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February 5, 2014

Chair Reginald Moody-Humchitt
Central Coast Regional District
P.O. Box 186
Bella Coola BC V0T 1C0

Dear Chair Moody-Humchitt:

Re: 2013 Resolutions

Please find attached the provincial response to the 2013 resolution(s) put forward by your Board and endorsed by the UBCM membership at Convention.

I trust this information will be of assistance to you. Please feel free to contact Reiko Tagami, UBCM Information & Resolutions Coordinator with any questions.

Tel: 604.270.8226 ext. 115 Email: rtagami@ubcm.ca

Sincerely,

Director Rhona Martin
President

Enclosure

RECEIVED

FEB 17 2014

Central Coast Regional District

Board Meeting

MAR 13 2014

GCRD ITEM

F(a)

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WHEREAS under the BC Human Rights Code, employees are entitled to work in an environment which is free from harassment, bullying, and discrimination;

AND WHEREAS some elected officials undertake to harass, bully, or discriminate against others within the local government workplace, and current provincial regulations lack the teeth to punish or enforce the removal from office elected officials who abuse their office by harassing, bullying or discriminating against others:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government take immediate steps to put in place legislation that will enforce severe consequences, including removal from office, for persons who abuse their office as elected officials by harassing, bullying, or discriminating against others within their local government environment.

CONVENTION DECISION: **ENDORSED**

PROVINCIAL RESPONSE

Ministry of Jobs, Tourism & Skills Training & Minister Responsible for Labour

The Government of British Columbia takes all matters concerning bullying and harassment in the workplace seriously. The safety of all British Columbia workers is a priority for government and such behaviour in the workplace is completely unacceptable. Government is very appreciative that the UBCM convention addressed the issue of bullying and harassment, as it impacts local government employers, supervisors and workers in such a direct and clear manner.

Government and WorkSafeBC have taken strong action to address this matter. Government passed Bill 14, Workers Compensation Amendment Act, 2011, in May 2012. The primary change was to amend the mental stress provisions of the Workers Compensation Act, which previously compensated acute reactions to a single, sudden and traumatic event, but excluded chronic stress conditions arising from the workplace. The Workers Compensation Act now provides that mental disorders resulting from one or more traumatic events, as well as mental disorders resulting from significant work-related stressors such as bullying and harassment (i.e., chronic stress), are now compensated. There is explicit recognition of bullying or harassment as significant work-related stressors that can result in a compensable mental disorder. Government made its position on bullying and harassment clear by stating that these destructive behaviours are simply not acceptable at any level.

As part of this initiative, WorkSafeBC was tasked with developing a policy on bullying and harassment under the existing Occupational Health and Safety Regulation to prevent and address this behaviour in the workplace. WorkSafeBC's Board of Directors approved this policy at its March 2013 meeting and WorkSafeBC has posted the approved policy on its website and has sent e-news notifications to over 10,000 stakeholders in BC. The policy became effective on November 1, 2013. Like all other employers in British Columbia, local governments will also be responsible for ensuring that they adhere to this policy.

On October 2, 2013, WorkSafeBC held a stakeholder and media event in Vancouver, to mark the introduction of its Occupational Health and Safety policies on bullying and harassment and to promote the resources that will be made available in a Workplace Bullying and Harassment Tool Kit. Some municipal leaders may have attended this important event.

Government encourages all persons working for BC local governments, whether they be elected officials, supervisors or workers, to view the following link to the WorkSafeBC website. It provides important, detailed information as to the duties and responsibilities of employers, supervisors and workers regarding bullying and harassment in the workplace.

<http://www2.worksafebc.com/Topics/BullyingAndHarassment/home.asp>

Regarding the specific concern that government takes steps to enact Legislation that will provide further consequences for bullying and harassment in the workplace, government does not have plans at this time to introduce additional legislative measures. Government has taken action by amending the Workers Compensation Act and WorkSafeBC has directly addressed this issue in its regulations and policies. Government is confident that these actions, which are unparalleled in other jurisdictions across Canada, will have a significant impact on addressing these unacceptable workplace behaviours. Local governments can also adopt formal policies to promote a bullying and harassment-free workplace. Such policies could assist in ensuring elected officials are clear on the expectations for their role in dealing with staff. Additionally, provisions in collective agreements and provisions in contracts for management can draw on Provincial legislation and policy guidelines (such as the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation) to assist in setting out the rights and duties of employees.