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March 27, 2020
File No.: 0530-02

The Honourable Mike Farnworth
Room 128 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Via Email: PSSG.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Farnworth:

Re: 911 Call Answer Levy on Cellphones

The Regional Board of the Regional District of Central Okanagan at its meeting of March 12, 2020 adopted the following resolution:

"THAT the Regional Board agree to advocate for the establishment of a province-wide 911 call answer levy on cell phones and the consistent application of 911 service standards that are aligned with the federal network of public safety answering points across Canada;

AND FURTHER THAT Chair Given be authorized to send a letter to the Honourable Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General in support of this matter and cc'd to all regional districts in British Columbia.

The Board is aware that in October 2018 your Ministry notified UBCM that it was reinvigorating work related to 911 emergency communication service delivery in BC, and further that in 2019 a new 911 Steering Committee was established with representatives from local governments, indigenous organizations, RCMP, Fire, Ambulance, Telus, E-Comm 911 and national/provincial 911 working groups. We also understand this initiative is a work in progress and that the Province recognizes the advantages of a 911 call answer levy on cellphones and that it is a significant public safety issue needing a province-wide approach.

On behalf of the Regional Board, I encourage you once the current pandemic and state of emergency ends, understanding the economic challenges that lay ahead and the complex landscape of 9-1-1 emergency communications, not to delay implementation of a provincial approach and passage of a 9-1-1 Bill. The Board further encourages consideration for the Call Levy dollars not to be put into provincial general revenue but establish an independent corporation with a clear mandate and appropriate authority to deliver the service.

Respectfully,

Gail Given
Chair

cc: BC Regional Districts
Premier John Horgan (premier@gov.bc.ca)
Deputy Solicitor General, Mark Sieben - PSSG.Minister@gov.bc.ca