



**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING  
AGENDA  
Thursday, April 16, 2026**

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**CALL TO ORDER**

**First Nations Acknowledgement**

**AGENDA & SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA**

**April 16, 2026**

Approve

**MINUTES**

**Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes - February 12, 2026**

Page 3-13

Approve

**DELEGATIONS**

**NORTHERN INTERIOR RURAL DIVISION OF FAMILY PRACTICE -  
Errol Winter, Executive Director**

Re: Healthcare Recruitment and Retention

**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Amy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Planning and Development  
Services - Heritage Conservation Act Transformation Project  
Revisions**

Page 13-18

Recommendation

**ADMINISTRATION REPORTS****Megan D'Arcy, Regional Agriculture Coordinator - Provincial  
Agricultural Land Commission Staff Layoffs**

Page 19-20

Receive

**Megan D'Arcy, Regional Agriculture Coordinator - Solutions for  
Sustainable Livestock Processing in Northwest BC Report**

Page 21-72

Receive

**John Illes, Chief Financial Officer - Continuity of Reserves**

Page 73-76

Receive and Discussion

**ADMINISTRATION CORRESPONDENCE****North Central Local Government Association and City of Dawson  
Creek - Request for Support - Improved Access to Publicly  
Funded Mental Health Services Resolution**

Page 77

Direction/Receive

**SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA****NEW BUSINESS****ADJOURNMENT**



**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO**  
**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING**  
**MINUTES**

**Thursday, February 12, 2026**

- Directors Present: Chair Mark Parker  
 Gladys Atrill  
 Shane Brienen  
 Leroy Dekens  
 Martin Elphee  
 Judy Greenaway  
 Clint Lambert  
 Linda McGuire  
 Shirley Moon  
 Kevin Moutray  
 Chris Newell - left at 11:53 a.m., returned at 12:03 p.m.  
 Michael Riis-Christianson  
 Stoney Stoltenberg  
 Sarrah Storey  
 Henry Wiebe
- Staff: Curtis Helgesen, Chief Administrative Officer  
 Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services  
 - left at 10:52 a.m., returned at 10:55 a.m.  
 John Illes, Chief Financial Officer  
 Sarah Brand, Recycling Coordinator - left at 10:50 a.m.  
 Trina Bysouth, Protective Services Clerk - left at 10:50 a.m.  
 Alex Eriksen, Director of Environmental Services  
 - arrived at 10:55 a.m.  
 Cameron Hart, Community Development Coordinator - left at 10:50 a.m.  
 Kaia Nitchie, First Nations Liaison - left at 10:50 a.m.  
 Maria Sandberg, Parks and Recreation Coordinator - left at 10:50 a.m.  
 Danielle Sapach, Administration Clerk - left at 10:50 a.m.  
 Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Corporate Services

Thursday, February 12, 2026

2 of 10

Christopher Walker, Emergency Services  
Manager- left at 10:50 a.m.

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\* **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Parker called the meeting to order at 10:45 a.m.

**First Nations Acknowledgement**

\* **Recognition of Tumbler Ridge**

Chair Parker, the Board and staff recognized the February 10, 2026 tragedy in Tumbler Ridge with a moment of silence.

**AGENDA & SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA**

**February 12, 2026**

**2026-COWM-058**

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Storey

That the Committee of the Whole Agenda for February 12, 2026 be approved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**MINUTES**

**Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes - January 15, 2026**

**2026-COWM-059**

Moved by Director Greenaway

Seconded by Director Dekens

That the Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes for January 15, 2026 be approved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning and Development Services - Direct**

Thursday, February 12, 2026

3 of 10

## **Action Enforcement Policy**

Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning and Development Services provided a PowerPoint Presentation.

### Direct Action Enforcement Policy

- Definition
- *Local Government Act*
- RDBN Enforcement Options
- Examples
- Why a Board Policy?

Discussion took place regarding:

- A property in Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural) that is a challenge
- Policy provides direction to staff regarding steps to be followed to ensure
  - Procedural fairness
  - Compliance with legislation
  - Consistent and predictable direct action enforcement process
  - Reduces the liability for RDBN taxpayers
- Compliance and ticketing
  - Each approach is independent of one another
  - Issuing of a ticket and cost recovery
  - Direct approach for hazardous waste, unsightly premises
  - Court Order
    - Courts determine cost recovery
- Need for programs similar to the Home Action Response Teams (Hart) in Vancouver that provides a coordinated community response for those impacted by hoarding
- The Policy is mostly a complaint driven process except for situations involving hazardous or unsightly premises
- Challenging for some property owners to pay for cleanup action if added to property taxes
- Electoral Area E where the Unsightly Premises Bylaw doesn't exist if a situation is unsafe the Board may direct staff to address the issue
- Legislation and legal considerations regarding liability and notification to involved parties
- Rights of property owners
- Variables staff take into account and bringing forward to the Board to determine

Thursday, February 12, 2026

4 of 10

action

- Staff to bring forward the Policy at the February 26, 2026 Board Meeting.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

### **Alex Eriksen, Director of Environmental Services - DRAFT Solid Waste Management Facility and User Fee Bylaw No. 2090**

#### **2026-COWM-060**

Moved by Director Dekens

Seconded by Director Stoltenberg

That the Committee receive the Director of Environmental Services' Draft Solid Waste Management Facility and User Fee Bylaw No. 2090 memorandum.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The following was discussed:

- Definition of contaminated soil and Industrial limits
- Outside material
  - Benefit to landfill operations
- Contaminated Soil
  - Ambient soil containing arsenic
  - The landfill is unable to accept the material when arsenic levels are above industrial levels
  - Town of Smithers ambient soil arsenic levels
    - Some soils are being taken to Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine
  - Hazardous waste site for B.C. is located in Fort St. John
- Fee structure and cost recovery
- Currently no fees for residential waste disposal
- De-watered lagoon sludge
  - Village of Granisle
- Costs of Environmental Services borne by all RDBN taxpayers
- Staff to bring forward Bylaw No. 2090 at the February 26, 2026 Board Meeting.

