is typically provided for a period of 72-hours based on a needs assessment by an ESS responder who is often a volunteer or employee of a First Nations community or Local Authorities. ESS services may be provided at a Reception Centre set up to support evacuees during larger events like wildfires, or at the scene of smaller events like a housefire.

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- If there is evidence of an unmet need, extensions beyond 72-hours may be granted on a case-by-case basis. To promote a provincially consistent approach, the ESS Program Guide recommends limiting the maximum term of ESS to three months and requires significant justification after a one-month extension.
- Longer-term supports may be required for larger events such as the wildfire and atmospheric river events in 2018 and 2021 where homes and whole communities have been destroyed. Response and recovery from these types of events may include partnership with NGOs such as the Canadian Red Cross.
- More recently, there have been an increasing number of requests for ESS extensions following apartment fires. Some lower income renters have struggled to find suitable accommodations due to factors including increased rental prices, decreased vacancy rates and global inflation.
- While a strong web of supports is in place to provide assistance after a disaster, further work is underway to improve coordination of services between provincial ministries, local authorities, First Nation Governments and NGOs when evacuees cannot return home.
- Additionally, in the case of some recent apartment fires, EMCR provided funding for additional case management supports to assist impacted individuals to find new homes.

### **Mental Health and Cultural Safety Supports**

- The ESS Program works with a broad network of NGO's and partners to support well-being and meet other needs such as mental health supports and cultural supports.
- EMCR works closely with partners such as the Provincial Disaster Psychosocial Services (DPS) team under Provincial Health Services Agency (PHSA) who can deploy mental health supports to requesting communities who have experienced an emergency or disaster. This volunteer-based group can be deployed to support Reception Centres, Emergency Operation Centres and community meetings as well as offering over-the-phone supports.
- Mental health and crisis support can also be accessed through partner organizations like the Canadian Red Cross and Salvation Army. ESS connects with existing resources and expert organizations (like First Nations Health Authority, local Friendship Centres, First Nations Emergency Services Society) to support evacuees.
- EMCR supports communities by funding positions for Community Navigators and First Nation Community Navigators who can connect evacuees with supports. EMCR also encourages the establishment of Cultural Activity Locations through funding and training, where evacuees can gather and access cultural care services like connection with an elder, as well as traditional foods and medicine.

**Key Facts and Figures:**

- The number of events in the table below is determined by issuance of a task number. The number of evacuees served by ESS is estimated based on the best available information; however, local authorities and First Nation Governments are not required to report this level of detail to EMCR.
- The table below includes ESS costs per fiscal year under STOB 7918; however, some costs related to hotel bookings and group lodging contracts are not captured.
- The table below is accurate as of February 21, 2023. Additional invoices may have been received after this date.

Fiscal Year	ESS Events by Fiscal Year	Estimated # of people impacted	Cost by fiscal year. As of February 21, 2023
2017/18	Not available	62,464*	\$16,173,250.46
2018/19	471	10,813	\$7,433,495.51
2019/20	490	1,920	\$1,017,080.77
2020/21	495	3,647	\$1,879,139.22
2021/22	518	34,609**	\$22,886,418.90
2022/23	449	4,152	\$ 7,708,504.60

\*Reflects intensity of wildfire season, includes evacuation of Williams Lake

\*\* Includes November 2021 Atmospheric River (Merritt & Abbotsford) and wildfires (Lytton & Lytton First Nation), reflects increased reliance/competition on hotels due to COVID-19

**Community Emergency Preparedness Fund - ESS Grants**

- The funding supports eligible applicants to build local capacity to provide ESS through volunteer recruitment, retention and training, including in-house training, and the purchase of ESS equipment. The grants are administered through Union of BC Municipalities.

Intake	Sum of Approved Funds	Number of Projects
Intake 1 – 2017/18	\$1,976,757.03	84
Intake 2 – 2018/19	\$904,892.13	33
Intake 3 – 2019/20	\$2,500,662.97	96
Intake 4 – 2020/21	\$1,675,273.37	51
Intake 5 – 2021/22	\$1,923,844.59	54
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$8,981,430.09</b>	<b>318</b>

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### ESS Rates as of February 2023

Food					
	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Total	
Restaurants	\$12.75	\$14.75	\$25.50	\$ 53.00	Per person per day
Groceries				\$ 22.50	Per person per day
<b>Clothing</b>				\$ 150.00	One time support
Extreme Winter Weather				\$ 50.00	One time support
<b>Incidentals</b>				\$ 50	One time support
<b>Transportation</b>					
Taxi or Bus Pass				N/A	
Gas Card – for extraordinary events that require evacuees to travel over 100 km to nearest Reception Centre					
<b>Lodging</b>					
Billeting				\$ 30.00	Per day
For each additional adult				\$ 10.00	Per day
For each child under 12				\$ 5.00	Per day
Hotel	Cost dependent on location & season (based on Feb 23 rates)			\$ 99 - 200	Per day

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **Emergency Support Services (ESS) Modernization**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- The Ministry of Emergency Management & Climate Readiness (EMCR) has worked with key partners including local authorities and First Nation Governments to modernization the ESS program. This initiative has an overall goal of better supporting volunteers, businesses and communities in British Columbia that have been impacted by disasters, now and into future as we face the increasing challenges of climate change.
- with an.
- This modernization has included changes to policies, tools, procedures, and volunteer training and the implementation of a new digital Evacuee Registration and Assistance (ERA) tool which provides for:
  - Digital registration of evacuees including self-serve pre-registration to reduce lineups and congestion in evacuation centres.
  - Interac e-transfer functionality to provide evacuees with greater flexibility in obtaining culturally appropriate emergency supports.
  - The digital submission of invoices which reduces reimbursement times for vendors supplying ESS supports to evacuees.
- In addition, EMCR has incorporated cultural safety and humility into the ESS program, including the introduction of policies to better meet the needs of Indigenous communities through First Nations Community Navigators and establishment of Cultural Activity Locations (where evacuees can gather and access cultural care services like connection with an elder, as well as traditional foods and medicine).
- As of February 23, 2023, 79 communities, including 14 First Nations, have onboarded to use the ERA tool.

#### **Evacuee Registration and Assistance (ERA) Tool**

- In 2019, a proof of concept was successfully piloted in four communities: Prince George, Kamloops, Regional District of Central Okanagan and Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc. The results of the pilot supported the decision to proceed with further implementation of the ERA tool.

