



**INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS SECRETARIAT
PREMIER'S ESTIMATES NOTES
2025**

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS SECRETARIAT
PREMIER'S ESTIMATES NOTES
2025**

Tab Title

Tariff Response and Advocacy

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1 | Canada's Tariff Response |
| 2 | B.C.'s Tariff Response |
| 3 | U.S. Advocacy |
-

Canadian Intergovernmental Relations

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 4 | B.C. – Federal Relations |
| 5 | Multilateral FPT Relations |
-

Relations with the United States

- | | |
|---|---|
| 6 | Columbia River Treaty – <i>from ECS</i> |
| 7 | <small>Advice/Recommendations; Intergovernmental Communications</small> – <i>from FOR</i> |
| 8 | Transboundary Mining |
-

International Relations

- | | |
|----|------------------------|
| 9 | B.C. – India Relations |
| 10 | B.C. – China Relations |
| 11 | Foreign Interference |
-

Protocol

- | | |
|----|--------------------------|
| 12 | Consular Corps Relations |
| 13 | Order of B.C. (OBC) |
-

Francophone Affairs

- | | |
|----|--------------------------|
| 14 | French Language Services |
|----|--------------------------|
-

Local Government Relations

- | | |
|----|----------------------------|
| 15 | Local Government Relations |
|----|----------------------------|
-

Organization

- | | |
|----|-------------------------|
| 16 | IGRS Organization Chart |
|----|-------------------------|
-

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

Title: **Canada's Tariff Response**

Issue: **Canada's Response to U.S. Tariffs**

Response:

- Unjustified tariffs remain on Canadian steel, aluminum, automobiles, and many goods not covered under the CUSMA free trade agreement.
- B.C. supports the Government of Canada's actions and engagement with American lawmakers, and negotiation of a new economic and security relationship with the U.S.
- American legislators and businesses are stepping up to oppose the tariffs on Canada.
- B.C. has and will continue to collaborate with the federal government on a unified Team Canada response to unjustified U.S. tariffs to strengthen the economy and diversify trade.

Background/Status:

- Since January 20, 2025, the U.S. federal administration has imposed a number of tariffs on Canadian goods.
- Unjustified tariffs remain on Canadian steel, aluminum, automobiles, and many goods not covered under the CUSMA free trade agreement.
- The U.S. administration has signaled that new tariffs or increased duties will be coming, including on the softwood lumber and film industries. It has also made escalating comments regarding Canadian resources and sovereignty.
- The Government of Canada has responded by:
 - Enacting counter-tariffs designed to compel the U.S. to remove their tariffs as soon as possible
 - Engaging with American decision-makers, emphasizing our interdependent trade relationship and the negative impact these tariffs will have on American consumers, workers and businesses
 - Engaging with allies around the world for coordination and support in its response to the U.S.
- Prime Minister Carney has also confirmed that Canada and the U.S. will negotiate a new economic and security relationship, and initial steps have been taken to start this process.
- The federal government has been regularly consulting with provinces and territories since late 2024 on the Canada-U.S. relationship, including on potential counter-tariffs and on border security.

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

- These discussions have taken place at all levels, from Canada's First Ministers to officials. Since November 2024, B.C. has participated in all 14 First Ministers' Meetings called by the Prime Minister, which have at times also included key members of the federal Cabinet.
- B.C. has taken every opportunity to participate in Canada's response, including:
 - Providing feedback on a proposed list of Canadian counter-tariffs, on non-tariff measures, and on a tariff remissions process
 - Advocating for federal supports and relief programs for B.C. workers and businesses impacted by the U.S. tariffs and Canadian countermeasures
 - Engaging in border security exercises and providing feedback to maximize the impact of the Canada Border Plan
 - Jointly working to diversify markets, internal to Canada and internationally, on an accelerated basis.
- B.C. supports Canada's actions to impose counter-tariffs, engage with American lawmakers, and negotiate a new economic and security relationship with the U.S.

Contact: Grant Smith – 250-387-1042
Executive Director, Federalism and Canadian Intergovernmental Policy

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

Title: B.C.'s Tariff Response

Issue: B.C.'s Response to U.S. Tariffs

Response:

- In response to unjustified tariffs imposed by the United States, B.C. supports Canada's action to impose counter-tariffs, and is taking further action in areas of provincial control, such as liquor and procurement. B.C.'s goal is to keep our dollars out of a country that is trying to economically harm Canada.
- At the same time, we continue to meet with American decision-makers, emphasizing our interdependent trade relationship and the negative impact these tariffs will have on American consumers, workers and businesses.
- B.C. is focused on defending the sovereignty of our country through a united Team Canada approach, strengthening our economy by accelerating major projects to create good-paying jobs in our province, and diversifying trade to reduce our reliance on the U.S.

Background/Status:

- Canada has responded by enacting counter-tariffs designed to compel the U.S. to remove their tariffs as soon as possible.
- B.C. counter measures in effect now include:
 - BC Liquor has removed all American products from store shelves and will cease procurement and importation of these goods.
 - The B.C. government, health authorities and Crown corporations will exclude goods and services from U.S. suppliers, and elect to support Canadian companies and companies from other countries where feasible.
 - The B.C. government, health authorities and Crown corporations have also been directed to avoid non-essential travel to the U.S.
 - CleanBC and BC Hydro rebates now exclude Tesla products.

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

- Other measures that are underway include:
 - Changing regulations to require low-carbon biofuels that are added to our gasoline and diesel be produced in Canada instead of the U.S.
 - Legislation has been introduced that, if passed, would allow B.C. to further defend jobs and businesses, including by:
 - Giving Cabinet authority to act quickly to reduce inter-provincial barriers and develop longer-term or more permanent solutions so goods, services and workers can move freely across the country.
 - Imposing tolls/fees on non-Canadian commercial vehicles using B.C. infrastructure such as highways, if needed.
- B.C. is also focused on growing a strong economy by accelerating major projects that will create good-paying jobs, finding new trade markets and increasing internal trade, and ensuring supports programs are available for impacted B.C. workers and businesses.
- B.C. has taken every opportunity to participate in Canada's response, including:
 - Providing feedback on a proposed list of Canadian counter-tariffs, on non-tariff measures, and on a tariff remissions process
 - Advocating for federal supports and relief programs for B.C. workers and businesses impacted by U.S. tariffs and Canadian countermeasures
 - Engaging in border security exercises and providing feedback to maximize the impact of the Canada Border Plan
 - Jointly working to diversify markets, internal to Canada and internationally, on an accelerated basis
- Since November 2024, B.C. has participated in all 14 First Ministers' Meetings called by the Prime Minister, which have at times also included key members of the federal Cabinet.