## **ADMINISTRATION REPORTS**

### **John Illes, Chief Financial Officer - Updated Budget for Major Services**

#### **2026-COWM-061**

Thursday, February 12, 2026

5 of 10

Moved by Director Stoltenberg  
Seconded by Director Storey  
That the Committee receive the Chief Financial Officer's Updated Budget for Major Services memorandum.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The Committee discussed the following:

- Directors Remuneration
- Minister and Deputy Minister Meeting budget
  - Remove at Board's discretion
- Expenditures: Operations - Landfilling Sites
- Special Projects (612801)
- Agriculture Expenses
  - Budget including staff
  - Grant funding
- Transfers from reserves of \$535,000
  - New capital items
  - Identifying areas to allocate the budget
- Environmental Services
  - Cost of maintenance and site maintenance
  - Staff CPI wage increase in accordance with the Collective Agreement
- General Government
  - Public relations
- Consider increasing the weed control budget
- Impact of sawmill closures in the region on respective municipal budgets
- Bringing forward a budget with a 1.7% increase
- Self-insure and risk management
  - Increasing insurance deductibles
- Lowering taxation
  - Service levels
  - Value of services.

**Lunch at 12:07 p.m.**

**Reconvened at 12:47 p.m.**

CAO Helgesen provided an overview:

Thursday, February 12, 2026

6 of 10

- Environmental Services
  - Cost of equipment
- Benefits of RBA funding
- Balancing taxation and responsibility to constituents
- Hospital district taxation
- Board consideration of taxation for the region.

CFO Illes noted the cost reduction in general government with a 1% decrease in taxation. CFO Illes spoke about the Impacts to the Residential Tax Payers table in the report.

Staff will bring forward a 2026 Budget for major services to an increase equal to inflation, 1.7% and explore the possibility of removing Minister and Deputy Minister Meeting budget line item.

**2026-COWM-062**

Moved by Director Riis-Christianson

Seconded by Director Newell

That staff bring back the 2026 budget for major services to an increase equal to inflation of 1.7% and explore the possibility of removing the Minister and Deputy Minister line item and other potential areas for reductions.

Opposed: Director Greenaway

CARRIED

**John Illes, Chief Financial Officer - 2026 Draft Capital Budget****2026-COWM-063**

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Dekens

That the Committee receive the Chief Financial Officer's 2026 Draft Capital Budget memorandum.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Discussion took place regarding:

- RBA funding expenditure over the 5-year period
  - Prudent management
  - Unspent RBA funds

Thursday, February 12, 2026

7 of 10

- Allocating funding for Command Vehicles to the 2027-2028 budget
  - Additional discussion required with the Rural Fire Chiefs
  - Command truck accessories and equipment
- Main building improvements
- Northern Capital Planning Grant (NCPG) can be utilized for land purchases
- Environmental Services Projects
  - Trailer Roof Structure
  - 2 Skidsteers
  - New Dump Truck
  - New Gate
  - Signs
  - Fall protection WSBC
- Utilizing NCPG funding for Administration items.

**John Illes, Chief Financial Officer - Northern Capital and Planning Grant (NCPG) Update**

**2026-COWM-064**

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Storey

That the Committee recommend that the Board support the final utilization of the Northern Capital and Planning Grant as proposed in the summary, and to include these amounts in the 2026 five-year financial plan as outlined.

And that the Committee recommend that the Board request permission from the Province to transfer any unused reserve funds as of December 31, 2026 to the Environmental Services reserve to be utilized against 2026 capital purchases.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**John Illes, Chief Financial Officer - Growing Community Fund Update**

**2026-COWM-065**

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Elphee

That the Committee recommend that the Board support the final utilization of the Growing Community Funds as proposed in the summary, and to include these amounts in the 2026 five-year financial plan as outlined.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Thursday, February 12, 2026

8 of 10

**John Illes, Chief Financial Officer - Northwest Revenue Sharing (RBA) Update****2026-COWM-066**

Moved by Director Storey

Seconded by Director Wiebe

That the Committee receive the Chief Financial Officer's Northwest Revenue Sharing (RBA) Update memorandum.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The following was noted:

- Environmental Services budget and the need for grant funding
  - Sustainability considerations
- Long-term Development Plan for Northwest Revenue Sharing (RBA) funding
  - Housing
    - First Nations engagement/partnership
  - Asset management funding
    - Asset management job position
  - Rural funding
  - Parks and Recreation
    - No funding allocated
    - Utilizing NCPG funding and Growing Communities funds for 2026 and 2027
  - Childcare Facilities
    - Provincial direction.

**Megan D'Arcy, Regional Agriculture Coordinator - European Union Deforestation Regulation****2026-COWM-067**

Moved by Director Storey

Seconded by Director Wiebe

That the Committee receive the Regional Agriculture Coordinator's European Union Deforestation Regulation memorandum.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Discussion took place regarding:

- ALR land designated for agriculture

Thursday, February 12, 2026

9 of 10

- Trees inhibiting the use of agriculture lands
- Chair Parker spoke with Deputy Minister Michelle Koski, Minister of Agriculture regarding the issue
- Takes effect at the end of 2026 but is currently being implemented
- Impacts and challenges of the *European Union Deforestation Regulation in B.C.*

**Megan D'Arcy, Regional Agriculture Coordinator - Growing Opportunities Podcast, Series 3**

**2026-COWM-068**

Moved by Director Storey

Seconded by Director Lambert

That the Committee receive the Regional Agriculture Coordinator's Growing Opportunities Podcast, Series 3 memorandum.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**ADMINISTRATION CORRESPONDENCE**

**Recommendations from the Premier's Taskforce on Agriculture and Food Economy**

**2026-COWM-069**

Moved by Director Lambert

Seconded by Director Riis-Christianson

That the Committee receive the Administration Correspondence regarding Recommendation from the Premier's Taskforce on Agriculture and Food Economy.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**IN-CAMERA MOTION**

**2026-COWM-070**

Moved by Director Brienens

Seconded by Director Stoltenberg

That this meeting be closed to the public pursuant to Sections 90(1)(c) and 90(1)(l) of the *Community Charter* for the Board to deal with matters relating to:

- Labour Relations
- Strategic Plan.