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- The full provincial release of the ERA tool occurred on April 1, 2020, and was accelerated to support physical distancing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic by reducing lineups and congestion in reception centres.
- In June 2020, a Supplier Portal was added to ERA, which enabled digital submission of invoices from suppliers to EMCR and decreased time to reimbursement.
- The introduction of ERA has also resulted in new opportunities for the province to support communities that may be challenged to meet the demand for ESS during large scale events. For example, during the 2021 and 2022 wildfire seasons, EMCR worked with staff from other ministries to stand up the Provincial Emergency Support Services Call Centre and used the ERA tool to support evacuees over the phone.
- In the summer of 2022, based on learning from the 2021 wildfire and atmospheric river events, an Interac e-Transfer function was added to enable direct transfer of funds to eligible evacuees. This empowers evacuees by providing more choice in where they shop for clothing, food and incidental supports and reduces reliance on traditional paper-based referrals (sometimes referred to as vouchers).
- Also in the summer of 2022, a pre-registration option was introduced so British Columbians can better prepare for an emergency. The BC Services Card App is used to verify an evacuee's identity as part of the registration process.
- EMCR worked with the Justice Institute of BC to develop and deliver new online training for the ERA tool and to support existing volunteers to become comfortable with the tool.
- As of February 23, 2023, 79 communities, including 14 First Nations, have onboarded to use the ERA tool. The ERA tool is now commonly used for smaller events such as single home and apartment fires in the cities like Victoria, Nanaimo, Surrey, Prince George, Kelowna, Kamloops, and North Shore, as well as larger events like wildfires.

### **Emergency Support Services Program Guide**

- The ESS Program Guide (December 2022) replaced the ESS Field Guide which was last updated in 2010. The changes were designed to:
  - Update reference materials, program descriptions, and terminology to reflect new service delivery mechanisms (like the ERA tool).
  - Appropriately reflect alignment with revised policy, training materials and partners (like BC Association of Native Friendship Centres, and First Nations' Health Authority).
  - Incorporate cultural safety and humility, including the introduction of policies to better meet the needs of Indigenous communities through community and First Nations community navigators and establishment of Cultural Activity Locations (where evacuees



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can gather and access cultural care services like connection with an elder, as well as traditional foods and medicine).

- Reflect lessons learned from significant emergency response experiences, including recent wildfires, atmospheric river, and the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The updates were informed by local authority and First Nation partnership tables and other forums including written feedback. Some local authorities have expressed concerns regarding engagement. EMCR is responding by offering to further concerns through dialogue and, where appropriate, to address issues via planned updates. Additional Program Guides updates are planned for February, October, and May 2023.
- The new Program Guide is considered a living document so that it reflects the evolution of ESS service delivery, wise practice and lessons learned during emergency events.
- The new Program Guide does not place additional responsibilities on Local Authorities or First Nation Governments.

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **Ombudsperson Review of Disaster Assistance Supports Provided to People Impacted by 2021 Wildfires and Floods**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- Given the events of 2021, it is not a surprise that the Ombudsperson is looking into provincial disaster assistance programs specifically Emergency Support Services (ESS) and Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA).
- These events were unprecedented and highlighted some of the challenges, limitations and strains in the support systems and processes that were not designed to face the rapidly changing climate pressures we face.
- I welcome this review and as Legislation is updated the Ombudsperson's recommendations will be helpful as the Government modernizes disaster assistance programs.

#### **Background:**

- In the Spring of 2022, the Ombudsperson initiated an investigation of provincial disaster assistance programs - Emergency Support Services (ESS) and Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA) - regarding how they supported people who were displaced from their homes and communities as a result of 2021 wildfires and floods.
- The review is examining the fairness of program administration in addition to identifying gaps and limitations with supports provided.
- EMCR's staff continue to work closely with Ombudsperson staff to inform the investigation. Further EMCR staff have provided Ombudsperson staff with an overview of the legislative modernization work.
- On October 6, 2022, the Ombudsperson opened an online survey to solicit feedback from those impacted by 2021 events on their experiences. This survey was open through December 31, 2022.
- EMCR anticipates that the Ombudsperson's report will be released in the Spring of 2023, resulting in recommendations to Government for improvements to provincial disaster assistance programs.

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- The Ombudsperson's recommendations and anticipated changes to the federal Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangement (DFAA) program flowing from the ongoing review of the DFAA program may inform the modernization of provincial disaster assistance programs as part of the ongoing legislative work.
- There are limitations to EMCR's programs such as ESS and DFA recognizing these programs were not designed to address the scope and scale of events experienced in recent years.

Advice/Recommendations

- 
- Challenges experienced by individuals with the DFA program include:
  - challenges with navigation of program,
  - transparency, and
  - timeliness of the review process and receipt of support.

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **Search and Rescue Program Overview (inc. Full Funding Structure and Night Hoist/Vision)**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- The Province acknowledges the valuable service ground search and rescue volunteers provide year-round.
- The Province continues to provide predictable and ongoing funding of approximately \$6M annually to support the Ground Search and Rescue (GSAR) volunteers' provision of service across British Columbia.
- This annual contribution provided for within EMCR's base budget complements funding totaling approximately \$10M that the Province provides annually to reimburse GSAR groups operational costs for search and rescue deployments, training, and equipment.
- EMCR continues to assess the tools and capabilities needed to support search and resource in BC. Most recently, EMCR is concurrently conducting a pilot project involving the use of helicopters at night to transport volunteers, as well as trialing the expanded use of winch equipped helicopters to include night rescue operations. Both are set to conclude within 24 months.

#### **Background:**

##### Funding Structure

- GSAR is a Provincial Public Safety Lifeline Volunteer program providing support to Requesting Agencies through the commitment of volunteer resources when requested. Requesting Agencies include:
  - Police of Jurisdiction
  - BC Emergency Health Services
  - Fire Service
  - BC Coroner Service
  - Parks Canada
  - Canadian Forces / Canadian Coast Guard
- There are 78 recognized GSAR groups and approximately 3,000 GSAR volunteers in BC. These GSAR groups respond to over 1,700 incidents each year.

