

RESOURCING A COLLABORATIVE SYSTEM OF DATA SHARING IN THE PROVINCE OF BC

WHEREAS natural disasters pose an increasing risk to the economic, social, and environmental well-being of British Columbians;

AND WHEREAS the provincial government is taking action to improve resilience by strengthening disaster preparedness and disaster risk governance in the context of climate change;

AND WHEREAS the sharing of integrated asset data, information, and knowledge across all sectors is key to improving emergency management and resiliency planning in BC:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Province of British Columbia be urged to take a strong leadership role and provide long-term sufficient funding and resources to increase the coordination, assembly, and access of asset data, information, and knowledge across multiple levels and sectors of government and stakeholders (including First Nations, local governments, provincial and federal government agencies, qualified professionals, and industry sectors) be received.

BACKGROUND

The Columbia Shuswap Regional District is working in collaboration with local governments, First Nations, and other stakeholders to update and strengthen flood hazard mapping in the Fraser Basin Watershed and Columbia Watershed. Other jurisdictions around the province are undertaking similar exercises with help from various provincial and federal grant programs. The mapping products and reports created are invaluable in helping determine areas of risk and in developing emergency management and planning policy.

It is critical that the hazard mapping remain current with changes to new development, infrastructure, and the changing natural environment. Decision-makers need to know that the data they are relying on is the best available. This requires re-running the analysis models to incorporate the latest information in the analysis.

The analysis models used to develop the hazard mapping pull together various types of data and information, including elevation data, existing floodplain mapping, demographic data, locations of critical assets and infrastructure, and professional reports. The sources of this data can be the local government, provincial government, or other agencies. Access restrictions and data formats can also vary widely. As a result the time and expense needed to update the models is unsustainable.

Provincial-level coordination of collection, assembly, and access to this data would greatly help facilitate a near real-time understanding of the hazards and risk. Models could reference data that is known to be current and is in a format common across jurisdictions. Decision-makers could confidently reference mapping and analysis that is authoritative.