Thursday, February 12, 2026

10 of 10

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**ADJOURNMENT**

**2026-COWM-071**

Moved by Director Lambert

Seconded by Director Dekens

That the meeting be adjourned at 1:37 p.m.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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Mark Parker, Chair

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Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Corporate Services



## Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Committee of the Whole

**To:** Chair and Committee

**From:** Amy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Planning and Development Services

**Date:** April 16, 2026

**Subject:** *Heritage Conservation Act Transformation Project Revisions*

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**RECOMMENDATION:** **(all/directors/majority)**

That staff be directed to respond to the request for feedback on the *Heritage Conservation Act* Transformation Project Phase 3 Technical Policy Paper – March 2026 with the following comments:

- The Province should ensure that adequate supports are in place for local governments and First Nations to administer the additional roles and responsibilities created by the proposed legislative changes before they are implemented.
  - The Province should refer the draft legislation and regulations to stakeholders for comment prior to adoption.
- 

### BACKGROUND

As previously reported to the Board in September 2025, the Province is undertaking engagement regarding the proposed changes to the *Heritage Conservation Act* (HCA) and associated legislation, regulations, and policy. Due to feedback on the proposed changes, the Province has revised the proposed changes to the HCA.

The proposed changes described by the Province remain in general terms, and the legislation and regulations are not available for review. Therefore, it is difficult for staff to provide any meaningful evaluation or comment regarding the anticipated impact of the proposed changes. The revisions to the proposed changes appear to be an improvement, however, staff remain concerned that the Province's budgetary constraints will prevent them from providing adequate support to local governments and First Nations to implement the changes. The deadline for feedback on the Phase 3 Technical Policy Paper is April 23, 2026.

Proposed Key Policy Changes include:

- The HCA will not include references to "intangible heritage"
- Heritage Management Zones will not be included in the proposed legislative package
- Greater clarity on the scope of agreements with First Nations will be included in the proposed legislative package

- First Nations compliance and enforcement (C&E) agreements will not be included in the proposed legislative package
- “Consent-seeking” language will be removed from permitting decision-making
- Records of engagement will not be a required part of HCA permit applications
- Greater clarity will be provided on the proposal to include required heritage information checks

The revisions to the proposed changes to the HCA are outlined below and organized into categories by the Province. Additional information relating to the proposal is available in the attached Technical Policy Paper.

<p><b>Intended Outcome 1: Making Permitting Faster and Easier</b></p> <p>1.1 Project-based permit  1.2 Fit-for-use permits  1.3 Modified permitting requirements  1.4 Statutory Decision-Making Criteria  1.5 Introduce greater regulation of the archaeology profession</p>	<p><b>Intended Outcome 2: Helping People and Communities Rebuild Quicker After Disasters</b></p> <p>2.1: Allow for permitting flexibility to support emergency management</p>
<p><b>Intended Outcome 3: Strengthening the Role of First Nations in Management of Their Cultural Heritage</b></p> <p>3.1: Affirm First Nations’ rights related to cultural heritage  3.2: Affirm First Nations as decision-makers regarding where ancestral remains and heritage belongings are held and cared for  3.3: Protect Indigenous knowledge and heritage data  3.4: Continued use and collection of at-risk heritage belongings by First Nations on Crown land  3.5: Enhance opportunities for agreements with First Nations under the HCA</p>	<p><b>Intended Outcome 4: Protecting Heritage More Effectively</b></p> <p>4.1: Ensure greater recognition of First Nations’ values  4.2: Maintain and clarify automatic protection criteria  4.3: Clarify and streamline heritage designation process  4.4: Clarify and broaden the promotion of diverse cultural heritage in B.C.  4.5: Explore mechanisms for distinct protections based on heritage value  4.6: Heritage Site Boundaries  4.7: Fossils  4.8: Heritage Information Check  4.9: Clarify tools that enable additional archaeological work to be required  4.10: Heritage Management Plans  4.11: Add Violation Tickets and Administrative Monetary Penalties to the Compliance and Enforcement Toolkit  4.12: Duty to report heritage finds</p>

	<p>4.13: Prohibit possession, sale and trade of heritage objects</p> <p>4.14: Enhance compliance and enforcement regime</p> <p>4.15: First Nations' role in compliance and enforcement</p>
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## DISCUSSION

### **Intended Outcome 1: Making Permitting Faster and Easier**

The policy proposals under this outcome aim to make permitting more efficient and transparent, while ensuring decisions are durable, meet constitutional consultation obligations, and minimize risks to heritage sites.

The most significant proposed change to permitting is from a multiple permit system to a single permit system for projects. The single permit would be modular, providing flexibility through the permit process to align with development phases. It is hoped that this will have the effect of streamlining the permitting process. The Province expects this change will simplify administration for all parties, increase process and timeline certainty and result in fewer overall authorizations and referrals.

Staff are supportive of the proposed changes provided there is capacity at the Provincial level to administer the permits.

### **Intended Outcome 2: Helping People and Communities Rebuild Quicker After Disasters**

The objective of the policy proposals under this outcome is to support disaster-impacted communities by providing greater flexibility in the HCA to respond and recover from disasters such as wildfires and floods, and allow people impacted by disasters to return home faster. The proposed tools will compliment authorities in the Emergency and Disaster Management Act (EDMA).

Staff are supportive of the proposed emergency exemptions from permit requirements and the modifications to permit requirements in emergency situations.