Contact: Grant Smith – 250-387-1042
Executive Director, Federalism and Canadian Intergovernmental Policy

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

Title: U.S. Advocacy

Issue: Engagement with U.S. elected officials and government officials in response to trade actions

Response:

- As part of our efforts to respond to U.S. tariffs, the Government of B.C. has been meeting with U.S. decision-makers to advocate on behalf of British Columbians and their interests.
- Since November 25, 2024, when President Trump first threatened to impose tariffs against Canada, B.C. elected officials and senior bureaucrats have had more than 75 interactions with U.S. legislators and members of the administration.
- In February 2025, a delegation of all of Canada's Premiers travelled to Washington, D.C., to make Canada's case against tariffs.

Background/Status:

- Members of Cabinet, MLAs, and senior officials continue to meet with U.S. decision-makers, including federal and state legislators and senior members of the federal and state public administrations, to underscore the deeply integrated nature of the Canadian and American economies, and the devastating impact tariffs have on consumers, businesses, and communities.
- Members of U.S. Congress have used their positions to publicly advocate against the continued imposition of tariffs generally, and those targeting Canada specifically.
- Advocacy from B.C. helps to ensure that B.C.'s unique economic connections with the U.S. are understood, and to emphasize to those in power in the U.S. how their own interests are damaged by continued trade action against Canada.
- The delegation of Canada's Premiers to Washington D.C. took place on February 12, 2025, and included meetings with members of U.S. Congress, a breakfast meeting with Canada's Ambassador to the U.S. and Minister Dominic LeBlanc, a luncheon with members of the Canadian American Business Council, and a meeting with senior White House officials.

Contact: Nicole Longpré - 250-589-2145
Executive Lead, Intergovernmental Policy

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

Title: **B.C. – Federal Relations**

Issue: **B.C.'s engagement with the federal government**

Response:

- The B.C. and federal governments are in frequent contact, at all levels, to advance opportunities to work together for the benefit of British Columbians.
- B.C. continues to collaborate with the federal government on a unified Team Canada response to unjustified U.S. tariffs, and to strengthen the economy and diversify trade.
- We will continue to work with the federal government to deliver on our shared priorities and build a future where all British Columbians can thrive.
- This will include pressing for progress on:
 - investing in critical infrastructure to keep people and goods moving,
 - accelerating clean energy projects and Indigenous economic development,
 - increasing the supply of housing, and
 - improving public safety and the justice system.

Background/Status:

Areas where B.C. has successfully made our voice heard and/or coordinated actions with the federal government:

- Canada-U.S. Trade Relations: B.C. continues to participate in a united Team Canada response to the ongoing U.S. trade actions. This includes advocating for federal supports for B.C. workers and businesses impacted by the tariffs, and jointly working to reduce barriers to internal trade on an accelerated basis. (see separate notes)
- Clean Energy and Critical Minerals: B.C. is working with Canada to strengthen the economy by expediting clean energy and critical mineral projects that align with national priorities, while advancing opportunities for energy security, Indigenous partnerships, good paying jobs, and decarbonization. In March, Canada contributed \$200M towards the low carbon, Indigenous majority-owned Cedar LNG project.
- Housing: Canada has acknowledged B.C.'s leadership in increasing the supply and affordability of housing. B.C. continues to work with the federal government on these efforts, including through:
 - BC Builds: Canada is providing a \$2B matching contribution to this program, through which approximately 1,400 homes are underway throughout the province, with nearly 2,500 more in various stages of early development.
 - Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund (CHIF): B.C. and the federal government have finalized an agreement for \$250M in federal funding for Phase 1 of the

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

Iona Island Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade, which will enable increased housing supply in Metro Vancouver, while protecting community health and the environment.

- Pharmacare: B.C. and the federal government signed a pharmacare agreement in March to invest more than \$670M over four years to provide universal access to contraceptive and diabetes medications, devices and supplies for residents of B.C. at little to no cost.
- Early Learning and Child Care: Earlier this year, B.C. welcomed a renewed agreement for a \$5.3B federal investment over five years to continue taking action to make affordable, quality child care a core service in the province – helping reduce costs for parents, while supporting early childhood educators, B.C.'s communities, and our economy.
- National School Food Program: Canada and B.C. have signed an agreement for \$39.4M over three years in federal funding for B.C. schools and districts to expand school food programs, enhancing B.C.'s existing Feeding Futures program.

Other areas where B.C. continues to make our voice heard include:

- Easing the impacts of the high cost of living, especially on seniors, families, young people, and small businesses.
- Critical infrastructure funding to support the movement of goods and people, including through investments in roads, rail, ports, and electricity transmission.
- Increasing public and community safety, reforming the justice system, combating the toxic drug crisis, and strengthening addictions and mental health care services.
- Improving the public health care system and ensuring access to family physicians.
- Advancing Indigenous reconciliation, including addressing the critical need for Indigenous housing, both on and off reserve.
- Streamlining economic immigration, skills training and credential recognition to address labour shortages.
- Coordinating disaster preparedness and emergency management responses to bolster approaches to mitigation, adaptation, relief and recovery.
- Addressing coastal issues, including Pacific salmon restoration, Indigenous commercial fisheries, and marine conservation areas.

Contact: Grant Smith – 250-387-1042
Executive Director, Federalism and Canadian Intergovernmental Policy

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

Title: **Multilateral Federal-Provincial-Territorial Relations**

Issue: **B.C.'s participation in First Ministers' Meetings, Council of the Federation, and Western Premiers' Conference**

Response:

- B.C. works collaboratively with all provinces, territories, and the federal government through multilateral forums such as the Council of the Federation, the Western Premiers' Conference, and First Ministers' meetings.
- These relationships serve to strengthen B.C.'s voice on the national stage, to join forces with other jurisdictions on shared priorities, and to ensure that national decision-making reflects the interests of British Columbians.
- Canada's First Ministers have been meeting regularly in recent months to discuss Canada-U.S. relations, and issues of internal and international trade.
 - There were two First Ministers' Meetings (FMM) in 2024; the First Ministers have met 12 times to date in 2025.

Background/Status:

First Ministers' Meetings (FMM)

- First Ministers' Meetings (FMMs), consisting of the Prime Minister and the Premiers of all thirteen provinces and territories, occur at irregular intervals when convened by the Prime Minister.
- FMMs serve as a forum for consultation, information sharing, and discussion on national issues.