*Feb 24, 2023*

## ***Confidential***

- Between April 1, 2022, and February 18, 2023, B.C.'s GSAR groups were deployed to support 1,664 incidents. This represents the first reduction in annual the SAR incident rate since 2020; however, this the figure of 1,664 is an increase from pre-pandemic incident rates of roughly 1,500 responses annually.
- Since 2022/23 GSAR groups have been funded through an annual budget allocation of approximately \$6 million, distributed through the BC Search and Rescue Association (BCSARA). Previously, provincial funding to groups was provided through ad-hoc grants which didn't provide funding certainty for GSAR groups from year to year.
- BCSARA and EMCR have developed a Framework for Search and Rescue in BC that outlines deliverables to support enhanced administrative and financial oversight of GSAR in BC as a requirement of the funding contribution to GSAR.
- BCSARA disperses the annual provincial funding based on a model that considers several factors, including:
  - The equipment and training requirements associated with each GSAR capability (e.g. rope rescue, swift water rescue, etc.).
  - The capacity (number of trained members) for each GSAR capability that an individual GSAR group is recognized for.
  - Minimum and maximum allocations to strategically direct support to smaller GSAR groups, which are generally located in rural and remote areas of the province.
  - Funding is not distributed equally among all GSAR groups, as their capabilities are based on an operational need.
- In addition to the funding provided to all groups the province provided nearly \$10M in operational funding last year (FY 2021/22) which included the following:
  - \$7.85M in support of operational tasks.
    - \$4.62M for equipment repair/replacement, mileage and meals.
    - \$3.23M in aircraft costs (primarily helicopter).
  - \$1.74M from gaming funds (equipment and training).
- EMCR and BCSARA recognize that a robust governance and oversight structure is required to ensure that BCSARA is accountable for expenditures and the appropriate distribution of funds, and that the GSAR groups are accountable for adhering to established EMBC policies and operational guidelines.
- The joint management and partnership committees were formed to develop and deliver the framework supporting accountability and effectiveness for future funding.

*Feb 24, 2023*

## ***Confidential***

### Night Vision Imaging Systems (NVIS) Pilot and Night Helicopter Winch Rescue (NHWR) Trial

- The NVIS pilot came into effect in August 2020 with approximately 30 operations conducted as of February 17, 2023.
- The NVIS pilot provides the capacity for an EMCR procured helicopter to search and transport GSAR Volunteers at night. Prior to 2020 this service was limited to aircraft operated by the RCMP or Canadian Forces.
- The NHWR trial came into effect in November 2022 with approximately five operations conducted as of February 17, 2023.
- The NHWR trial provides the capacity for an EMCR procured helicopter to lower and raise a GSAR volunteer responder and subject at night. Prior to 2022 the service was only provided by the Canadian Forces.
- Both the NVIS Pilot and NHWR Trial are set to conclude in early 2025. The Province will work with the NSR and Requesting Agencies to understand operational need for NVIS and NHWR capacity within the GSAR service.

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **Preparedness Response Posture**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- General preparedness for emergencies is a shared responsibility in B.C. that includes households, businesses, not-for-profit agencies, and all levels of government and requires an understanding of disaster risk and appropriate emergency plans.
- EMCR provides preparedness guides for individuals and businesses as part of a whole-of-society approach to risk reduction and readiness.
- EMCR undertakes and coordinates readiness for specific seasonal hazards such as flooding, wildfire, and extreme heat and cold, as well as seismic hazards.
- EMCR maintains a robust 24/7/365 regional and provincial staffing model to ensure constant readiness for emergency response to disasters anywhere in the province.
- EMCR hosts regional Seasonal Readiness Calls in the fall and spring of each year for First Nation and Local Authority Emergency Programs with a focus on ensuring the readiness of all partners for flood, wildfire, fall winter storms and extreme heat or cold events.
- EMCR pre-positions flood control assets (e.g., sandbags) in consultation with communities to ensure the assets are ready for rapid deployment to areas with imminent flood threat.
- EMCR coordinates advance planning for the provision of Emergency Support Services (ESS) supports, including temporary accommodation, that may be required by large-scale evacuations due to flooding or wildfire events.
- EMCR engages Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) to provide year-round weather forecasting for provincial emergency management partners of precipitation events, as well as temperature trends that will impact freshet snowmelt.

#### **Background:**

- In BC, a local authority is responsible for the direction and control of the local authority's emergency response and must establish and maintain an emergency management organization and must prepare local emergency plans.

*March 03, 2023*

## ***Confidential***

- The *Emergency Program Regulation* requires hazard specific emergency response plans and procedures to be developed by each Minister. (e.g., the Ministry of Forests is responsible for wildfire events).

### Flood Readiness

- Flooding in BC is typically driven by freshet snowmelt (during the spring/early summer) and heavy precipitation (possible anytime of year, but most common during fall storms or when occurring at the same time as freshet snowmelt).
- Flooding of coastal areas due to ocean storm surge is also possible in BC despite less frequent impacts.
- Roles and responsibilities for flood preparedness and response are outlined in the Provincial Flood Emergency Plan.
- The Ministry of Forests River Forecast Centre (RFC) produces springtime snowpack mapping and analysis, predicts flow levels in BC rivers and streams, and issues regional flood warnings, watches, and advisories to inform emergency managers and the public about current and upcoming flood conditions and risk.
- The information from ECCC and RFC is then cross-referenced by the Province, First Nations, and Local Authorities against local floodplain mapping to further refine predictions of flood risk and inform flood readiness activities.
- EMCR pre-positions flood control assets (e.g., sandbags) in consultation with communities to ensure the assets are ready for rapid deployment to areas with imminent flood threat.
- EMCR continues to work with communities and other partners to identify and address flooding vulnerabilities created or increased by the 2021 Atmospheric River Event, (ARE), (as well as recent drought and wildfire events).
- As part of these efforts, EMCR is working with:
  - Ministry of Environment to address natural and human debris deposited in riverways during the ARE that may increase flooding risk.
  - Ministry of Forests Water Management Branch to identify changes to river system flows that may increase local flood risk and orphan dike vulnerabilities that need to be addressed.
  - Communities to understand further diking improvements needed following the ARE and for future climate change threats.

March 03, 2023



## ***Confidential***

### Wildfire Readiness

- Mapping and publishing of wildfire risk, as well as readiness for tactical wildfire response (on both crown land and in partnership with First Nation and Local Authority wildfire response plans) is largely undertaken by the BC Wildfire Service, (BCWS).
- As the Province's lead agency for coordinating emergency management activities in BC, EMCR works closely with the BCWS in all aspects of wildfire readiness.