### **Intended Outcome 3: Strengthening the Role of First Nations in Management of Their Cultural Heritage**

The objective of the policy proposals under this outcome is to expressly acknowledge or respect First Nations' rights to maintain, control, protect, and develop their heritage, traditional

knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions, and to recognize First Nations' authority and jurisdiction as decision-makers regarding the care and management of their heritage.

Staff support the affirmation of First Nations rights with respect to their heritage in the context of the HCA. It is important that the Province provide adequate resources to First Nations so they are able to fulfil any new statutory obligations.

#### **Intended Outcome 4: Protecting Heritage More Effectively**

The objectives of the policy proposals under this outcome are to modernize the protection framework, enhance due diligence and create greater awareness of HCA requirements early in the process, and enhance the compliance and enforcement toolkit. Staff would like the Province to ensure local governments and other stakeholders have the opportunity to review and provide comment on draft legislation and regulations as stated in the Technical Paper.

#### **FEEDBACK ON TECHNICAL PAPER**

Feedback on the Phase 3 Technical Policy Paper is due by April 23, 2026. Staff recommend responding with the following comments:

- The Province should ensure that adequate supports are in place for local governments and First Nations to administer the additional roles and responsibilities created by the proposed legislative changes before they are implemented.
- The Province should refer the draft legislation and regulations to stakeholders for comment prior to adoption.

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- March 26, 2026 Email from Engage HCA
- [Heritage Conservation Act Transformation Project: Phase 3 Technical Policy Paper \(link\)](#)
- [HCA Webinar Slide Deck \(link\)](#)
- [Board Report – Heritage Conservation Act Transformation Project – Jason Llewellyn \(link\)](#)

#### **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

This topic aligns with the following Strategic Focus Area(s) from the RDBN Strategic Plan:

1. Relationships with First Nations
2. Advocacy with the Province
4. Community and Economic Stability

Additionally, the recommendation supports the following objective(s) related to this Focus Area(s):

- 1.3 Investigate and identify opportunities for the RDBN to provide specific services to First Nations.

**From:** [Engage HCA FOR:EX](#)  
**Subject:** Heritage Conservation Act Transformation Project – Technical Policy Paper for Review  
**Date:** March 26, 2026 2:38:53 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Please do not click on links on open attachments from unknown sources.

Hello,

As part of the next stage of the Heritage Conservation Act Transformation Project (HCATP), the Province is sharing a Technical Policy Paper. This paper outlines how proposed reforms to the *Heritage Conservation Act* (HCA) have evolved and incorporated feedback received through engagement with First Nations, local governments, stakeholders, and the public, and provides further detail on the full suite of proposed policy changes.

**The Technical Policy Paper is available for review on our public-facing website:**  
<https://engage.gov.bc.ca/heritageconservationact/technical-policy-paper/>

Feedback on the Technical Policy Paper is welcomed until April 23, 2026, through written submissions sent to [EngageHCA@gov.bc.ca](mailto:EngageHCA@gov.bc.ca). Responses to the Technical Policy Paper will inform provincial government direction on a Request for Legislation, which is the next step before legislative drafting will begin.

The Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) is hosting a webinar with Ministry of Forests staff from the Heritage Conservation Act Transformation Project on April 2, 2026, to update UBCM members on proposed legislative changes to the *Heritage Conservation Act*. Details and registration information can be found on the [UBCM website](#).

We appreciate your continued interest and participation in this important work and look forward to your feedback. Our team is happy to meet with you if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

**HCA Transformation Project Team**

Ministry of Forests

Email: [EngageHCA@gov.bc.ca](mailto:EngageHCA@gov.bc.ca)

Project Website: [HCATP Webpage](#)



#### Collection Notice

Your personal information is collected under section 26(c) and (e) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act for the purposes of contacting you and collecting information for the Heritage Conservation Act Transformation Project (HCATP). If you have any questions about the collection of your information, please contact HCATP Team Staff at [EngageHCA@gov.bc.ca](mailto:EngageHCA@gov.bc.ca).



## Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Committee of the Whole

**To:** Chair and Committee  
**From:** Megan D'Arcy, Regional Agriculture Coordinator  
**Date:** April 16, 2026  
**Subject:** **Provincial Agricultural Land Commission Staff Layoffs**

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**RECOMMENDATION:** **(all/directors/majority)**

Discussion.

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### BACKGROUND

The British Columbia's Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) is laying off six staff due to ongoing financial constraints and a lack of recent budget increases, despite rising workloads. According to ALC leadership, demand has grown significantly in areas such as application processing, compliance, enforcement, and legal obligations, while funding has remained effectively flat, leading to reduced service capacity and likely longer wait times. An [article in Country Life](#) (published March 25, 2026) also highlighted a mismatch between the provincial government's stated commitment to protecting agricultural land and its limited funding increases for the ALC since 2017, especially compared to earlier budget growth. Critics, including opposition politicians, warn that underfunding and staffing cuts could weaken oversight of farmland and lead to more unauthorized activities, raising concerns about the long-term protection of agricultural land in the province. ([Country Life in BC](#)).

The ALC's March 23 letter to partner organizations included information about the difficult but necessary decision as it relates to the expansion of legislatively mandated responsibilities and increased workload across the organization combined with inflationary pressures and negotiated wage increases. These factors made it impossible for the ALC, despite extensive cost-containment measures, to operate within the approved budget and retain the existing staffing complement. ALC Chair Jennifer Dyson reports that "Despite these efforts, salary and benefit costs now exceed available funding, leaving staffing reductions as the only remaining option to ensure fiscal compliance."

The letter also indicates that staff reductions will impact service capacity and some areas of the province will experience changes to processing timelines.

**STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

This topic aligns with the following Strategic Focus Area(s) from the RDBN Strategic Plan:

4. Community and Economic Sustainability

Additionally, the recommendation supports the following objective(s) related to this Focus Area(s):

4.2 Revisit, prioritize and advance recommendations of the RDBN Food and Agriculture Plan and the work of the Agriculture Coordinator.



## Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Committee of the Whole

**To:** Chair and Committee  
**From:** Megan D'Arcy, Regional Agriculture Coordinator  
**Date:** April 16, 2026  
**Subject:** **Solutions for Sustainable Livestock Processing in Northwest BC Report**

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**RECOMMENDATION:** **(all/directors/majority)**

Receive.

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### BACKGROUND

The RDBN partnered with Making Agriculture Sustainable in the Hazeltons (MASH) and the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine to do a comprehensive evaluation of the livestock services in the central and northwest BC, determine gaps, and recommend steps forward. As the project comes to a close, there are some outcomes to share. The project results have been summarized in a report that can be accessed below and on the RDBN website.

MASH has incorporated the toolkit portion of the project into a comprehensive, resource-based website called [MeatUHere](#). Workshops have been held throughout March in the region that review project findings and walk participants through the [MeatUHere website](#). In addition to a final workshop in Smithers in late April, there will also be a virtual workshop for anyone who is interested.

### ATTACHMENTS:

Solutions for Sustainable Livestock Processing in Northwest BC report

### STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This topic aligns with the following Strategic Focus Area(s) from the RDBN Strategic Plan:

4. Community and Economic Sustainability

Additionally, the recommendation supports the following objective(s) related to this Focus Area(s):

4.2 Revisit, prioritize and advance recommendations of the RDBN Food and Agriculture Plan and the work of the Agriculture Coordinator.



## Solutions for Sustainable Livestock Processing in Northwest BC

**PREPARED BY:**

Laurie Gallant, Society for Making Agriculture Sustainable in the Hazeltons

In partnership with Megan D'Arcy, Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako

March 2026



## Acknowledgements

We sincerely thank the Public Health Association of British Columbia (PHABC) for their generous financial support and valuable advice during this project. The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction provided funding, with PHABC and Food Banks BC helping to facilitate the project.

We are also grateful to the key stakeholders who dedicated their time to participating in interviews and surveys; their valuable perspectives and experiences have substantially informed the development of this report.

We also thank the project team that included three small-scale farmers who raise poultry, sheep, and cattle.

- Laurie Gallant (Project lead and Toolkit Development)
- Megan D'Arcy (Ecosystem Research)
- Firyal Mohamed (Toolkit Development)
- Yoenne Ewald (Ecosystem Research)

The success of local food systems is rooted in the collaboration and dedication of community members, producers, and organizations. These partnerships play a critical role in enhancing food security, supporting economic resilience, and advancing sustainability across the region. Through continued cooperation, we can work towards establishing a stronger and more equitable food system for Northwest BC.

## Table of Contents

<b>1.0 Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2.0 Methodology .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3.0 Background .....</b>	<b>2</b>
3.1 Regional Context .....	2
3.2 Livestock Processing Pathways and Regulatory Context.....	4
3.3 Organic Waste Management and Composting in the Meat Supply Chain .....	6
3.4 Producer Motivations and Farm Structure.....	6
<b>4.0 Existing Livestock Services .....</b>	<b>7</b>
4.1 Abattoirs .....	8
4.2 Farmgate Plus Licensing .....	9
4.3 Cut & Wrap Operations.....	10
<b>5.0 Results &amp; Discussion.....</b>	<b>11</b>
5.1 General Information and Demographics.....	11
5. 2 Business Location, Years in Operation, & Type of Business.....	12
5. 3 Survey Pathway: Livestock Producers.....	13
<i>Distance Travelled to Livestock Service(s)</i> .....	15
<i>Barriers to Livestock Production</i> .....	15
<i>Elements of a Sustainable Food System</i> .....	16
5.4 Survey Pathway: FarmGate and FarmGate Plus Operations.....	17
<i>Elements of a Sustainable Food System</i> .....	18
5.5 Pathway: Abattoir and Cut & Wrap Services .....	19
<i>Staffing and Labour</i> .....	20
<i>Customer Profile</i> .....	21
<i>Elements of a Sustainable Food System</i> .....	21
<b>6.0 Partnerships Supporting Livestock Processing Capacity .....</b>	<b>21</b>
6. 1 Small-Scale Meat Producers Association (SSMPA).....	21
6. 2 Indigenous-Led Livestock Processing and Food Sovereignty Initiatives .....	22
6.3 Role of Partnerships in Addressing Service Gaps .....	23
<b>7.0 Toolkit Development.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>8.0 Conclusions .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>9.0 Recommendations.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>10.0 References .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Appendix I: Survey Questions .....</b>	<b>29</b>

## 1.0 Introduction

Livestock production and processing services are a critical component of food security, economic resilience, and rural livelihoods in Northwest British Columbia. Producers across the Regional Districts of Bulkley-Nechako and Kitimat-Stikine operate in a geographically large, sparsely populated region characterized by long travel distances, seasonal constraints, and limited access to inspected slaughter and meat processing infrastructure.

The objective of this report is to provide a comprehensive snapshot of the livestock processing ecosystem in Northwest BC as it existed in 2025. Drawing on surveys, interviews, and stakeholder engagement, the report examines the availability and accessibility of slaughter, processing, and cut and wrap services, alongside the regulatory, infrastructure, labour, and business conditions that shape how these services operate.

Particular attention is given to the impacts of the provincial Meat Inspection Regulation (Section 3.2) and the role of FarmGate and FarmGate Plus licensing (Sections 3.2 and 4.2) in addressing service gaps in regions underserved by licensed abattoirs. While these licensing pathways have enabled some producers to continue operating locally, they also introduce new challenges related to scale, infrastructure investment, labour capacity, and regulatory complexity.

By identifying persistent barriers and emerging opportunities within the livestock services ecosystem, this report aims to inform regional planning, support collaborative decision-making, and guide future investment. The findings are intended to support producers, processors, local governments, and partner organizations working to strengthen the long-term sustainability and resilience of local meat systems in Northwest BC.