Council of the Federation (COF)

- The Council of the Federation (COF) is composed of the thirteen Premiers of Canada's provinces and territories, and was established in 2003.
- The Chair of COF is assumed by a Premier on a rotational basis, typically for a one-year term.
 - The current Chair is Premier Doug Ford of Ontario.
 - Prince Edward Island is scheduled to become Chair of COF for 2025/26. The exact date of the transition is yet to be determined but will be at or after the 2025 summer meeting in July.
 - Premier Rob Lantz was sworn in as Premier of PEI on February 21, 2025, after being endorsed as the PEI Progressive Conservative Party's (PEI PCP) interim leader. The PEI PCP has established a Leadership Convention Committee and a Candidate Search Committee, but has not announced a date for their Leadership Convention.
 - B.C. was most recently Chair of the COF in 2021/22.

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

- COF typically meets in person at least once each year, with the main summer meeting being supplemented as necessary by a shorter winter meeting.
 - Nova Scotia hosted the last annual summer meeting in Halifax on July 16-17, 2024, and Ontario hosted a winter meeting in Toronto on December 15-16, 2024.
 - Premiers have met virtually since December, and a COF mission to Washington, D.C. also took place in February 2025.
 - The 2025 COF summer meeting will take place in Ontario, July 21-23, 2025.
- Premiers use their meetings and calls to exchange views and information on important aspects of the provincial and territorial response to current and upcoming shared issues, and to discuss approaches to First Ministers' Meetings.
- Collective priorities of Premiers include, but are not limited to, Canada-U.S. relations, internal and international trade, strategic infrastructure, public safety, housing and affordability, and health care.
- COF is supported by a Secretariat funded by all provinces and territories.

Western Premiers' Conference (WPC)

- The Western Premiers' Conference (WPC) is a forum to advance shared interests of Western Canada through cooperation and constructive dialogue.
- WPC is comprised of seven Premiers: B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut.
- WPC normally meets once each year. Yukon chaired the 2024 WPC in Whitehorse on June 9-10, 2024.
- The 2025 WPC will be held in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, May 21-22, 2025.
- WPC members do not make financial contributions for this forum; however, members incur expenses for travel costs to annual meetings, and for hosting the annual meeting while they are Chair.

Contact: Grant Smith – 250 387-1042
Executive Director, Federalism and Canadian Intergovernmental Policy

Columbia River Treaty

KEY FACTS:

Negotiations

- The British Columbia (B.C.) Columbia River Treaty (CRT) Team works closely and collaboratively with Global Affairs Canada, and the Ktunaxa, Secwepemc and Syilx Okanagan Nations, in preparing negotiating scenarios, positions and proposals for CRT modernization. BC Hydro, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada also support the negotiating team.
- The current chief negotiator for Canada is Stephen Gluck and for B.C. is Kathy Eichenberger. The current lead negotiator for the United States (U.S.) is Jill Smail who was appointed in August 2017 by the U.S. State Department.
- An Agreement-in-Principle (AIP) was reached in July of 2024, and the development of an amended Treaty text began thereafter.
- In August 2024, the Canadian negotiations team sent an outline of a proposal for modernized Treaty text which reflected the AIP for discussions with the U.S.; however, the U.S. did not respond until October 2024 when they transmitted their own proposal for consideration. Negotiations between the two teams continued into January 2025 in an effort to ratify amendments during the Biden administration.
- Since then, negotiations between Canada and the U.S. have paused as the U.S. government is evaluating all of its foreign relations files as is usual practice for incoming administrations.
- Since an AIP was reached, the countries are now in the “interim period” which is 1 August 2024 to the first 31 July after a modernized Treaty comes into force.
- BC Hydro, as the Canadian Entity, and Bonneville Power Administration and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, jointly the U.S. Entity, have entered into Entity Agreements made binding under the existing Treaty by Exchange of Diplomatic Notes to allow for continued operations and to implement components of the AIP including power benefits for 20 years and payments for flood risk management for 3 years.
- There is no timeline for the resumption of negotiations and the finalization of a modernized Treaty.
- Until a new amended Treaty is ratified, the current Treaty continues.

First Nations

- B.C. and Canada are committed to seeking First Nations' free, prior, and informed consent on the outcome of the modernized Treaty negotiations, consistent with the respective governments' adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Since early 2018, representatives of the Ktunaxa, Secwepemc and Syilx Okanagan Nations have worked closely with the governments of Canada and B.C. to develop and refine negotiating positions and strategies.
- As observers, First Nations are present at all negotiating meetings, make presentations on behalf of Canada, fully participate in caucus meetings with Canada and B.C. during negotiation sessions and debrief with Canada and B.C. after each negotiation round.
- Domestic interests of the First Nations associated with the CRT are the potential for future long-term revenue sharing, redress for past impacts created by CRT dams, and new governance arrangements for future CRT decisions.
- Currently, each First Nation currently receives five percent of the revenue generated from the sales of the Canadian Entitlement via an Interim Revenue Sharing Agreement which will end March 31, 2026.

Treaty Termination

- With the implementation of high tariffs on Canadian goods on March 4 of 2025, followed by Canadian counter tariffs, and public comments on Canada's water and natural resources by President Trump, there has been speculation that Canada or the U.S. may issue a notice of intent to terminate the Treaty.
- The CRT allows either country to unilaterally terminate the Treaty with a ten-year notice – the two countries could mutually agree to terminate the Treaty at any time.
- U.S. impacts of terminating the Treaty include: uncertainty for U.S. power producers to reliably meet customer load; increased flood risk in the lower Columbia; and negative impacts to U.S. navigation, recreation, agriculture, and fisheries interests.
- The U.S. would be required to continue to deliver the Canadian Entitlement for 10 years after the notice is given.
- Termination would give B.C. more flexibility to manage Canadian dams for optimal hydropower generation and to meet domestic other interests. However, once the Treaty is terminated, B.C. would no longer receive delivery of the Canadian Entitlement, or payment for Flood Risk Management.

Financial Information

- In 2019, the Treasury Board approved that as of 2020/21, CRT negotiating and ancillary costs be recovered from the revenues generated from the sale of the Canadian Entitlement (CE) that the Province receives.
- The Province has received on average \$140 million per year from the U.S. over the past 10 years through the CE, ranging from \$89 million (2012/13) to \$448 million (2023/24).
- The fluctuations in the cash value of the CE are due to variations in the market price of power and exchange rates. Factors such as high flow years, or unusually hot or cold weather and the price of natural gas can create variations in power market prices and the revenues from selling the power B.C. receives.
- Revenue from the CE is expected to decrease over time as the volume of power also declines as agreed to in the AIP. This is partially offset by the escalating annual cash payment for Flood Risk Management (and other benefits if a modernized Treaty based on the AIP is ratified).