### Extreme Heat Readiness

- Following the 2021 heat dome event, the Province established the Health Effects of Anomalous Temperatures (HEAT) Committee, led by the Ministry of Health, and supported by EMCR.
- In 2022, the BC HEAT Committee developed the BC Heat Alert and Response System (BC HARS) that established criteria and response actions for a two-level system of heat alerts (Heat Warnings and Extreme Heat Emergencies), including the ability for the Province to issue a BI alert for an extreme heat emergency if recommended by the Committee.
- The BC HARS outlines key messages for the public and provides recommended actions for public health officials, EMCR, communities and other provincial heat response partners during heat events, including the issuance of Broadcast Intrusive Alerts
- EMCR ensured First Nation and Local Authority Emergency Program Coordinators were familiar with the BC HARS plan and supported them in its recommended response actions during 2022 Heat Warnings.
- The BC HEAT Committee will review and update the BC HARS in advance of summer 2023.

### Drought

- Roles and responsibilities for drought and water scarcity are outlined in the BC Drought and Water Scarcity Response Plan updated by Ministry of Forests in 2022.
- EMCR provides leadership on the Provincial Inter-Agency Drought Working Group by:
  - Providing advice and the historic context of response activities in regions related to loss of supply (potable water and firefighting).
  - Providing support to local governments during emergency response activities.
  - Supporting provincial emergency response coordination.
  - Engaging Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) to provide advice and support on pre-planning, risk assessment and Fire Code requirements relating to water supplies for fire-fighting purposes.
  - Chairs the Deputy Minister Committee Disaster Risk Management Committee (DMC DEM), to collaborate with partner ministries to support Disaster Risk Management across government, in accordance with the United Nations' Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

March 03, 2023

## ***Confidential***

- EMCR is supporting shishalh Nation (Sechelt First Nation), Sunshine Regional District, Dawson Creek and Hudson Hope by providing subject matter expertise to assist with drought response planning, provide data collection, identify risks and develop triggers for emergency response actions.

### Seismic Event (Earthquake and Tsunami) Readiness

- EMCR's 24/7/365 staff maintain readiness for seismic events, including the ability to launch the Provincial Emergency Notification System (PENS) to notify communities and emergency management partners of tsunami warnings, advisories or watches.
- PENS includes Broadcast Intrusive Public Alerts to radio, TV, and cellular devices to notify the public in the event of a tsunami warning.
- EMCR is responsible for maintaining the Earthquake Immediate Response Plan, which details the roles, responsibilities and integration of the province and its partners during the immediate response phase following a catastrophic earthquake.
- EMCR and the Ministry of Citizens' Services coordinate all other Ministries in developing their Catastrophic Response Actions (critical functions required for the continuity of government and the Public Service after a catastrophic seismic event).
- The federal government will launch an Earthquake Early Warning system in spring 2024.
- In September 2022, the Regional Emergency Management Partnership (REMP) – a partnership between the Province and Capital Regional District – launched the Capital Regional District Tsunami Information Portal.

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **Regional Flood Vulnerabilities**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- Climate change has increased the incidence and impact of systemic flooding. Existing river system vulnerabilities are increased by events such as the 2021 wildfires and November 2021 Atmospheric Rivers. These factors coupled with the snowpack levels and the spring temperatures and rains impact the amount of flooding within a particular community.
- The B.C. snowpack is near normal for March 1st with the average of all snow measurements across the province at 94% of normal. Of note, the Fraser River snow basin index is 191% and above normal snow was measured within the Lower Thompson, Okanagan and Boundary basins. Below normal snow basin indices are an early indicator for potential spring or summer drought concerns for some regions.
- The Province continues to work with communities that face systemic flooding concerns to ensure they are both prepared and aware of mitigation funding opportunities.
- The Province has authorized the reimbursement of approximately \$15M for community-led emergency waterway projects through both the *Emergency Program Act* and Disaster Financial Assistance since the November 2021 Atmospheric River events (ARE), primarily in the City of Merritt, Town of Princeton, Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, the Thompson Nicola Regional District, Fraser Valley Regional District and the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District.
- Projects include raising of berms and temporary repairs to dikes, erosion mitigation work, riverbank restoration, and critical infrastructure repairs. Completion of these projects will help to diminish anticipated flooding vulnerabilities.
- The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy continues to lead provincial efforts to assess and remove human-made and natural debris within central and southern B.C. watercourses, as well as to assess sediment deposition in these systems, thereby helping to reduce potential flooding vulnerabilities across multiple jurisdictions.
- EMCR Regional offices are hosting Seasonal Readiness Sessions, starting at the end of March, which will provide an opportunity for First Nations and local authorities to learn about seasonal risks and preparedness activities from River Forecast Centre, BC Wildfire Service, Environment and Climate Change Canada and other partners.

## ***Confidential***

- In preparation for Freshet 2023, EMCR will be supporting communities by providing sandbags, and prepositioning sandbag machines and other flood control assets as necessary. In addition, EMCR provides flood assessment flights and deploys Provincial Wildfire Service crews as needed to assist with the filling and positioning of sandbags.

### **Background:**

#### **Regional Flood Vulnerability - Central**

##### Coldwater River

- The Coldwater River was impacted by the 2021 July Mountain Fire and November 2021 ARE.
  - The area within Brookmere in Thompson-Nicola Regional District, and Coldwater Indian Band has a limited number of flood protection structures such as temporary berms. The construction of additional dikes will require funding for the dikes and a mechanism to cover costs for operations and maintenance.
  - The City of Merritt has maintained a series of dikes that were repaired during the November 2021 ARE, but these dikes may need further enhancements to protect against future flood events.
- Primary risks along this river system will be erosion, further impacts to the Coquihalla Highway, and further build up of woody debris.

##### Nicola River, Including tributaries (Spius Creek)

- The Nicola River watershed was impacted by flows from the Coldwater River during the November 2021 ARE and the Lytton Creek wildfire and will likely have increased flows during freshet which may impact the Upper Nicola Indian Band and the City of Merritt.
- Primary risks along this river system will be overland flooding or increased ground water (Upper Nicola Band and Merritt) and erosion, further impacts to Highway 8, and further build up of woody debris in the section between Merritt and Spences Bridge.
- In August 2022, an intense localised rain event resulted in a mud flow onto 4-6 properties along Highway 8. These properties remain impacted by the past debris flow.

##### Tulameen River

- The Tulameen River was impacted by the November 2021 ARE.
- The communities of Tulameen and Colemont, within the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, are frequently impacted by overland flooding from Otter Lake and have limited flood protection structures.
- Primary risks along this river system will be erosion, further impacts to Colemont Road, and further build up of woody debris.

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### Similkameen River

- The Similkameen River was impacted by the November 2021 ARE and is regularly impacted during spring freshet.
- The Town of Princeton, Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, Upper Similkameen Indian Band, and Lower Similkameen Indian Band are frequently impacted during freshet.
- Primary risks along this river system will be overland flooding for the Regional District, Upper Similkameen Indian Band, and Lower Similkameen Indian Band riverbank erosion and further build up of woody debris.

