

Terms of Reference for 2017 Flood and Wildfire Strategic Review

(Jan 9, 2018)

The strategic review of the Province's emergency management system will examine and assess the provincial and local government response to the 2017 flooding and wildfire events, including the provision of recommendations that can assist the Province in improving upon its systems, processes and procedures.

Specifically, the review will focus on the governance aspects of the system, including statutes, regulations, policy and leadership practices that define the context within which the emergency management system operates. To accomplish this, the review team will engage with British Columbians to understand the Province's tactical and strategic response to the floods and wildfires of 2017.

The review will consider the spectrum of activities that are undertaken across the four phases representing the lifecycle of the BC Emergency Management System, as represented below.

The review and recommendations will provide guidance and illuminate opportunities for improvement to the Province on the following key focus areas:

Planning and Preparedness

- Status of assessment of hazard, risk and vulnerabilities
- Status of provincial governance, planning and preparedness levels, including tactical and strategic considerations
- Capacity of the Province to plan for and ensure support to local governments, regional districts, First Nation communities, and rural and remote communities
- Status of local government, regional district and First Nation communities' governance, policy, planning and preparedness levels
- Resourcing requirements for flood and fire events for all key capability assets
- Review and status of actions taken from the Filmon Report to identify progress and determine whether there are any remaining gaps in implementing the recommendations
- High level overview of emergency preparedness, response and approaches to disasters in other jurisdictions in Canada and internationally

Prevention and Mitigation

- Current activities and opportunities for new activities by government and partners, including activities at the landscape level, that could contribute to enhanced prevention and mitigation for natural hazards, including but not limited to development approvals in the wildland urban interface, FireSmart, and public education programs
- Review of current forest management legislation and policies that affect planning, prevention and mitigation, including but not limited to ecosystem management, spatial planning, reforestation, cut block size, hazard abatement and harvest age

- Economic costs and benefits associated with existing practices and possible enhanced mitigation practices for natural hazards

Response

- Execution of the 2016 BC Emergency Management System
- Province's ability to respond effectively and sustain operations over a longer term during major emergency events of provincial significance, including resourcing requirements for all key capability assets
- Province's ability to effectively support local government response during significant emergencies
- Province's ability to quickly and effectively secure required resources during critical incidents
- Capacity of local governments, regional districts, First Nations communities, and rural and remote communities to respond effectively during major emergency events and provide needed assistance to the people affected
- State of co-ordination and communication structures and processes in place within the provincial government
- State of co-ordination and communication structures and process with other levels of governments and external partners including but not limited to First Nations, Canada, local governments and regional districts, communities and the public
- Examination of private and public sector best practices to respond to major emergency events of provincial significance, including the identification of tools and approaches that may be effective in the B.C. context

Recovery

- Gain a better understanding of the role of all levels of government in recovery following floods and fires
- Assess the current capacity for the Province to assist and support communities, businesses and individuals in recovery efforts

The terms of reference are designed to be as comprehensive as possible and the reviewers have the discretion to consider other items that may be brought forward in the context of emergency preparedness, response and recovery.

A final report and recommendations are due to government by April 30, 2018, to help inform government's actions in advance of the 2018 freshet and wildfire seasons. If more time is needed, government will use interim recommendations.