FINANCIAL SUMMARY:

Table: Approved Funding for CRT Negotiations (\$millions)

Budget	2023/24 Actuals	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Estimates	2026/27 Plan	2027/28 Plan
Total	4.200	5.673	5.673	2.933	2.933

ATTACHMENTS:

- Not applicable

ADM(s) Responsible	Contact number
Les MacLaren	778-698-7183

Page 15 of 42

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

Advice/Recommendations ; Intergovernmental Communications

Page 16 of 42

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

Advice/Recommendations ; Intergovernmental Communications

Page 17 of 42

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

Advice/Recommendations ; Intergovernmental Communications

Page 18 of 42

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

Advice/Recommendations ; Intergovernmental Communications

Page 19 of 42

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

Advice/Recommendations ; Intergovernmental Communications

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

Title: **Transboundary Mining**

Issue: **Mining activities and transboundary waterways**

Response:

- B.C. maintains regular contact with U.S. partners on a range of cross-border environmental files.
- B.C. continues to work with counterparts in Alaska and Montana to implement the Memoranda of Understanding and Statement of Cooperation.
- B.C. also cooperates directly with Indigenous peoples to uphold the Province's commitments under the *Declaration Act*.

Joint Reference

- Canada, the United States, and Ktunaxa government officials developed a joint proposal for the role of the International Joint Commission (IJC) announced via a joint ambassador statement on March 11, 2024.
- The purpose is to reduce and mitigate the impacts of water pollution in the Elk-Kootenai/y watershed, as committed to in the Joint Statement of President Biden and Prime Minister Trudeau on March 24, 2023.
- B.C. remains fully engaged in the process for the Elk-Kootenai/y watershed, which we see as an opportunity to build trust and understanding between B.C., Canada, the United States, and Ktunaxa governments.
- The reference instructs the IJC to assist governments in the establishment of a formal governance structure (Governance Body) to support information sharing and co-development of options for future action.
- The IJC process will respect the corresponding legal responsibilities and jurisdictions of each Government, including the role that B.C. plays as the primary regulator of the mining sector.
- B.C. has been assured the IJC Governance Body will not seek to replace or override existing regulatory processes.
- The Elk-Kootenai/y IJC reference is specific to the history and complexity of water quality influences, historical and ongoing water quality exceedances, and unique relationships of the region.
- B.C. is not supportive of IJC involvement in any other watershed at this time and will continue to work collaboratively with neighbouring states and transboundary First Nations and Tribes.

Background/Status:

Southeast B.C./Montana

- The IJC Governance Body is composed of 18 members, six each from Canada, the United States, and the Ktunaxa governments. Canada's delegation is split evenly between federal and provincial representatives. B.C.'s Governance Body members are the Deputy Ministers of Environment and Parks, Mining and Critical Minerals, and the Intergovernmental Relations Secretariat.

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

- The Study Board released a draft Plan of Study that is currently under IJC review. The plan includes a budget and financing request to the federal governments of Canada and the United States for a total of \$4.9M.
- All engaged governments, including B.C., are expected to participate in the process through 'in-kind' contributions, i.e. by making available provincial staff to support the process.
- B.C. and the IJC have an MOU in place to provide funding for B.C. to hold a Study Board Manager position (equivalent to one full-time employee) and support B.C. participation in other Study Board related work.
- B.C. also has a representative on the Government Advisory Committee to the Study Board, and staff may be asked to participate in the technical working groups at the discretion of the IJC.

Northwest B.C./Alaska

Advice/Recommendations; Intergovernmental Communications

- Concerned groups and U.S. Tribes have called for an International Joint Commission (IJC) reference for the B.C.-Alaska border and are pressuring the Alaska State government to also support an IJC reference.
- B.C. maintains the position that an International Joint Commission (IJC) reference is not needed at this time. Intergovernmental Communications
- The Province and Alaska signed a Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation (MOU) in 2015. The MOU is being implemented through a Statement of Cooperation (SoC) on the Protection of Transboundary Waters. B.C.'s relationship with Alaskan State Commissioners who participate in the Bilateral Working Group (BWG) established under the SoC is strong, transparent, and cooperative.
- B.C.'s Deputy Ministers and Alaska Commissioners meet formally under the auspices of the BWG on a bi-annual basis to discuss transboundary mining and water quality. The most recent BWG meeting was held virtually on March 10, 2025. The previous meeting was held in person in Juneau, Alaska, in June 2024.
- These BWG meetings are supported by a cross-ministry staff-level group that meets monthly with Alaska representatives
 - BC: Ministry of Environment and Parks; Ministry of Mining and Critical Minerals; and the Environmental Assessment Office
 - AK: Department of Environmental Conservation; Department of Fish and Game; and Department of Natural Resources.
- Progress has been made over the past year on a partnership approach with Teck Resources (Teck) and the Taku River Tlingit First Nation (TRTFN) toward the reclamation of Tulsequah Chief Mine, a historic mine south of Atlin and northeast of Juneau, Alaska which left a legacy of acid rock drainage in the Tulsequah River.

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

- B.C., Teck, and the TRTFN are working collaboratively to ensure the reclamation and clean-up of the Tulsequah site are done sustainably, without unnecessary delay and are completed according to the laws and traditions of B.C. and the TRTFN.
- Communication improvements, including updated webpages and engagement with concerned groups, have highlighted regulatory improvements B.C. has made in the past decade.
- New B.C. mining webpages were released in January 2025. Through a natural resource sector approach to the issue, the web resources help the domestic and international public better understand how responsible mining is carried out in B.C., and the significant improvements that have been made in the past decade.

Contact: John Pratt – Government Financial
Information
A/Executive Director, International Relations

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

Title: **B.C. – India Relations**

Issue: **B.C. - India Relations**

Response:

- B.C. values its long-standing relationship with India.
- The Canada-India relationship is based on the fundamental principle of respect for the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the two countries.
- We have important and historic people-to-people ties, the cornerstone of relations between our jurisdictions.
- India is B.C.'s fifth most important export market. In 2024, the value of those exports reached \$1.3 billion.
- B.C. has Trade and Investment representatives based in New Delhi, Chandigarh, Mumbai and Bengaluru.
- India is the largest source country for international students studying in B.C.
- We were deeply disturbed by the serious allegations raised by former Prime Minister Trudeau of credible evidence of links between agents of the Government of India and the assassination of Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Surrey.
- Canadians across the country must be safe from the interference of foreign governments, including threats or physical harm, including murder.
- Four Indian nationals resident in Canada have been arrested and charged for their alleged involvement in the killing of Mr. Nijjar. This matter is now before the courts.
- We are also troubled by reports emerging from the Foreign Interference Commission suggesting instances of Indian foreign interference in previous federal elections.
- Notwithstanding the current challenges facing the Canada-India relationship, its enduring importance requires meaningful diplomatic engagement.

