



April 1, 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

On March 24, 2014, the Rural BC Project (RBCP) Steering Committee (comprised of Board members of all three Beetle Action Coalitions) met in Victoria, BC with Donna Barnett, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations for Rural Development to provide an update on the activities of the RBCP since meeting with the Premier and Ministers at the Union Of BC Municipalities held in Vancouver, BC in September 2013.

“We appreciate the invitation to meet with Parliamentary Secretary Barnett, and value the very productive discussion on the challenges and opportunities facing our rural and remote communities, which include First Nations who have a federal and provincial relationship.” said Grace McGregor, Chair of the RBCP Steering Committee.

Over the past 18 months, several presentations on the Rural BC Project have been made to economic development conferences, local government meetings and at a workshop at the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) 2013 Convention. During UBCM 2013, local governments endorsed a resolution supporting the following five major recommendations of the Rural BC Project:

To create:

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| 1. BC Rural Development Strategy | 3. Rural Dividend |
| 2. New Rural Economic Development Programming | 4. Rural Advocacy and Catalyst Organization |
| | 5. Rural BC Venture Capital Program |

As a result of a series of meetings between provincial government elected officials and the Rural BC Project Steering Committee, it was agreed to develop a joint Coalition/government staff working group, consisting of staff from: the three Coalitions; Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations; Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training; Community, Sport & Cultural Development; and, Ministry of Social Development & Social Innovation.

The joint staff working group is tasked to provide additional information to support the on-going dialogue between the provincial government and the Rural BC Project Steering Committee and to develop a set of recommended actions that would further rural development in the province. The recommendations developed from the workshops will be brought forward to Parliamentary Secretary Barnett this spring and the Rural BC Project Steering Committee is committed to continuing to work with the Province on identifying concrete actions that can be undertaken to address these recommendations.

On March 18, 2014, the first in a series of workshops was held in Richmond, BC on the topic of Rural Business Development & Rural Investment Capital. The following organizations participated:

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| All Nations Trust Company | Community Futures Sunshine Coast |
| Northern Development Initiative Trust | Community Futures Central Interior First Nations |
| Southern Interior Development Initiative Trust | Small Business BC |
| Columbia Basin Trust | Canadian Youth Business Foundation & Women's |
| Island Coastal Economic Trust | Enterprise Centre |
| UBCM's Community Ec. Dev. Committee | Western Economic Diversification |
| Community Futures British Columbia | Economic Development Association of BC |
| Community Futures Thompson Country | Small Scale Food Processors Association |
| Community Futures Fraser Fort George | Christina Lake Venture Capital Corporation |
| Community Futures Sun Country | VanCity Foundation |

More information on the Rural BC Project can be found at www.ominecacoalition.ca .