This report is the result of a collaboration between Making Agriculture Sustainable in the Hazeltons (MASH), the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, and the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine to better understand livestock processing service gaps and opportunities in Northwest British Columbia.

## 2.0 Methodology

This study used a mixed-methods approach to capture the experiences of different actors within the livestock processing system in Northwest British Columbia.

Data were collected through a combination of an online survey and semi-structured interviews with livestock producers, processors, and service providers across the Regional Districts of Bulkley-Nechako and Kitimat-Stikine. Literature review and government

information also formed an important part of our research. Lastly, with three of the four project team members being small-scale livestock farmers, lived experience also informed the interpretation of the results and the recommendations.

An anonymous online survey was used to capture quantitative and qualitative information related to livestock production, processing needs, service access, and perceived barriers. The survey was distributed through multiple channels, including email lists, social media, printed posters, and regional newsletters circulated by Making Agriculture Sustainable in the Hazeltons (MASH) and the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako. The survey was open from late June to early September 2025, allowing respondents to participate during both peak and shoulder production seasons.

Because survey respondents entered the questionnaire through different pathways depending on their role in the meat system, some themes appear across multiple sections of this report. Where this occurs, repetition reflects convergence of experience rather than duplication of data.

In addition to the survey, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of participants, including livestock producers, abattoir operators, FarmGate and FarmGate Plus license holders, and cut and wrap operators. Interviews followed the general structure of the survey while allowing for more in-depth discussion of operational challenges, regional service gaps, and potential solutions. Participants were offered honorariums in recognition of their time and expertise.

Survey responses were reviewed for completeness, and partially completed responses were excluded from analysis. Quantitative survey data were summarized descriptively, while qualitative responses and interview notes were reviewed thematically to identify recurring issues and areas of convergence across respondent groups.

This approach captured both the scale of regional service challenges and the lived experiences of producers and service providers. While the findings reflect the perspectives of those who participated, they provide a robust snapshot of the livestock processing ecosystem in Northwest BC and inform the analysis, conclusions, and recommendations presented in this report.

## 3.0 Background

### 3.1 Regional Context

Livestock production and associated processing services play an essential role in the agricultural economy of central and northern British Columbia, particularly within the Regional Districts of Bulkley-Nechako and Kitimat-Stikine. The region supports a wide range

of livestock operations, from large commercial cattle ranches to small-scale, diversified farms that supply local markets and communities.

The geographic scale and rural nature of northwest BC significantly shape how livestock production and processing occur. Producers operate across long distances, often far from licensed slaughter and processing facilities, and face seasonal constraints related to climate, transportation, and labour availability. These structural conditions influence both the feasibility and cost of accessing livestock services and are central to understanding the challenges identified in this report.

The Nechako Plateau, especially in the vicinity of Vanderhoof, Fraser Lake, and Burns Lake, plays a significant role in northern British Columbia's cattle industry. The region's extensive pasture and hay fields facilitate commercial beef production, complemented by the cultivation of forage and feed grains such as barley and oats. Additionally, dairy farming is present in both Smithers and Vanderhoof, where established operations contribute to the overall agricultural economy of the area.

In addition to commercial livestock production, small-scale and mixed farming systems are widespread throughout the Skeena and Bulkley valleys. These operations commonly integrate livestock—such as cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, poultry, and rabbits—with vegetable, berries, and greenhouse production. Many of these farms sell directly to consumers through farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture programs, small retail outlets, caterers and local restaurants, contributing to food security and local economic resilience.

Indigenous communities across both regional districts also contribute to food production through a combination of traditional harvesting practices and modern agricultural initiatives, including community gardens, greenhouses, and livestock projects. These activities support community food sovereignty while strengthening regional food systems more broadly.

Despite the diversity and importance of livestock production in Northwest BC, producers face persistent challenges. Short growing seasons, long travel distances to markets and services, wildlife pressures, and limited access to slaughter and processing infrastructure all affect production decisions and business viability. These pressures are particularly acute for small-scale and diversified producers, who often lack the scale or capital to absorb rising costs or long-distance transportation requirements.

The table below presents livestock farm data from the 2021 Census of Agriculture (updated in 2023) for the Regional Districts of Bulkley-Nechako and Kitimat-Stikine. Farms may appear in multiple categories where more than one type of livestock is raised.

**Table 1.** Summary statistics from Agriculture Census.

Regional District	Beef cattle	Dairy cattle & milk	Hogs	Poultry & egg	Sheep & goat	Other animal
Kitimat-Stikine	18	1	1	7	3	19
Bulkley-Nechako	229	20	9	14	33	132

*Note: "Other animals" includes bison, elk, deer, horses and other equines, llamas and alpacas, rabbits, mink and other fur-bearing animals, and bees, as defined by the Census of Agriculture.*

Overall, Bulkley-Nechako supports the largest and most diverse livestock sector in the study area, dominated by beef production but with significant numbers of mixed and small-scale operations. While Kitimat-Stikine has fewer livestock farms overall, the region shows a strong presence of small-scale, diversified producers, particularly in poultry and mixed livestock production.