Background/Status:

Canada – India Relations:

- British Columbia has had a long-standing and deep relationship with India, an important cornerstone of which is people-to-people ties. British Columbians of Indian ethnic origin have made valuable contributions over many decades to the economic, academic, cultural and political life of the province.
- B.C. exports to India have grown from \$468 million in 2013 to \$1.3 billion in 2024, in tandem with India's rapid economic growth. It now ranks as B.C.'s fifth most important export market.
- India is also B.C.'s largest source of immigrants and international students.

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

- B.C. companies wishing to export goods or services to India can be assisted by four B.C. Trade and Investment offices in India, located in New Delhi, Chandigarh, Mumbai and Bengaluru.
- On June 18, 2023 Hardeep Singh Nijjar was murdered as he left Surrey's Guru Nanak Gurdwara. On September 18, 2023, Prime Minister Trudeau informed the House of Commons that "Canadian security agencies have been actively pursuing credible allegations of a potential link between agents of the Government of India and the killing of a Canadian citizen, Hardeep Singh Nijjar."
- Canada paused negotiations on a free trade deal and cancelled a planned Team Canada trade mission to India.
- India has denied the allegations, claiming Canada has not provided any relevant evidence.
- On October 19, 2023 India forced the departure of two-thirds of Canada's diplomatic staff from the High Commission in New Delhi (41 diplomats and their families) by unilaterally withdrawing their diplomatic immunity.
- On May 3, 2024 RCMP Asst. Commissioner Dave Teboul announced that three Indian nationals, in Canada on student visas, have been charged with first-degree murder and conspiracy to commit murder in relation with the homicide. A fourth suspect, also an Indian national, was later arrested in Ontario and charged. The trial has yet to begin.
- An unclassified summary, with caveats and limitations, of an intelligence assessment provided to the Foreign Interference Commission in April 2024 referred to foreign interference activities of Government of India officials, including their Canada-based proxy agents, directed against the 2019 and 2021 federal elections.
- On May 3, 2024 Commissioner Hogue issued an initial report from the Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference in Federal Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions ("the Commission"). In describing, with similar limitations and caveats, foreign interference activities of Indian officials, including Canada-based proxies, she suggested those activities "aim to align Canada's position with India's interests on key issues, particularly with respect to how the Indian government perceives Canada-based supporters of an independent Sikh homeland (Khalistan)." She indicated "India does not differentiate between the lawful, pro-Khalistan political advocacy and the relatively small Canada-based Khalistani violent extremism. It views anyone aligned with Khalistani separatism as a seditious threat to India."
- On October 14, 2024 Global Affairs Canada announced that six Indian diplomats and consular officials had received a notice of expulsion from Canada in relation to a targeted campaign against Canadian citizens by agents linked to the Government of India. India had refused to waive their diplomatic immunities and cooperate with the RCMP investigation. India responded by expelling six Canadian diplomats from India.
- During the recent federal election campaign, Prime Minister Carney indicated there are opportunities to rebuild the relationship with India.
- In congratulating Prime Minister Carney on April 29, 2025, the Indian Prime Minister stated, "India and Canada are bound by shared democratic values, a steadfast commitment to the rule of law, and vibrant people-to-people ties. I look forward to working with you to strengthen our partnership and unlock greater opportunities for our people."

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

- June 23, 2025 marks the 40th anniversary of the bombing of Air India Flight 182 en route from Toronto to London, killing all 329 people aboard, most of them Canadians. It remains the worst terrorist attack in Canadian history, and evokes painful memories in both India and Canada. Although only one person was convicted in connection with this act of terrorism, separate commissions of inquiry pointed to Khalistani extremists based in Vancouver as the masterminds behind the attack.

Contact: Kenneth Macartney – Government Financial Information
Executive Lead, Intergovernmental Strategy

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

Title: B.C. – China Relations

Issue: B.C. – China Relations

Response:

- Like the rest of Canada, B.C. has a significant trading relationship with China. B.C.'s exports amounted to close to \$9 billion in 2024.
- We also have a long-standing and valued sister-province relationship with Guangdong Province in China, with this year marking the 30th anniversary. This relationship has economic benefits and has allowed for cooperation on issues relating to a low-carbon future, including mass timber and other sustainably produced B.C. forest products.
- British Columbia consults closely on and follows the Government of Canada's lead in its evolving approach to relations with the government of the People's Republic of China.
- The Government of Canada's approach recognizes that defending Canada's national interests will at times require ^{Intergovernmental Communications} and that Canada will also seek to cooperate with China to find solutions to global issues such as climate change.
- Reports of foreign interference by the Chinese government in this year's federal election in Canada, and recent elections in British Columbia, are of serious concern.
- The final report of the Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference in Federal Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions, issued by Commissioner Hogue, indicates that China is assessed by Canadian authorities as the most active foreign state actor engaged in interference directed at government officials, political organizations and candidates and diaspora communities.
- These reports are very troubling and we will continue to work with federal authorities to address the threats to our democracy and values from foreign interference as recommended by Commissioner Hogue.
- China's recent decision to impose new tariffs on Canadian agricultural and seafood products is concerning. We are supporting affected British Columbian producers, processors and businesses, together with welcome supports provided by the Government of Canada.
- The large and diverse communities of British Columbians of Chinese heritage have made extraordinary contributions to the fabric of this province, including with respect to our cherished democratic values and freedoms.
- British Columbia follows Canada's One China Policy. Under that policy Canada maintains unofficial but valuable economic, cultural and people-to-people ties with Taiwan. B.C. opened a Trade and Investment Representative office co-located within the Canadian Trade Office in Taipei in April 2024.

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

Background/Status:

Canada – China Relations

- In Canada's 2022 Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS), China is described as "an increasingly disruptive power". According to the policy outlined in the IPS, behaviours and policies of the Government of China which erode the existing rules-based international order also undermine Canadian interests. At the same time, the IPS acknowledges that China's sheer size and influence makes cooperation necessary to address the world's existential challenges, such as climate change. It also notes that China's economy offers significant opportunities for Canadian exporters.
- On January 28, 2025, The Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference in Federal Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions, under Commissioner Hogue, released its final report after assessing the extent to which state actors, including China, interfered in the 2019 and 2021 federal elections.
- The final report of the Public Inquiry, issued May 3, 2024 by Commissioner Hogue, indicates that "the People's Republic of China is the most active perpetrator of foreign interference targeting Canada's democratic institutions. The PRC views Canada as a high-priority target."