### Other Risks, Hazards, and Regular Impacts During Freshet include:

- Debris flows from intense thunderstorms.
  - Hummingbird and Wiseman Creeks near Sicamous are examples of past events and risks.
- Smaller stream overflows
  - Guichon Creek (Lower Nicola Indian Band and Thompson-Nicola Regional District) – Flooding in 2018
  - Lumby – Significant flooding in 2018
  - Whiteman, 6 Mile Creek, and Salmon River (Okanagan Indian Band)

### **Regional Flood Vulnerability - Northwest**

- The Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine (RDKS) and the City of Terrace continue to monitor properties along the Kitsumkalum River that are routinely affected by flooding events.
  - The City of Terrace is currently completing a \$2.5 million slope stability project to address infrastructure issues associated with a landslide near McConnell Crescent. The City of Terrace submitted an EAF which was approved and funding supplied through EPA. The work, as supported by EMCR, is expected to be completed in April 2023.
  - The RDKS continues to monitor erosion and flood concerns in the Dutch Valley area. This area is prone to flooding and has been subject to provincially supported erosion protection work in the past. With financial support from EMCR during the 2022 freshet season, geotechnical work was completed in this area in preparation for additional erosion protection work to be completed as emergent work under the *Emergency Program Act*. Risk to this area decreased and the plan was paused.
- Properties along Granite Creek within the Regional District of Kitimat Stikine are being closely monitored. Diking work in this area has been considered, however, the RDKS has been unable to advance a process forward to create a local service area due to opposition from the property owners. RDKS has invested \$40,000 of its own funds to purchase 2,000 feet of tri-water bags (similar to tiger dams) to provide temporary flood protection, as required. They have yet to be deployed.

## ***Confidential***

- The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako has several areas that are prone to flooding, particularly in the river forecast region known as the Upper Fraser West, where Snow Basin Indices are at 100% of normal. Flood risk in this area is anticipated to be average for 2023 given the current snowpack conditions. Unanticipated extreme weather events and snow accumulated in the remaining months may change this assessment.
- EMCR continues to monitor potential flood situations in the Stikine Region where EMCR acts as the local authority. An area of concern is the unincorporated community of Atlin which was impacted by flooding in 2021 and 2022.

### **Regional Flood Vulnerability – Southeast**

- Primary impacts from the November 2021 ARE were in the Elk River and the City of Fernie. Impacts included damage to roads and to a flap gate designed to prevent flood water from entering the community. Repairs to the road and flap gate were made shortly after the water receded.
- The City of Grand Forks was significantly impacted by flooding in 2018 and construction of permanent flood protection works remain ongoing.

### **Frequent Flooding Risks in the Southeast Region**

- Fairmont Hot Springs – debris flows from Fairmont and Cold Creek
  - Creeks have debris flow works that routinely fill and spill into residential areas.
  - The Regional District of East Kootenay (RDEK) has built several structures (supported by mitigation funding) to minimize damages caused by flows; however large events can still cause impacts.
- Windermere Creek
  - A small community located in the Regional District of East Kootenay.
  - Ongoing sediment flows into Windermere Lake that impacts a number of residents.
  - EMCR continues to work with RDEK, MOTI and FOR on options for this area; which is complicated by a high number of vacation homes in the area.
  - EMCR will continue to support temporary flood protection works until a long-term solution can be achieved.
- Duhammel Creek
  - Orphan structure protects a community.
  - RDEK is working to develop a regulated structure that will provide adequate protections.
  - EMCR will continue to support temporary flood protection works until long term solution is achieved.
- Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK)
  - Flooding from a region wide thunderstorm in 2020.
  - Mobilization of natural (wood) debris is an ongoing challenge in creeks and rivers.

## ***Confidential***

- EMCR continues to work with RDCK, MOTI and FOR to review areas of accumulated debris where it is identified as a risk to public safety.

### **Regional Flood Vulnerability – Northeast**

- Due to current drought conditions in the Northern Rockies and Williston basins, there is an elevated risk associated with early spring rain events causing significant runoff, leading to erosion, and flash flooding. Hydrophobic soil will not readily retain these potential flood waters.

#### Cariboo Regional District (CRD)

- Several homes are uninhabitable due to ongoing slope instability. Evacuation Orders remain in place on two homes located on Maple Drive within the Regional District near Quesnel. Northeast Region continues to work with the CRD should additional Life Safety assessments be required.

#### Nazko First Nation

- Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) supported recovery and mitigation projects that will be complete this year with only the relocation of the cemetery remaining. Mitigation works completed include constructed berms in four locations, which should continue to reduce flood impacts to Nazko's infrastructure.

#### City of Williams Lake

- Erosion within the Williams Lake River Valley is an ongoing issue for the City. The City retained a geotechnical engineer to assess land slippage at the Green Acres Trailer Court. Infrastructure continues to be threatened by floods and landslides in this area, including homes and critical infrastructure. LiDAR assessments have identified landslide risk at multiple sites within the Municipality.

#### Canim Lake (Tsq'escen) First Nation

- Concurrent localized flooding impacts have been experienced in Canim Lake and it is anticipated that the flood risk will continue forward. Multiple recovery projects have been identified and approved for construction to address previous impacts.
- Possible mitigation opportunities will be identified to prevent further risk of loss and/or impact to two cemeteries within the community, and ISC is prepared to consider funding for the potential solutions identified.

#### City of Quesnel

- Currently two Evacuation Orders remain in place for a home and a business from Freshet 2021; both structures have been deemed uninhabitable resulting from freshet-related landslides. Northeast Region continues to work and support the City of Quesnel should additional Life Safety assessments be required.

## ***Confidential***

### District of Hudson's Hope & City of Dawson Creek

- EMCR is supporting both communities by acquiring qualified professionals to support the emergency water scarcity planning that will augment their ability to respond to an emergency water shortage due to drought conditions.

### Doig River First Nation

- EMCR supported response to flooding in June 2022 that caused significant bank erosion on cultural grounds. Response activities included armoring and riprapping the riverbank. This to reduce flood risk to the community for the upcoming season.

### **Regional Flood Vulnerability - Southwest**

- The Fraser, Coquihalla, Chilliwack, Harrison, and Lillooet River systems were all impacted by the November 2021 ARE. Although Ministry of Forests has indicated the Fraser River Diking infrastructure was not impacted, recovery from this catastrophic event continues into 2023.