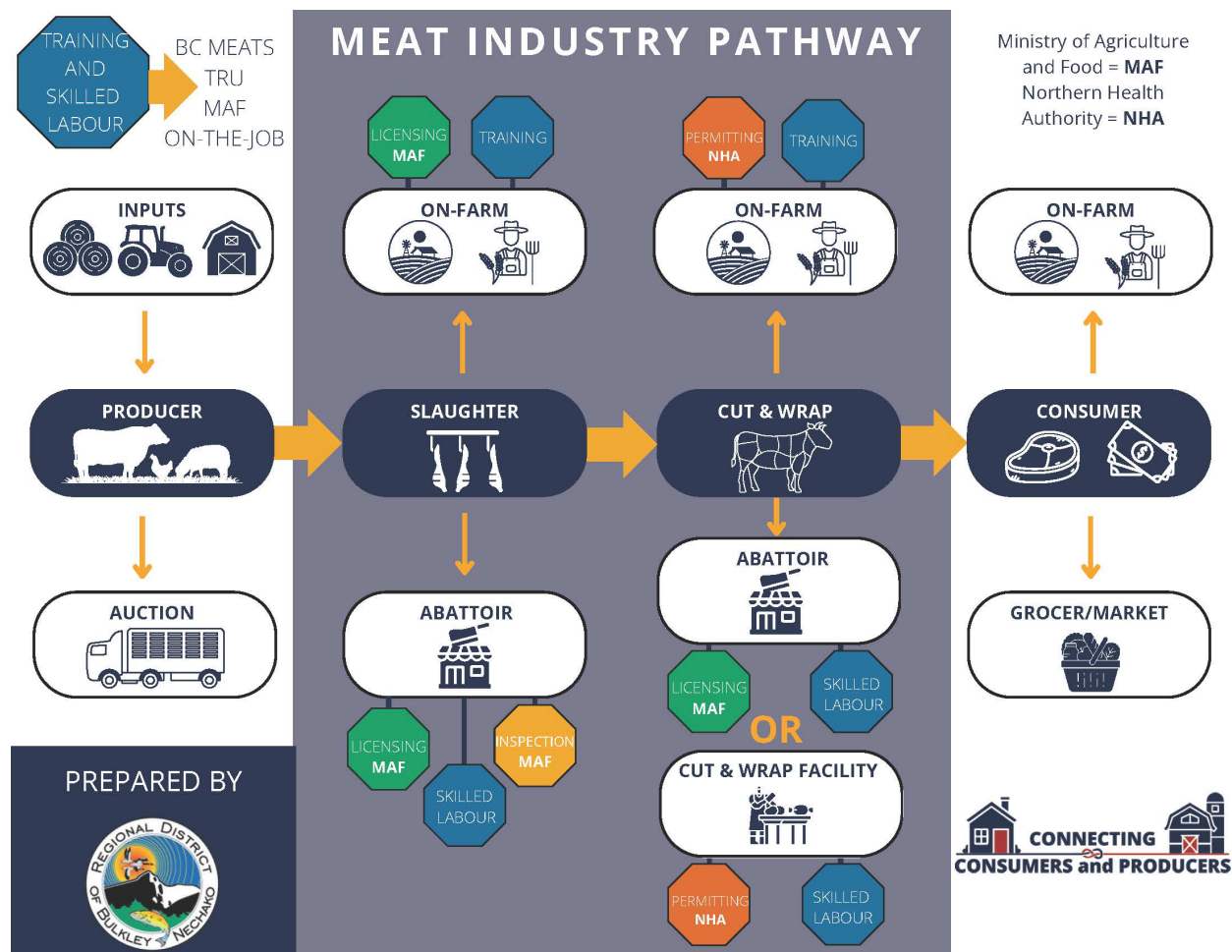
This regional context provides the foundation for understanding current livestock processing needs, service gaps, and the regulatory and infrastructure challenges explored in the sections that follow.

### 3.2 Livestock Processing Pathways and Regulatory Context

Livestock processing in British Columbia operates within a regulated framework that distinguishes between inspected and uninspected slaughter, licensed abattoirs, FarmGate and FarmGate Plus operations, and downstream cut and wrap facilities. Understanding these pathways and their associated regulatory authorities is essential for interpreting the service gaps and capacity constraints identified in this report.

Prior to the introduction of the provincial Meat Inspection Regulation in 2004, livestock slaughter and processing in British Columbia occurred primarily on-farm or at small local facilities operating under varied regional rules. The regulation established uniform, province-wide standards for meat inspection and effectively restricted the sale of meat from uninspected slaughter, with the intent of improving food safety and consistency across the province.

In regions without access to licensed abattoirs, this regulatory shift created significant challenges for small-scale and rural producers. In response, the province introduced licensing pathways that allow for limited, on-farm slaughter and direct sales under specific conditions. These pathways have evolved over time and are now reflected in the FarmGate and FarmGate Plus licensing categories that came into effect in 2021 and are shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Meat industry pathways showing livestock processing options and associated licensing and inspection authorities in British Columbia.

Source: Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (2025).

As illustrated in the pathway graphic, FarmGate and FarmGate Plus operations allow producers to slaughter animals on-farm under defined production limits and sales restrictions, while licensed abattoirs provide inspected slaughter services that permit broader distribution within British Columbia. In both cases, carcasses typically move downstream to licensed cut and wrap facilities for further processing prior to sale.

The regulatory structure depicted in Figure 1 highlights how different processing options are governed by distinct licensing and inspection authorities and how these options function together as a system. This framework provides the basis for understanding why certain services—particularly inspected slaughter and cut and wrap—emerge as critical bottlenecks in northwest BC, and why FarmGate and FarmGate Plus licensing has become

an important, though limited, mechanism for maintaining local meat production in under-served regions.

In addition to inspection and licensing requirements governing slaughter and processing, livestock producers and processors must also manage organic waste streams generated through these activities.

### 3.3 Organic Waste Management and Composting in the Meat Supply Chain

Composting plays an important but often under-recognized role within the local meat supply chain, particularly in relation to the management of organic waste generated through on-farm slaughter, licensed processing, and cut and wrap operations. Although this study did not include survey questions specific to composting practices, waste management is governed by a combination of provincial regulations and local government bylaws that directly affect how livestock producers and processors operate.