Canada - China Trade and Investment

- On August 26, 2024 the Canadian government announced measures to protect "key economic sectors from unfair Chinese trade practices", specifically through the introduction of a 100% tariff on all Chinese-made electric vehicles and a 25% additional tariff on imports of steel and aluminium products from China, which came into effect on October 1 and 15, 2024, respectively.
- The federal government has modernized its toolkit to address economic security, including through amendments to the *Invest in Canada Act* (which entered into force in September 2024) related to critical minerals. It has also introduced new guidelines aimed at safeguarding Canadian research in sensitive technologies; of the 100 listed research affiliations of concern, 85 are Chinese institutions.
- On March 20, 2025, China imposed 100 per cent tariffs on Canadian canola oil, canola meal and peas, as well as 25 per cent tariffs on certain pork, fish and seafood products. The Chinese government announced these tariffs following the conclusion of its anti-dumping investigation into rapeseed (canola) imports from Canada launched on September 26, 2024. In response, the Ministry of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Rural Economic Development announced supports such as increased compensation rates for agricultural producers through the federal AgriStability program in coordination with provincial and territorial partners.

B.C. – China Relations

- B.C. businesses have connections with China across a variety of economic sectors, including clean technology, agriculture, energy and forestry.

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

- China and Hong Kong ranked #2 as a destination for B.C. exports behind the U.S., with B.C. exports totalling about \$8.79 billion in 2024.
- B.C. has four Trade and Investment offices in China, co-located in the Canadian Embassy in Beijing and in consulates in Shanghai, Guangzhou and Chongqing.
- The large and diverse multi-ethnic Chinese diaspora communities in B.C. have long made, and continue to make, valuable contributions to the economy and social fabric of B.C. There are over 500,000 British Columbians that claim Chinese heritage.

B.C. – Guangdong

- B.C. and Guangdong formed a sister-province relationship in 1995.
- Guangdong, China's southernmost mainland province, is the ancestral homeland of a large proportion of British Columbians of Chinese heritage.
- Recent activities under this twinning arrangement have focused on the promotion of mass timber and a low carbon future.

Hong Kong

- Canada supports the right to peaceful protest and autonomy under Hong Kong's Basic Law and the "One Country, Two Systems" framework. In that context, Canada voiced deep concerns about a new security law passed in March 2024, the *Safeguarding National Security Ordinance*, and potential impacts on human rights in Hong Kong, already eroded by the 2020 imposition of the *National Security Law*.
- In a March 20, 2024 statement the Government of Canada raised concerns about the law's broad definitions of national security offences and national security threats and the potential for enforcement overreach. The statement further outlined concerns about the chilling effect created by the new security law at a moment when the city is trying to maintain its status as an open and free international hub.

Taiwan

- Under its One China Policy, Canada does not recognize Taiwan as a sovereign state or conduct official government-to-government relations; however, it maintains unofficial but valuable economic, cultural and people-to-people ties. B.C. follows this approach.
- China's military forces have carried out aggressive exercises close to Taiwan. According to the IPS, "Canada will oppose unilateral actions that threaten the status quo in the Taiwan Strait."
- Taiwan is an important economic partner for B.C. In 2024, B.C. exported \$817 million in goods to Taiwan, making it B.C.'s seventh largest export market.
- B.C. has opened a Trade and Investment office co-located in the Canadian Trade Office in Taipei, which represents Canadian interests in Taiwan in the absence of formal diplomatic relations.

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

Contact: John Pratt - Government Financial Information
A/Executive Director, International Relations

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

Title: **Foreign Interference**

Issue: **Foreign interference targeting elections, elected representatives and the diaspora community**

Response:

- We remain deeply concerned about foreign interference in Canadian democratic processes and institutions and targeting Canadian individuals and communities, including in British Columbia, carried out by state actors such as China, India and others.
- The recently completed Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference in Federal Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions concluded that foreign interference did not impact the overall outcome of the 2019 and 2021 federal elections. However, both Commissioner Hogue and the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians pointed to interference in several electoral ridings and nomination processes and highlighted the federal government's failure to adequately share information, including with provincial government partners. Commissioner Hogue and the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians also recognized the serious and disproportionate impact of foreign interference on diaspora communities and human rights advocates in Canada.
- It is vitally important for our democracy that our electoral system is safeguarded from foreign interference and that Canadians and British Columbians have faith in that system. It is equally important that Canadians who have been targeted by state actors or their proxies feel protected and know that they have the full support of the province, as well as Canada's police and security agencies. No Canadian should fear for their safety or that of their family members abroad for exercising their democratic rights or expressing their personal views.
- Our government has consistently called for greater transparency and action from the federal government in countering foreign interference. Even before Commissioner Hogue's final report was released, we urged the federal government to expand information-sharing with the province and repeatedly requested that federal agencies share any specific information related to foreign interference affecting democratic processes and institutions or individuals in British Columbia.
- We have continued those calls for greater cooperation following the completion of the Public Inquiry, in line with the recommendations of Commissioner Hogue. While some progress has been made, more must be done to ensure that provincial, territorial, municipal and Indigenous governments, including in British Columbia, receive and can meaningfully act upon information related to threats from foreign interference.

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

- We welcomed the passage of the federal *Act respecting countering foreign interference*, or Bill C-70, on June 20, 2024, and look forward to the federal government to fully implementing the Act, including the foreign influence registry at the provincial and territorial level, in consultation with the province.
- We will continue to press the federal government to improve information-sharing with provinces and territories and to dedicate the resources necessary to ensure that democratic institutions and processes in British Columbia, and British Columbians themselves, are adequately protected against foreign interference.
- In the meantime, our officials maintain close contact with federal counterparts responsible for national security, foreign and trade relations, and economic and research security. We are working, with those counterparts and independently, to improve resiliency within and across the provincial government for all national security threats, including foreign interference.

Background/Status:

- In late 2022 and 2023, media reports alleged that the Chinese government was involved in widespread foreign interference in Canada, including in the 2019 and 2021 Canadian elections. Specific allegations suggested that the Chinese Consulate General in Vancouver interfered in both the 2021 federal election in Lower Mainland constituencies and in the 2022 Vancouver mayoral election.
- In response to these allegations, Prime Minister Trudeau announced a number of national security reviews in March 2023, including a request to the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians (NSICOP) to study foreign interference in the 2019 and 2021 federal elections and the appointment of former Governor General David Johnston as an Independent Special Rapporteur tasked with building on the work of the Committee and recommending additional processes.
- David Johnston released his first report in May 2023, concluding that interference is an increasing threat and that China is particularly active, but determining that because of the classified information involved, a public inquiry would not be appropriate. In June 2023, David Johnston resigned and filed his confidential report.
- In September 2023, based on all-party agreement, the federal government established the Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference in Federal Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions ("the Commission") under Commissioner Hogue to respond to concerns about foreign interference in the 2019 and 2021 federal elections. The Commission was also tasked to examine the flow of information within the federal government in relation to these issues, evaluate

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

the actions taken in response, assess the federal government's capacity to detect, deter, and counter foreign interference, and make recommendations on these issues. The Commission's mandate was later expanded to include alleged interference by India and other foreign states or non-state actors.

