

Connecting Communities BC CITZ:EX
ConnectingCommunitiesBC@gov.bc.ca

Dear Sir/Madame

Re: RFI CCBC-020038-5 for Shuswap Economic Development Society (SEDS) Broadband Network Shuswap Economic Development Society Grant Application – Letter of Support

Please accept this letter of support from the Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSRD). We are writing this letter to once again show our support of the Shuswap Economic Development Society (SEDS) funding application to the Connecting Communities BC Program to provide high-speed broadband internet access to the underserved areas and households that have been identified in the SEDS service areas within the CSRD.

Efficient and effective internet connectivity will help people and businesses connect to healthcare, education, e-commerce, and remote work opportunities. Improving broadband internet access will help rural community's viability and growth potential. We agree that access to high-speed broadband services supports economic and social development to underserved communities.

SEDS is forming the Shuswap Regional Broadband Cooperative which will provide the opportunity for many community members, Indigenous communities, businesses, and other community stakeholders to be a part of the solution. The return on investment will stay in the areas served.

Connectivity became extremely important during the wildfires of 2023 when communication was extremely crucial. It is important to improve the communities and government to be able to communicate, coordinate, respond and recover from emergency events. This is a great benefit to those communities and Regional Districts (Thompson Nicola and North Okanagan), neighboring CSRD communities who are jointly affected by emergencies and rely on communication in connecting remote areas.

The CSRD recognizes the need for better broadband internet access and supports the funding application for the British Columbia Connecting Communities grant to improve internet connectivity and to invest in the future of our communities.