

WHEREAS recent legislation supporting watershed governance, and the 2024 NDP-Green Party Accord recognize the importance of local knowledge around water management;

AND WHEREAS well established multi-interest watershed health organizations are working throughout BC to restore watershed ecosystems from past excessive resource exploitation, and future proof them to adapt to climate impacts;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that NCLGA and UBCM request the Government of British Columbia share a portion of natural resource royalty income to provide financial support to local watershed governance organizations.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Importance of Watersheds in BC

Watersheds are vital for the health of British Columbia's environment, society, and economy. They provide important services like clean drinking water, habitats for wildlife, flood control, and water for farming and industry. The varied geography and climate in British Columbia create many different watersheds, each with its own unique characteristics and issues. Many of these watersheds have suffered due to human actions such as logging, mining, farming, and city growth, leading to habitat loss, pollution, and altered water flow.

Watershed Health Organizations

Various watershed health organizations with multiple interests have been established throughout British Columbia, focusing on harmonizing the diverse demands of resource utilization, including forestry, agriculture, mining, and tourism, while prioritizing environmental sustainability. These organizations generally adopt a collaborative problem-solving strategy, uniting different viewpoints and areas of expertise to tackle challenges related to watershed health. They are essential in rehabilitating watersheds that have suffered from previous resource exploitation, such as deforestation, mining, and industrial pollution, and in equipping them to face the future challenges posed by climate change.

2024 NDP-Green Party Accord

Recent legislation, such as the 2024 NDP-Green Party Accord, reflects the increasing focus on integrating local knowledge and collaboration into natural resource management. This Accord acknowledges the significant role of local communities, including Indigenous peoples, in managing their water resources sustainably. The recognition of local knowledge within the governance framework supports the idea that policies and actions should be informed by the experiences and expertise of those closest to the land and water.

The Need for Financial Support for Watershed Organizations

Local watershed organizations are doing important work, but they often face funding challenges. Many depend on grants, donations, and volunteers, which can be unreliable and not enough to handle the rising needs for ecosystem restoration and climate adaptation. As climate change brings more issues like changing rainfall, droughts, and floods, the need for stronger and more consistent funding for watershed health is becoming critical.