### Fraser River Flood Risks

- In the event of significant Fraser River flooding, some ongoing areas of concern in the Southwest include:
  - Erosion arcs in Abbotsford approaching the Matsqui Dike, Barnston, and Nicomen Island where significant livestock relocation would be required (Katzie First Nation and Leq'a:mel First Nation).
  - Backflow into the Harrison River and Harrison Lake when Fraser River levels are too high to allow for outflow.
  - Residential evacuations in the Glen Valley area of Abbotsford and Bridgeview area of Surrey.
  - Debris and sedimentation removal projects yet to be completed, include Vedder Canal, Sumas Canal and Hatzic Lake.

### Squamish Lillooet Regional District and Pemberton Flood Risks

- In the event of heavy rainfall or significant rapid snowmelt, some areas of concern for the Squamish Lillooet Regional District and Pemberton area are:
  - Pemberton Valley is located on a flood plain and is prone to flooding from nearby rivers.
  - Squamish has a risk of flooding from the Squamish River and holds the highest potential impacts for displacing people in the region.
  - Lil'wat Nation is at risk of flooding from the Grandmother Slough during high water events due to drainage issues.
    - § Such flooding would put farmland, residential housing, and Highway 99 at risk of impact.

### **Regional Hazard Vulnerability – Vancouver Island Coastal**

- Vancouver Island Coastal Region has witnessed an increased incidence and impact of atmospheric river and winter storm flooding in several areas of the region, particularly from the Koksilah, Cowichan, Chemainus, Englishman, Kingcome, Bella Coola and San Juan Rivers.



## ***Confidential***

- EMCR is working with Halalt and Penelakut Nations, Cowichan Valley RD, and the Municipality of North Cowichan on a Chemainus River Flood Plain strategy.
- Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy has completed sediment removal in the Chemainus River and is now working with the above jurisdictions to reduce the long-term risk of future flooding in the area.

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **Regional Landslide Vulnerabilities**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- Climate change has contributed to an elevated risk of landslides in BC, both through increased frequency and severity of wildfires, intense rainfall event such as the 2021 atmospheric river events, and through extreme heat and cold weather systems.
- Wildfires can remove vegetation which can result in debris flows following intense rainfall. Atmospheric rivers can overly saturate steep gradient terrain, making it less stable and more prone to mass movement, while extreme heat and cold can exacerbate freeze/thaw patterns and destabilize slopes.
- If a landslide impacts homes or communities, EMCR provides supports such as: Emergency Support Services (E.S.S) when there is an evacuation, reimbursement for geotechnical hazard assessments, and coordination of subject matter experts from other ministries and agencies such as Ministry of Forests and Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI).
- In addition, EMCR supports First Nations and local authorities to advance disaster risk reduction through several funding programs, including provincial programs and federal/provincial cost share programs. In February 2023, the Province committed \$180 million to the CEPF to support projects that help local governments and First Nations prepare communities for the risks of natural hazards and lessen the effects before disasters happen.
- Landslides are an eligible hazard under the CEPF Disaster Risk Reduction – Climate Adaptation Stream, which supports communities to reduce risks by developing and improving knowledge of risks, and investing in effective strategies to prepare for, mitigate, and adapt to those risks.
- The DFA program operates under the Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation (CDFAR). The regulation does not allow DFA for homes that did not sustain direct physical damage. There were 55 DFA claims attributed to landslides for the Atmospheric River Event.

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## **Background**

### **Central Region**

- Following the Elephant Hill wildfire in 2017, there were several debris flows along Highway 97 in the summer of 2018 that impacted traffic and resulted in the loss of one life. Debris flows following the 2021 Atmospheric River Events (ARE) significantly impacted the Highway 8 corridor in November of that year.
- The Central region has several areas that are prone to rockfall. These areas include Highway 3 (Keremeos/Similkameen River), Fraser Canyon (Lytton to Lillooet) and Nicola River Valley (Highway 8). These rockfall events are typically along highway corridors and are managed by MOTI.
- In 2023, there were additional reports of rockfall in Keremeos and Lower Nicola Indian Band and EMCR supported the Regional District Okanagan Similkameen and Lower Nicola with reimbursement of costs and geotechnical hazard assessments.
- The January 16, 2023 Keremeos rockfall near Eagle Campground and RV Park located at 3161 Highway 3, 2 km west of Keremeos, was noted in the original subdivision approval (1995) for the RV Park but on further review the report limited the risk to the area north of the highway and the subdivision was approved.

### **Southwest Region**

- The Southwest region has longstanding, historical landslide risks with the potential for catastrophic impacts in the Pemberton Valley, Squamish Valley, and Chilliwack River Valley.
- EMCR Regional Office representatives support several Steering Committees that provide feedback and guidance for consideration in the monitoring and study of risk for landslides in these areas. The steering committees are comprised of Local Authority and First Nation representatives, Ministry of Forests, EMCR and qualified professionals.
- The November 2021 Atmospheric River Event resulted in significant landslide impacts across the region, resulting in temporary and permanent displacement of residents. In addition to residential impacts, the Atmospheric River Event generated landslides that isolated the Southwest region, burying and/or destroying portions of Highway 1, 3, 5, 7 and 99, and severely disrupting movement of people and essential goods into and throughout the region. In addition, impacts from this event resulted in 55 landslide related claims to DFA.
- Although the 2021 Atmospheric River Event did not generate landslides impacting the North Shore communities in Metro Vancouver, there is a history of landslides in the area. A 2005 event resulted in one fatality and impacts to multiple residences.

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- The province has approved funding for geotechnical studies in the Pemberton Valley, Sumas Mountain and Chilliwack River Valley, for a combined total exceeding \$160,000. In addition, the province has approved funding of large-scale public safety studies for the Pemberton Valley and Chilliwack River Valley that collectively totaled approximately \$750,000.

### Chilliwack River Valley Landslide History & Vulnerability

- The Chilliwack River Valley is one of the areas most prone to landslide risk in the region during severe rain events. Notable landslide events in recent years include 48853 Chilliwack Lake Road:
  - A 2021 Landslide on south-facing valley side slopes north of Wingfield Creek and east of Ryder Creek. Determined no critical infrastructure or structures impacted, and no immediate risk to public safety.
  - Possibility that a future large landslide could block or divert Wingfield Creek, causing localized flooding, sedimentation, and/or washouts. It is recommended that consideration is given to upgrade the existing dike along the south side of Wingfield Creek to increase their protection from such events.
- Due to continued risk of landslides in the Chilliwack River Valley, an updated Hazard Risk Analysis/Public Safety Study of the area was recommended in Spring 2021, the findings of which would be communicated to residents. In 2021, EMCR provided approval for the Fraser Valley Regional District to spend up to \$500,000 on an updated risk analysis.

