

MCs

Mike Bernier, Pat Pimm

ACKNOWLEDGE:

- Mayors, Chief Admin. Officers and Councillors
- Minister Coralee Oakes
- MLAs

Here in the Northeast, you're at the forefront of driving prosperity...

Prosperity that touches the entire province.

The reason they have social housing in Vancouver isn't because of socialism...

It's because of hardworking men and women literally extracting wealth from the ground.

The Northeast plays a fundamental role in growing B.C.'s diverse economy. It's only right you see the long-term benefits.

There are too many communities which contribute millions to the provincial economy...

But which also struggle to maintain services for growing populations.

Since 1994, B.C.'s government has provided local governments with grants to ensure they can make critical investments in services and infrastructure.

The current grant agreement was signed in 2005. In 2013 – standing right here – I promised to discuss extending it.

Today I am pleased to announce we have negotiated a new agreement...

One that over the next 20 years will bring over \$1.1 billion to the Northeast!

Promise made, promise kept.

Effective next year, the new agreement provides \$50 million every year until 2019.

Starting in 2020, it will begin to grow by 2 per cent per year.

In addition, each local government signing the agreement will share a one-time special payment of \$3 million.

This agreement extends to at least 2035, with an option to extend it into the future.

What does this mean for the 58,000 plus British Columbians who live here?

It means financial stability. It means growth – and it means making sure they benefit from the industries like LNG that will create opportunity here – and in communities from here to the Pacific coast and US border.

I want to thank local leaders for their vision. Today, we have an agreement that works not only in the best interests of the Northeast...  
But all of British Columbia.

Thank You.

- END -

From: Jessica Harrison [mailto:JHarrison@fortstjohn.ca]  
Sent: Friday, May 29, 2015 12:18 PM  
To: Jessica Harrison  
Subject: NEWS RELEASE - Fort St. John sign new MOU with Province

Good afternoon,  
Attached is a news release from the City of Fort St. John regarding the Fairshare MOU

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## **Fort St. John Signs ‘Peace River Agreement’ with Province**

Fort St. John B.C. – Fort St. John Council announced they have signed the Memorandum of Understanding between the Province and the Peace River Region for ‘Payments in Place of Direct Access to the Unincorporated Industrial Tax Base (MOU)’, now called the Peace River Agreement. The Peace Region municipalities had a Fair Share Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2005 that provided an annual grant in lieu of access to the industrial tax base that was set to expire in 2020. In March 2015 the Province invited municipalities to begin negotiations for a new agreement to be completed by the end of April.

Fort St. John and Taylor advocated that the 2005 Fair Share MOU should be honoured. It was the hope of both Councils that an agreement beyond 2020 could be negotiated over time using solid research and considered discussion. On May 4<sup>th</sup> Fort St. John announced they would participate in negotiations as the Province indicated there would be a framework for negotiation broad enough to allow for consideration of the interests of their community.

Fort St. John values and appreciates the work of previous Councils and administration in drafting previous Fair Share Agreements. The Peace River Agreement is a departure from those agreements in that the link to industrial growth is no longer reflected.

Mayor Ackerman stated, “Although this agreement is not the agreement Fort St. John envisioned for the community, it does represent a commitment by the Province to provide consistent funding to the community for 25 years.” The special 2015 payment, in excess of \$1 million, is welcome and Council will initiate a conversation with the community on the creation of a legacy project.

Fort St. John is committed to ensuring the Province understands and respects the unique needs of a resource based community with the highest growth rate in the province. The City will continue to seek strategies to offset impacts of rapid growth and ensure positive outcomes for citizens.

Mayor Lori Ackerman stated, “We will continue to advocate for long term reliable funding solutions to allow us to build on partnerships with other agencies and to provide services to industry.”

This MOU comes with significant audit and reporting functions. Fort St. John welcomes terms which will hold municipalities accountable for the way in which they manage their finances. Fort St. John has always utilized Fair Share dollars for capital projects to enable the City to manage growth effectively and will continue to manage finances responsibly.

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