



**NORTHWEST BRITISH COLUMBIA
RESOURCE BENEFITS ALLIANCE**
300-4545 Lazelle Avenue, Terrace, BC V8G 4E1

Northwest BC Local Government Alliance Establishes Action Plan to Secure Equitable Share of \$35 Billion in Provincial Revenues

TERRACE, B.C., August 17, 2015 /CNW/ - On Saturday, August 15, 2015, the 21 Local Governments in the Northwest B.C. Resource Benefits Alliance (RBA) gathered for their first summit in Terrace, B.C. The morning session consisted of the following:

- expert briefings on projected provincial revenues from economic development in the Northwest over the next 25 years,
- identification of immediate community infrastructure needs,
- discussion of possible revenue-sharing frameworks, and
- approval of the 2015/16 Action Plan.

The Alliance then formalized its commitment to working together by signing the NWBC RBA Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and established its executive.

At the summit, the Alliance was advised that the province has the necessary financial resources to address the many community impacts of economic development. Under a moderate economic development scenario, Perrin, Thorau & Associates Ltd. forecasts that 49 major projects in the RBA's geographic area will generate \$35 billion in new provincial revenues over the next 25 years.

A three percent (3%) revenue share would equate to \$1 billion to address pressing community needs. An example of these needs is infrastructure. Urban Systems reported that RBA Local Governments have immediate infrastructure needs of well over \$500 million.

"The summit resulted in the development of three priorities: addressing infrastructure needs, mitigating social impacts, and developing a legacy fund so that we can look forward to a sustainable future," says RBA Chair, Stacey Tyers.

Revenue sharing negotiations with the province are intended to address these priorities, leaving RBA communities better off through a lasting legacy- similar to the Columbia Basin Trust. "It is important not to confuse revenue sharing with planning grant programs such as Northwest Readiness or other small scale programs such as the proposed rural dividend," says Tyers. "We want to be at the table to negotiate our share."

The RBA is receiving positive support from industry; in-depth briefings are planned for industry sectors including LNG, mining and forestry over the next several months.

“We are hopeful with the signing of the RBA MOU that industry will come to the provincial table and help us as well,” says Vice-Chair Bill Miller. “An RBA revenue sharing agreement will make industry more competitive with the advantage of having community infrastructure in place - industry is definitely going to benefit.”

The members of the RBA share a strong commitment to work together for the benefit of all communities in Northwest B.C.

“This is a historic and commendable process that the 21 Local Governments have been engaged in – we are excited and looking forward to coming up with a revenue sharing agreement with the provincial government to meet the needs of the Northwest,” says Vice-Chair Barry Pages. “We are looking forward to the province sitting down with the RBA and coming up with an agreement that is a win-win for everybody.”

A copy of the RBA MOU is available on the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine website: www.rdks.bc.ca.

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For further information:

Stacey Tyers, Chair of the RBA and Chair Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine
Bill Miller, Vice-Chair RBA and Chair, Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako
Barry Pages, Vice-Chair RBA and Chair, Skeena-Queen Charlotte Regional District

NWBC Resource Benefits Alliance

300 - 4545 Lazelle Avenue
Terrace, BC, Canada
V8G 4E1

Media contact:

Amanda Munro
communications@rdks.bc.ca