### City of Abbotsford Landslide History & Vulnerability

- The City of Abbotsford experienced many landslides during the November 2021 ARE.
  - Significant tension cracks developed along the Lower Sumas Mountain Road.
  - The landslide risk for this area remains active with ongoing work to look at the stabilization of the area.

### Pemberton Valley and Squamish Valley Landslide History & Vulnerability

- There are several locations in the Pemberton Valley and Squamish Valley where large-scale landslides pose the risk of catastrophic impact. In addition, the 2021 ARE resulted in some landslide events that displaced residents from a number of homes.
  - Mount Meager and Mount Currie
    - § A landslide event on Mount Meager or Mount Currie has the potential to cause catastrophic impacts to the Village of Pemberton and Lil'wat First Nation, either through the damming of Lillooet River resulting in overland flooding or by directly sliding into residential values.
    - § There has been an increased risk in these locations following the 2021 Heat Dome event due to severe glacier ice melt. Both sites are monitored by Simon Fraser University, with Steering Committee oversight.

## **Confidential**

- Mount Cayley
  - § A landslide event on Mount Cayley has the potential to cause catastrophic impacts to the Squamish Valley, District of Squamish and Squamish Nation by damming the Squamish River and causing overland flooding.
  - § Mount Cayley is monitored by Simon Fraser University, with Steering Committee oversight.
- Reid Road (Jason Creek)
  - § Landslide event that occurred during 2021 ARE, initially leading to the displacement of eight homes.
  - § Active State of Local Emergency (SOLE) and Evacuation Order in place with continued requests for SOLE extension from the Squamish Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) due to imminent landslide risk for one property.
  - § A Public Safety Study coordinated by SLRD and approved by EMCR for up to \$250,000 is currently underway. The purpose of the study is to better understand landslide risk in the Reid Road area.
- Lillooet Lake Estates
  - § Landslide risk continues to be present in the area, with SLRD initially issuing a Do Not Occupy recommendation in 2014. An evacuation order is not currently in place.
  - § SLRD has been working on mitigation and funding options to support local residents.
- The SLRD is also undertaking a district-wide slope assessment that looks at the impact that wildfires have on landslide hazards.

### **Regional Landslide Vulnerabilities - Northwest**

- In October 2021, a small, localized landslide occurred within the Village of Daajing Giids With financial support under the *Emergency Program Act*, the Village completed a secondary geotechnical assessment which concluded that there is no immediate risk to the home. The Village in the process of contacting the homeowner, cancelling the SOLE and rescinding the Evacuation Order.

- Personal Information

- In January 2022, a significant slope failure occurred on the Kitsumkalum River at the west boundary of the City of Terrace. The slide resulted in one property having its septic field outflow pipes exposed and the home voluntarily vacated by the owners. The two homes on either side of this property remain occupied.

## ***Confidential***

- With support from EMCR, the City of Terrace commissioned geotechnical studies to determine the risk to City infrastructure adjacent to three (3) homes on McConnell Crescent. During this time weekly monitoring was conducted to ensure public safety.
- Due to the risk to City infrastructure, EMCR supported a \$2.5 million slope stability project to address the risk. The work is currently underway and is expected to be completed in April 2023. A three-month monitoring program will follow construction to ensure its successful completion.

### **Regional Landslides - Northeast**

- Significant risk of further landslide activity remains throughout the Cariboo region. The region remains vulnerable to extreme weather such as heavy rain events, as well as persistent risk due to previous wildfire impacts. The upcoming freshet season will result in further landslide activity as well as potential for accelerated land movement in slow-moving landslide areas.

### **Peace River Regional District**

- There is a significant history of land movement in the Peace River Regional District due to a high occurrence of colluvial soils. The Peace River and Sukunka River drainages have historically been impacted, with several homes being moved or bought out due to erosion.
- The construction of Site C will cause changes to water courses and may have impacts on land movement.

### **Cariboo Region**

The Cariboo region has significant land instability issues, including land slippage and landslides linked to existing geomorphology, wildfires, and increased extreme weather such as heavy rain events. Of note, numerous slow-moving landslides could impact a significant number of homes and infrastructure. The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) has received Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements funding for multiple, long-term, recovery projects targeting MOTI roads, for example, the Hodgson Slide in the City of Williams Lake.

- Cariboo Regional District
  - The Cariboo Regional District has an ongoing State of Local Emergency that supports two evacuation orders for two uninhabitable private properties on Maple Drive. These properties have been uninhabitable since May 2020.
  - The Cariboo Regional District received funding to participate in two large-scale slope stability studies for the areas referenced as the Quesnel and Williams Lake Fringe area. These studies identified areas of slope movement within a three-year period. The studies and related material were released to the public. Current or potential property owners in the impact areas were encouraged to “educate themselves on the risks and methods to mitigate and avoid intensifying the issue”.

## ***Confidential***

- City of Williams Lake
  - The City of Williams Lake participated in a joint media release with the CRD to share with the public the results of the slope stability study (Williams Lake Fringe Area).
  - The Williams Lake River Valley, which includes critical infrastructure, remains vulnerable to floods and landslides since the year 2020 when a significant incident occurred. Multiple geotechnical assessments have been completed or are planned.
  - EMCR approved funding for a project designed to mitigate the risk of impact to the infrastructure located in the Williams Lake River Valley. However, as of February 2023, the work has not yet been initiated due to ongoing consultations with First Nations in the area.
- City of Quesnel
  - There have been a series of landslides in Quesnel. Two private properties remain under Order (since April 2021) due to slide activity and continued risk. The City has conducted their own risk assessments. Most of the slide risk is concentrated in the West Quesnel area.
  - EMCR supported Quesnel through geotechnical assessments, updated LiDAR capture and report and the hiring of a communications specialist for the release of the LiDAR report.
  - Ongoing issues remain:
    - § the lack of insurance for residents and business for landslides,
    - § the limited application of DFA support for landslides when there is a DFA eligible event,
    - § local governments' continued development in known risk areas/land-use planning issues,
    - § preliminary discussions have started by FOR surrounding managed retreat, and
    - § developing policy for supporting displaced people for interim and permanent displacement from primary residences.

### **Regional Landslide – Southeast**

- The EMCR Southeast region has several areas that are prone to landslide and debris flows. These areas include Johnson Landing (2012) and various debris flows from steep creeks including Fairmount Creek (2012).
- In Fairmount and Cold Spring Creek, mitigation structures have been constructed with support through various provincially supported mitigation programs.

