
BACKGROUND

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Office of the Premier

MOU on Interprovincial Emergency Management Assistance

B.C. and Alberta have formally agreed to share emergency resources and information to assist each other if a major emergency overwhelms the resources of either province. The MOU on Interprovincial Emergency Management Assistance outlines a framework for both provinces to take a collaborative planning approach to managing emergencies. The provinces agree to share information such as situation reports, risk assessments and impact analysis as well as public communications. The MOU also provides for sharing resources to ensure a prompt and effective response to emergencies.

For instance, in 2006, the Provincial Emergency Operations Centre in Prince George, working with the Alberta Ministry of Sustainable Resource Development, co-ordinated the rescue of 48 forestry workers working on both sides of the B.C.-Alberta border. The workers were trapped by a severe snowstorm and thanks to the co-ordinated effort on all sides, were rescued without incident. This rescue included three search and rescue teams from B.C., RCMP on both sides of the border, West Fraser Timber and Department of National Defence.

Today's MOU will solidify those efforts in all areas of emergency management, including fire, flood and other emergencies.

Media contacts:

Tracy Balash, Alberta Municipal Affairs and Housing: 780 422-8817 / 717-7721 (cell)
Glen Plummer, B.C. Provincial Emergency Program: 250 952-4846

MOU on Radiation Therapy

Through this MOU, B.C. and Alberta will develop a joint plan to make radiation therapy more accessible in high-demand periods. The provinces will work together with cancer boards and agencies, regional health authorities and other health system providers to develop an interprovincial approach for radiation therapy that will improve efficiencies and access to radiation therapy. Alberta and British Columbia already collaborate to provide cancer services for residents of north and southeastern B.C., and north and southwestern Alberta. This MOU will enable the expansion of that collaboration in a way that will result in even more timely and efficient access for patients. The provinces will report back in April 2008.

Media contacts:

Shannon Haggerty, Alberta Health and Wellness: 780-427-5207 / 720-8431 (cell)
Marisa Adair, B.C. Health Communications: 250 952-1889 | 250 920-8500

MOU on Capital Program Development

The agreement enables the two provinces to co-ordinate public-private financing and procurement for capital projects by sharing information. British Columbia and Alberta are among North America's fastest-growing regions, and public-private partnerships have proven themselves as an important tool that can help meet infrastructure needs and demands from a growing population. P3s can help deliver more and better infrastructure, in a timely manner and at a fixed cost, thereby ensuring the best value for taxpayers' dollars.

By working together, the two provinces will:

- harmonize and coordinate public-private partnership finance and procurement processes;
- increase the number of private sector proponents in the market, resulting in greater competition; and
- explore opportunities for joint investment.

This MOU is similar to agreements Partnerships BC has in place with Ontario Infrastructure and Partnerships Quebec, and could serve as a model for agreements with other provinces. This MOU broadly describes the scope of areas of co-operation. It will be supplemented with subsequent agreements that further define collaboration between Alberta and B.C.

Media contacts:

Bart Johnson, Alberta Treasury Board: 780 427-6699 / 446-9190 (cell)
Robert Pauliszyn, B.C. Finance Communications: 250 356-2821

MOU on Procurement Framework for Medical Devices and Pharmaceuticals

This MOU will allow Alberta and British Columbia to explore opportunities for joint savings for the procurement of pharmaceuticals and medical devices. As well, the provinces will explore the development of a test case for a joint tender process, including publicly funded blood glucose test strips and work on distribution systems and processes. The provinces will also work to develop a collaborative approach for vaccines purchase, their distribution systems and processes.

Media contacts:

Shannon Haggerty, Alberta Health and Wellness: 780 427-5207 / 720-8431 (cell)
Marisa Adair, B.C. Health Communications: 250 952-1889 | 250 920-8500

Credit Transfer Protocol

The governments of Alberta and B.C. also expressed support for the transfer protocol to ensure students will receive academic credit for their successfully completed courses when transferring to equivalent programs at Alberta and British Columbia institutions.

Students in the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut can also take advantage of the transfer protocol. The protocol will continue to improve opportunities for students throughout Canada by giving other provincial jurisdictions a model to work with their post-secondary institutions and transfer bodies.

Media Contacts:

Marie Iwanow, Alberta Advanced Education and Technology: 780 427-5196 / 721-4046 (cell)
Corrina Filion, B.C. Advanced Education Communications: 250 952-6400

Update on the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement

Under the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA), joint professional credential requirements have been successfully negotiated for five professions (acupuncturists, chiropractors, occupational therapists, and water and waste water operators) so these professionals can work in either province without taking extra steps to have their credentials recognized. Work is well underway to reconcile the nearly 250 identified occupations over the next two years that do not currently enjoy full labour mobility between British Columbia and Alberta.

As of April 1, 2007, significant new opportunities are available for suppliers interested in bidding on a broader range of government procurement opportunities. Other benefits include:

- Requirements for companies and workers to maintain local offices have been eliminated.
- Business subsidies that favour one company over another, or that encourage re-location, are now prohibited.
- Unnecessarily differing standards and regulations across all sectors of the economy, including financial services, energy and transportation, are being addressed.
- An effective dispute resolution mechanism has been established.

General media enquiries may be directed to:

Mike Morton
Press Secretary
Office of the Premier of British Columbia
250 213-8218

David Sands
Alberta Premier's Communications Office
780 415-2417
780 619-7586 (cell)

Rena Kendall-Craden
Communications Director
Ministry of Economic Development
250 952-0152

Carol Chawrun
Alberta International, Intergovernmental and
Aboriginal Relations Communications
780 422-2465
780 916-4739 (cell)

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