

UBCM communities applauded for demonstrating environmental leadership

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Vancouver, BC—A coalition of 14 leading British Columbia environmental organizations are applauding the passage of several important environmental protection resolutions at last week's Union of B.C. Municipalities (UBCM) convention in Penticton. Key among these resolutions was a call for a moratorium on coal bed methane development in BC's Sacred Headwaters, and a ban on Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) tanker traffic in Georgia Strait.

"UBCM communities demonstrated real leadership by supporting resolutions based on sound principles and practices for sustainability in B.C.," said Deborah Conner, Georgia Strait Alliance executive director and spokesperson for Priorities for Environmental Leadership. "We need all levels of government, and in particular municipal leaders, to work to address increasing threats to B.C.'s land, water, air, species and human health."

The UBCM convention also passed resolutions calling on B.C. to enact a Species and Ecosystems Protection Act, ban cosmetic use of pesticides province wide, and provide municipalities with funding for sewage treatment systems that recover heat and biofuels from liquid waste.

"We are very pleased that BC communities support our call for a provincial Species and Ecosystems Protection Act," said Candace Batycki of ForestEthics. "Our province has a globally significant wealth of species and ecosystem diversity, and municipal support will be necessary to persuade the provincial government to do what it should have done years ago: adopt a law to protect our at-risk species."

The Priorities for Environmental Leadership coalition used the occasion of the UBCM annual meeting to release their annual list of "Policy Priorities". These are:

- A strong, stand-alone provincial Species and Ecosystems Protection Act;
- An 'Innovation and Legacy Fund' to benefit communities and low-income families; pricing of industrial carbon emissions; and allocation of a portion of the budget surplus to public transit;
- A ten-year moratorium on coalbed methane development, in order to resolve impacts to watersheds and rural communities.
- A Closed System Aquaculture Innovation and Development Fund, to leverage investment from industry in closed containment technology for salmon aquaculture.

"Passing these resolutions confirms that local leaders understand that protecting our quality of life in B.C. requires a healthy environment, a strong economy and socially just transition" said Peter Ronald, BC Sustainable Energy Association provincial coordinator. "Along with UBCM communities' support, we expect the province to work with us to make these priorities a reality."

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