



JOINT NEWS RELEASE

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MAJOR TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING FOR THE WEST COAST

Ucluelet and Tofino Receive Funding to Support Year-Round Tourism



Ucluelet: Wild Pacific Trail



Tofino: Joe David Čiinut (Totem) Carver

TOFINO AND UCLUELET B.C. – On Wednesday, April 24th, 2019, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Lisa Beare announced changes to the Resort Municipality Initiative (RMI) program that will support long-term planning and investment for tourism infrastructure on the West Coast. In the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the Districts of Ucluelet and Tofino will receive \$384,368 and \$1,192,944, respectively, in provincial funding to upgrade and invest in community tourism assets and programming.

Ucluelet Mayor Mayco Noel thanked the Province for making the RMI program a permanent funding source for resort communities. “The RMI program continues to grow and strengthen each year. The guaranteed funding allows the District to plan and create more community assets. It’s a wonderful program and all residents benefit from the outcomes of the projects.”

The RMI program specifically addresses and supports the unique challenges and opportunities faced by small municipalities such as Tofino and Ucluelet by providing funding for amenities that our communities could not otherwise afford, but that are required to meet the expectations of visitors. Not only are the funds designed to diversify municipal revenue and tax base, investments are reviewed annually to ensure that projects increase employment, visitor activity, and tourism as an economic driver for the region as a whole.

“We are so appreciative of the strategic and practical investments the Ministry has made in our communities”, said Mayor of Tofino, Josie Osborne. “Visitors come to the West Coast and expect certain amenities like accessible trails, great special events, and transportation to the beaches, but asking local residents to pay for it is a challenge. These investments are critical to small communities like ours, and improve the quality of life for residents as well as the visitor experience.”

EXAMPLE RMI PROJECTS ON THE WEST COAST:

- Public Washrooms
- Accessible Beach Accesses
- Emergency Shelter
- Parks and Trails
- Downtown Vitalization
- Seasonal Shuttle Service
- Special Events and Festival Support
- Public Art

Province-wide funding will be increased to \$13 million in 2019-20 from of \$10.5 million annually in previous years. Designated resort municipalities will receive a confirmed amount each year that is based on hotel tax that was collected in their community in the previous three years plus an additional amount based on year-to-year improvements.

In the past, the RMI was not part of the ministry's core budget, making it difficult for resort municipalities to plan long-term projects. Now part of the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture's core budget, the Districts of Tofino and Ucluelet can plan for tourism-oriented community upgrades that will support the region's growing economy.

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