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **Ground Search and Rescue Avalanche Response**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- Approximately 75% of all Canadian avalanche fatalities occur in B.C. and about 90% of Avalanche Canada's services are delivered in this province.
- In 2021 the Province provided a \$10 million contribution to Avalanche Canada complementing a \$25 million contribution from the federal government in 2019. This funding was intended to provide Avalanche Canada with funding certainty to allow for the continued expansion of Avalanche Safety Programming across the province.
- This expansion includes an increase from three to seven days per week forecasting services on Vancouver Island, in the Northern Rockies and in the area around Atlin, BC, along with a new flexible forecasting system launched for the 2022/23 winter season which increases the precision of the forecasts using 92 subregions grouped into regions of like conditions, from the previously pre-defined 15 regions.
- These programs help keep British Columbians safe by monitoring avalanche risk and communicating it to the public, building awareness of avalanche risk and by supporting the avalanche safety training.
- Where there is an operational need, Ground Search and Rescue Groups (GSAR) are supported by the Province in training for and responding to avalanche involvements. These GSAR Groups rely on Avalanche Canada's forecasting as a vital source of information used to keep their members safe.
- The 2022/23 winter season has seen notably hazardous snowpack conditions which have contributed to 12 fatalities in BC between January 9, 2023, and March 1, 2023. This is an increase over last winter, during which six fatalities occurred between November 27, 2021, and April 13, 2022.
- The Province, through social and traditional media channels, provides avalanche risk and preparedness information so British Columbians can make informed decisions.



## ***Confidential***

### **Background:**

- In 2019, the Province contracted the development of a Volunteer Avalanche Safety Plan, which outlines operational procedures for minimizing snow avalanche risk to GSAR volunteers and aligns with Avalanche Canada and the Canadian Avalanche Association, standards.
- The Volunteer Avalanche Safety Plan provides flexibility to GSAR Volunteers in that it recognizes the recreational and professional levels of avalanche related training provided by Avalanche Canada and the Canadian Avalanche Association, respectively, as well as the Province's own GSAR Organized Avalanche Response training courses.
- Operators of recreation activities on Crown Land must be tenured under the Land Use Operational Policy for Adventure Tourism through the Ministry of Forests. Applications for tenures must include a Risk Management Plan to address safety. Applications proposing backcountry snow sport activities in avalanche terrain (e.g., heli-skiing, cat-skiing, snowmobiling, ski touring, etc.) are also required to have an Avalanche Risk Management Plan.
- WorkSafeBC's Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, Section 4.1.1, requires all employers whose workers travel through, work around or within a potential avalanche hazard area to have a qualified person conduct a risk assessment and if there is a risk of an avalanche, develop and implement appropriate avalanche safety plans and/or a program.
- The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure operates the Avalanche Safety Program to keep roads and travellers safe.
- The Province funds directly the maintenance and delivery of its Organized Avalanche Response Team Member and Team Leader training courses, which are delivered every winter by the Justice Institute of BC to GSAR Volunteers.
- Training and equipment specifically associated with avalanche response account for a relatively small percentage of the GSAR Groups' costs for preparedness.
- Of the 78 GSAR Groups in the Province, 62 are supported in providing avalanche response capacity with approximately 625 GSAR Volunteers trained to various levels of avalanche response in the province.
- During response, the Province occasionally supports the Requesting Agencies, such as the Police of Jurisdiction, BC Emergency Health Services and the BC Coroner Service with avalanche forecasting and mitigation services through the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) Avalanche Program.

*March 6, 2023*

## ***Confidential***

- The Province supports public education on the hazards associated with avalanches through issuing news releases and directing the public to informative sources such as BC AdventureSmart and Avalanche Canada.
- The Provincial grant provided to Avalanche Canada in 2021 is supporting the expansion of Avalanche Canada's regional forecasts to under-served regions in B.C., as well as increases to its delivery of avalanche safety training for youth and provision of more programs for winter recreationists of all types.

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## **2023/24 ESTIMATES NOTE**

### **Online Emergency Information, Education & Digital Services**

#### **Key Messages/Suggested Response:**

- The Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness leads three online platforms:
  - PreparedBC – a website and social media channel designed to raise public awareness about the importance of preparing in advance of all the hazards British Columbia faces, especially as we experience more extreme weather events, and prolonged freshet and wildfire seasons due to climate change.
  - ClimateReadyBC – a one-stop platform which includes tools, funding programs and functions to help guide communities on the Province’s cross-ministry climate readiness and emergency strategies and supports, and those of our partners.
  - EmergencyInfoBC – a website and social media channel providing verified, urgent public safety information 24/7/365. This platform ensures British Columbians have a provincial source of the public safety information they need during an emergency.
- The teams at EMCR supporting these platforms produce a variety of guides, resources, programs and social media campaigns with the intent of influencing positive behaviour change at the individual level, but also the household and community levels.
- EMCR continues to explore new ways to ensure public education programs are inclusive and accessible, and that equity-denied individuals have access to preparedness materials. This includes translation into different languages, GBA+ analysis, cultural safety considerations and use of technology and print.

#### **Background:**

- PreparedBC library: A library of guides created to address BC’s top hazards and personal preparedness actions, created in collaboration with key partners and stakeholders. The most popular guides have been translated into several languages.

## ***Confidential***

- ClimateReadyBC is both a disaster and climate risk reduction tool for public and community use, and a hub for future collaboration and growth. Engagement with First Nations, local governments and other partners will drive the platform's expansion and evolution.
- EmergencyInfoBC is a trusted provincial platform that has been active on the web and Twitter for over a decade. It supports local authorities and residents with verified, immediate safety information covering every hazard BC faces from Tsunami and Earthquakes to climate-driven and seasonal risks like flood and wildfire. It is the second-most followed government Twitter account with 200k followers.
- High Ground Hike tsunami preparedness program: High Ground Hike is a community-based program that assists coastal communities reinforce proper tsunami response. High Ground Hikes take place during Tsunami Preparedness Week every April. This year's is April 9 to 15, 2023. Resources, prizes, logistical support and digital assets are shared with host communities to encourage participants to walk, run, wheel or hike to designated safe areas.
- Emergency Preparedness Week: An annual opportunity in May to share information and messaging with the public to educate and entice them to take action to mitigate the potential affects of an emergency event and increase awareness of each person's important role in preparedness and recovery. This year's is May 7 to 13, 2023.

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