



# BC Urban Mayors' Caucus Meets with Federal Leader of the Official Opposition on BC's Urban Challenges

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VICTORIA, BC – Today, Kelowna Mayor Colin Basran and Victoria Mayor Lisa Helps, co-chairs of the B.C. Urban Mayors' Caucus, along with BCUMC members, met with Federal Leader of the Official Opposition, Erin O'Toole, to discuss areas of alignment between the priorities of his party and the BCUMC Federal Blueprint for BC's Urban Future.

Local governments need willing partners at the Federal level to advance key issues of concern. These include housing affordability, transportation, mental health and addictions treatment and an expanded set of sustainable, predictable and reliable funding tools to address the needs of our growing communities, upgrade aging infrastructure, and create accessible and sustainable cities.

"On behalf of the B.C. Urban Mayors' Caucus, we would like to thank Mr. O'Toole for meeting to begin to explore our shared priorities," said Mayor Lisa Helps. "We look forward to having a champion in Ottawa to advocate and push for changes on areas of shared interest to support cities to recover from the pandemic and flourish into the future."

Mr. O'Toole expressed his interest in advocating to work towards addressing these concerns with the Federal government in a way which will raise the profile of these issues.

"It was a pleasure to meet with the B.C. Urban Mayors' Caucus and hear the priorities and concerns they have for their constituents," said O'Toole. "Municipalities have been on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic, and play a vital role in the safe reopening and recovery of this country. It's clear that urgent action is needed on several issues to help improve the lives of British Columbians. We need to tackle Canada's opioid and addictions crisis, skyrocketing housing prices, and get infrastructure built. It's time for real leadership on these important issues, and Canada's Conservatives remain committed to working with B.C. Urban Mayors' Caucus in order to deliver tangible results for their constituents."

"We are also encouraged to hear that Mr. O'Toole recognizes the pressing need to address the opioid crisis through complex health and housing services here in BC. People with complex

health needs are falling through the cracks and aren't being served by the supportive housing models and programs currently available," said Mayor Colin Basran. "It's important that our Federal partners are working with cities and the Province to place this issue on high alert and work together to find solutions."

The BCUMC appreciates the responsiveness of Mr. O'Toole's office to meet with the BCUMC, which represents 55 per cent of BC's population. The caucus has sent meeting requests to all federal leaders following the election and look forward to meeting with his counterparts, Jagmeet Singh and Prime Minister Trudeau at their earliest convenience.

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**About the BC Urban Mayors' Caucus**

BC Urban Mayors' Caucus is an informal, non-partisan group of mayors from Abbotsford, Burnaby, Coquitlam, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nanaimo, New Westminster, Prince George, Richmond, Saanich, Surrey, Vancouver and Victoria, representing over 55 per cent of the province's total population. The group came together in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and acts as a unified voice on critical issues facing their communities and urban British Columbia. [www.bcurbanmayorscaucus.ca](http://www.bcurbanmayorscaucus.ca).