- Commissioner Hogue issued her initial report on May 3, 2024, finding that while the Canadian electoral system itself is robust, acts of foreign interference occurred during the last two federal elections and "are a stain on our electoral process and impacted the process leading up to the actual vote."
- Commissioner Hogue described two federal ridings in B.C. (Vancouver East and Steveston-Richmond East) where concerns about foreign interference and disinformation on the part of Chinese state actors and their proxies are alleged. She indicated that, according to intelligence collected by Canada, the People's Republic of China stands out as by far the main perpetrator of foreign interference against Canada. She indicated that "Canada's intelligence holdings also identify Russia, India, Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran, among other countries, as possible foreign interference actors in Canada."
- The NSICOP expanded the scope of its work beyond the 2019 and 2021 federal elections to include foreign interference targeting Canada's federal democratic processes and institutions more broadly and released its redacted report on June 3, 2024, finding that the People's Republic of China represented the greatest foreign interference threat to Canada, followed by India. The report noted that, while foreign interference did not sway the overall outcome of Canadian federal elections in 2019 and 2021, foreign states had interfered in democratic processes and institutions, e.g. by interfering in nomination processes and riding elections.
- Commissioner Hogue issued her final report on January 28, 2025, finding that, while foreign interference did not change the outcomes of the 2019 or 2021 elections, foreign interference did have impacts at the riding level during Canadian elections and has undermined confidence in Canadian democracy. The report noted intelligence indicating that some People's Republic of China officials had coordinated the exclusion of political candidates in B.C. perceived as "anti-China" from attending election related events in the community. During the Commission, the Office of the Commissioner of Canada Elections also reported suspected People's Republic of China interference efforts in the Steveston-Richmond East and Vancouver East electoral ridings in the 2021 election.
- Commissioner Hogue criticized the federal government's responsiveness, coordination and communication in countering foreign interference, highlighting a lack of transparency across federal ministries and agencies, and called on the federal government to improve cooperation with provincial, territorial, Indigenous and municipal governments to counter the threat posed by foreign interference. The Commission also provided recommendations aimed at provincial governments in Canada, including developing foreign interference training for government officials, establishing key points of contact for federal agencies on national security issues and improving their own subject matter expertise.

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

- While neither the NSICOP nor the Commission were mandated to specifically investigate transnational repression, both the NSICOP and the Commission reports highlighted repressive activities by foreign states against vulnerable individuals and communities in Canada as a serious threat.
- Starting in November 2023, the Government of Canada (Public Safety and Justice Canada) launched public consultations on *Modernizing Canada's Toolkit to Counter Foreign Interference*. Justice Canada stated it was considering amendments to the Security of Information Act, modernizing certain Criminal Code offences, and introducing a review mechanism in the Canada Evidence Act to manage sensitive information. CSIS stated it was considering amendments to its Act to provide it the legal ability to share threat information with a wider set of Canadian partners (including provinces and territories). The B.C. government has consistently called for greater information sharing on these subjects.
- Pursuant to these public consultations, the federal government introduced on May 6, 2024, Bill C-70, *An act respecting countering foreign interference*. Bill C-70 introduced a *Foreign Influence Transparency and Accountability Act*, as well as amendments to the *CSIS Act*, the *Security of Information Act*, the *Canada Evidence Act*, and the modernization of certain Criminal Code offences. Among other changes, the legislation would establish a new foreign influence registry (the "Registry") overseen by a Foreign Influence Transparency Commissioner. Bill C-70 received Royal Assent on June 20, 2024.
- The federal government aims to bring the Registry online by June 2025 and to expand the application of the Registry beyond the federal level at a future date.

Contact: John Pratt – Government Financial Information
A/Executive Director, International Relations

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

Title: **Consular Corps Relations**

Issue: **B.C. Consular Corps**

Response:

- I have designated Parliamentary Secretary Susie Chant responsible for the Consular Corps of British Columbia and have asked her to develop relationships with foreign representatives based in our province to solidify partnerships on many fronts, including supporting trade diversification to strengthen B.C.'s economy.
- The 87 members of the B.C. Consular Corps represent their countries and citizens and work on promoting shared priorities, often including trade relationships. These members are key to B.C.'s goals of building connections in new markets, increasing exports and investments, and highlighting B.C. capabilities as a low-carbon supplier.

Background/Status:

- Maintaining strong relations with the B.C. Consular Corps is key to advancing British Columbia's international objectives and enables the province to highlight B.C. as a destination for trade, investment, tourism, and education.
- The province works to maintain strong relations with the foreign representatives in B.C. through regular outreach, briefings and hosting official visits.
- In the last fiscal year there were 70 meetings between B.C. elected officials with foreign dignitaries.
- The B.C. Consular Corps is comprised of 35 consular posts staffed by foreign diplomats and 51 consular posts staffed by honorary consular officers who are Canadian citizens. In total, 78 countries have representation based in B.C.
- There are also four international organizations based in B.C.:
 - the Commonwealth of Learning;
 - the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission;
 - the North Pacific Marine Science Organization; and
 - the Pacific Salmon Commission.
- In addition, there is one "Special Office" – the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) in Vancouver. TECO is not an official member of the Consular Corps, but TECO directors and staff are accredited by Global Affairs as "other" representatives in Canada.
- The Office of Protocol is a main government contact for the Consular Corps and typically organizes two briefings per year (Note: in 2024, there was no fall briefing given the election cycle) by ministers and senior government staff.

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

- The last ministerial briefing was held in Victoria on May 14, 2024. It included presentations on internal trade; opportunities for foreign direct investment including major projects seeking international investment; tariff response; and mining and critical minerals.

Contact: Lucy Lobmeier – 250-356-6177
Chief of Protocol and Executive Director, Office of Protocol

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

Title: **Order of British Columbia (OBC)**

Issue: **Status Report**

Response:

- The Order of British Columbia advisory council will meet in late May to review the applications received this year.
- The 2025 recipients of the Order will be announced on B.C. Day (August 4).
- An investiture ceremony will take place at Government House at a date in the Fall that is to be determined.
- Nominations are accepted year-round.

Background/Status:

- The Order of British Columbia represents the highest form of recognition the province can extend to its citizens.
- The OBC was created in April 1989 under the authority of the *Provincial Symbols and Honours Act*, which is under the responsibility of Intergovernmental Relations Secretariat (IGRS).
- Since 1989, the province has recognized 515 British Columbians from a variety of sectors including professional, business, volunteer, arts and sporting communities and from all regions.
- The Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia is Chancellor of the Order.
- The composition of the Advisory Council is established by legislation. For 2025 it consists of:
 - the Chief Justice of British Columbia (chair): The Honourable Len Marchand.
 - the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly: The Honourable Raj Chouhan.
 - a Public University President in rotation: Dr. Trish Kelly, Emily Carr University of Art & Design.
 - the President of the Union of B.C. Municipalities: Trish Mandewo (Councillor, City of Coquitlam).
 - the Deputy Minister of IGRS: Leslie Teramoto; and,
 - two past members of the Order: John Anderson and Catherine Ulrich.
- The nomination deadline was April 4, 2025. Submissions received after this date will be considered in 2026.
- The Honours and Awards Secretariat receives, on average, 154 nominations annually. This year, 212 nominations were submitted.
- OBC appointments are made by Order-in-Council.

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

Contact: Lucy Lobmeier – 250 356-6177
Chief of Protocol and Executive Director, Office of Protocol

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

Title: French Language Services

Issue: French Language Services

Response:

- The province provides information and services in French in several priority sectors such as education, health, justice, employment services, and immigration.
- B.C.'s French Language Policy, implemented one year ago, has yielded commendable results, with significant enhancements to services in the health and child care sectors.
- The 2024-2028 Canada-B.C. Agreement on French Language Services was signed in June 2024, and the federal contribution increased from \$700k/year to \$2.2M/year in each of the following 4 years.

Background/Status:

Canada-B.C. Agreement on French-Language Services

- The Agreement was first signed in 2001. The latest agreement, signed in June 2024, is effective until March 31, 2028.
- The Agreement supports the development of information and services in French in priority sectors. Priority sectors identified through community consultation include health and social development, justice and public safety, immigration and employment, and arts and culture.
- The funding provided through the Agreement rose from \$700k to \$2.2M (\$2,196,228) per annum in 2024 following additional federal appropriation to Canada's Official Languages Action Plan, coupled with a new federal funding formula. B.C. continues to provide a matching contribution in cash and in-kind.

French Language Policy

- B.C.'s French Language Policy came into effect on April 1, 2024. The policy guides Ministries towards incrementally increasing their ability to serve French-speakers throughout the province, based on need and available resources.
- Implementation of the policy is underway, with information and services now available in French in several priority areas, including the Santé-Ouest Francophone Community Health Centre; the translation of ICBC's Learn to Drive Smart Manual; Residential Tenancy Branch web content; and the Master of Disaster, a free classroom program designed to help young people learn about emergency preparedness.

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

French Language Service Fund

- This is a \$250k/year fund created in 2018. The purpose of the fund is to assist NGOs to provide services in French. Applications to the fund are expected to open in May.

Contact: Vincent Portal - 778-698-2990
A/Executive Director, Community Relations

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

Title: **Local Government and Rural Communities**

Issue: **Local Government and Rural Communities Relations**

Response:

- The Minister of State for Local Governments and Rural Communities was appointed to serve as the key contact for UBCM, local governments and rural communities, to work proactively on inquiries and issues.
- It is important to ensure that local governments and rural communities' perspectives are considered in government decision-making processes in policy and program development.
- Understanding each community is unique, UBCM represents the common views and interests of the 188 local governments and 13 First Nations members.

Background/Status:

In 2024, Government committed to increasing awareness of local government issues and integrating input from local governments and rural communities in the delivery of provincial government policies and programs.

The appointment of a Minister of State (MoS), as a key contact with UBCM membership and mandated to work across ministries to identify and proactively address issues raised, represents a significant step in fulfilling the commitment. The appointment of Parliamentary Secretaries for Rural Development and for Rural Health further support this goal.

The Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs (HMA) is the regulatory authority providing housing and local government legislative, governance, policy and program leadership and oversight.

To fulfill her mandate, the MoS conducts visits to communities and has bilateral meetings with the UBCM President and local government officials. She also actively participates, leads or co-leads in various forums including:

- Quarterly UBCM Executive meetings (HMA Minister and MOS have standing invites, 20 elected officials of UBCM, in Vancouver)
- Annual Advocacy Days (UBCM elected officials meeting with Cabinet Ministers, in Victoria)
- Five Area Association meetings (various dates and locations)
- Annual UBCM Convention (this year September 22-26, 2025 in Victoria, MoS will be the host Minister).
- As needed, Roundtables with local elected officials (e.g. Townhall format on tariffs, MoS to facilitate and/or participate).

2025/26 Estimates Note - Advice to the Premier

UBCM's Key Issues and Priorities:

UBCM Priorities

The priorities for 2025 as shared during Advocacy Days are:

1. Infrastructure - UBCM is seeking from the Province:
 - a. Immediate strategic stimulus investments in local government infrastructure based on the allocation model for the Canada Community-Building Fund.
 - b. Create long-term local government infrastructure program that transfers \$650M annually based on the allocation model for the Canada Community-Building Fund.
2. Affordable Housing - UBCM wants the Province to:
 - a. Scale up provincial investment in affordable housing and supportive housing beyond the commitments provided in Budget 2025.
 - b. Improvement to BC Housing operations to minimize delays and expedite projects.
 - c. Transfer an annual percentage of the provincial property transfer tax to support local efforts in subsidizing affordable housing supply.
3. Emergency Healthcare – UBCM wants the province to:
 - a. Continue expanding the HEART and HEARTH funding
 - b. Provide long-term funding for the mental health and policing programs under the Safer Communities Action Plan.
 - c. Introduce additional long-term beds for mental health care.
 - d. Provide additional complex care facilities.

Consultation and Engagement

UBCM is a key partner in fostering the collaboration needed to develop and implement successful legislation, policies, and programs that affect local governments. Ensuring that UBCM and its members are consulted in a meaningful and timely manner remains a priority.

Local Government Financial Resiliency

In 2022, the Province and UBCM established a Memorandum of Understanding to address the recommendations from the "*Ensuring Local Government Financial Resiliency: Today's Recovery and Tomorrow's New Economy*" report. An officials level working group has been established with representatives from the Ministry of Finance, HMA, and UBCM.

U.S. Tariffs

Local governments continue to raise concerns about the impact of tariffs on their operations and communities. A roundtable on U.S. tariffs was organized with UBCM in March 2025. It provided an avenue for the two-way exchange of information about B.C.'s tariff response and its impacts.

Contact: Vincent Portal - 778-584-7840
A/Executive Director, Community Relations

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS SECRETARIAT Organization Chart (May 2025)