In British Columbia, composting of agricultural wastes—including manure, soiled bedding, mortalities, and certain slaughter by-products—is regulated under the Environmental Management Act through instruments such as the Agricultural Environmental Management Code of Practice and the Organic Matter Recycling Regulation, depending on the source and type of material. Land use classification further shapes what is permitted: on lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), composting associated with normal farm use may be allowed, while larger-scale or non-farm composting activities can trigger additional approval requirements from the Agricultural Land Commission and local governments. These regulatory and land-use considerations mean that composting capacity, siting, and compliance can influence the overall feasibility, cost, and environmental performance of local meat production systems. As interest grows in strengthening regional food systems and reducing waste, composting represents a potential point of integration between livestock production, environmental stewardship, and land-use planning that warrants further attention in future research and regional planning efforts.

### 3.4 Producer Motivations and Farm Structure

**Livestock production in northwest British Columbia is motivated by a range of factors that extend beyond direct farm income.** For some producers, raising livestock is closely tied to lifestyle values, land stewardship, food self-provisioning, and maintaining farm classification and associated benefits under provincial taxation and land-use frameworks. In these cases, farm income may be supplementary rather than primary, with many producers relying on off-farm employment to sustain household livelihoods.

This mixed-income model can shape how producers perceive regulatory requirements and service costs associated with slaughter, processing, and waste management. Where farming is not the sole or primary source of income, additional compliance costs,

administrative burden, or infrastructure investments may be experienced as disproportionately onerous relative to direct financial returns. This dynamic may contribute to lower tolerance for regulatory complexity or rising service costs, particularly among small-scale and diversified producers operating at the margins of commercial viability. While this study did not directly examine producer motivations or farm status decisions, this perspective offers a useful context for interpreting responses related to service access, cost sensitivity, and reluctance to pursue licensing or expansion pathways.

## 4.0 Existing Livestock Services

The current capacity with respect to animal processing (slaughter) and meat processing (cutting and wrapping) in both regional districts is a diverse range of inspected, licensed abattoirs, uninspected but licensed Farmgate and Farmgate Plus operations and permitted cut and wrap operations. Table 2 below indicates the current livestock processing services by regional district.<sup>1</sup>

**Table 2.** Livestock processing services offered in 2025 throughout both the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako and Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine.

Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (RDBN)		
DJ Meat Locker Inc.	Abattoir (red meat)	Telkwa
Country Locker	Abattoir (red meat) & Processor (cut & wrap)	Vanderhoof
The Speckled Sow Butchery & Market Ltd.	Farmgate Plus (red meat) & Processor (cut & wrap)	Vanderhoof
The Klassen Cabin	Farmgate Plus (poultry)	Fraser Lake
Happy AG Organic Farm	Farmgate Plus (poultry)	Telkwa
The Smithers Sausage Factory Ltd.	Processor (cut & wrap)	Smithers
W Diamond Ranch	Processor (cut & wrap)	Telkwa
CAST Cuts Butcher Shop	Processor (cut & wrap)	Houston

<sup>1</sup> BC Licensed Seafood and Meat Operators map, linked to BC Meat Inspection and licensing [webpage](#).

Tatalrose Corner Store & Custom Meats	Processor (cut & wrap)	Grassy Plains
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Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine (RDKS)		
Graham Acres Homestead & Creamery	Farmgate	Terrace
Kalum Acres	Farmgate Plus (red meat)	Terrace
TLC Acres	Farmgate Plus (red meat)	Terrace
Kilby Road Cattle Company	Farmgate Plus (red meat)	Terrace
Mount Layton Farm	Farmgate Plus (red meat)	Terrace
Healey's	Farmgate Plus (rabbits)	Terrace
Skeena Valley Meats	Processor (cut & wrap)	Terrace
Tea Creek Farm/Small Scale Meat Producers	Red meat slaughter trailer	Kitwanga
Sik-E-Dakh Community	Meat Processing	Kispiox/Hazelton

## 4.1 Abattoirs

An abattoir is a facility for humane animal slaughter and meat processing, meeting provincial health regulations are vital to local meat supply, offering inspected and licensed services for food safety and quality.

Our region is serviced by two abattoirs, one in Vanderhoof, and one in Telkwa and both are within the boundaries of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Bulkley Valley Custom Slaughter operated the Telkwa abattoir for multiple years prior to its closure in March 2023, providing inspected slaughter services for both red meats and poultry. They also provided a poultry cut and wrap service. Large-scale poultry producers ran their business based on the availability of this service.

After reopening as DJ Meat Locker, the Telkwa abattoir briefly trialed a poultry service but ultimately found it unworkable and stopped offering poultry service altogether. This decision caused a significant disruption in the local meat supply chain and a panic with

larger scale poultry producers. Meanwhile, Country Locker in Vanderhoof has always specialized exclusively in red meat slaughter and processing.

The BC Meat Inspection Program governs abattoir operations and requires a trained Meat Hygiene Inspector to be on-site every day of operation. The roles and responsibilities of the Meat Hygiene Inspector include:

- assess animal prior to slaughter, and perform post-mortem checks on carcasses and meat products to detect signs of disease, defects, or contamination, and isolate any questionable items for further food safety testing,
- verify that abattoirs comply with all provincial rules and regulations, including licensing conditions and procedures for emergency slaughter, and
- ensure humane handling and welfare standards are upheld throughout the facility.

Animals slaughtered at the two abattoirs can be sold anywhere within the province of BC.

## 4.2 Farmgate Plus Licensing

In British Columbia there are two options for setting up licensed slaughter on farm: Farmgate and Farmgate Plus licensing.<sup>2</sup> These licenses were created to support small-scale farmers who want to raise, process, and sell their own meat locally, particularly if there is limited or no access to a licensed abattoir.

A Farmgate license is the simplest option, allowing a producer to slaughter only their own animals, up to the equivalent of five animal units per year (about 5,000 pounds of live weight). Meat processed this way can be sold directly to consumers from the farm, at local farmers' markets within the same regional district, or at markets up to 50 kilometres away. Labels must clearly state that the product was "Not Government Inspected" and is only for sale within those limits.

The Farmgate Plus license offers more flexibility, allowing producers to slaughter both their own animals and those from other farms, with a larger annual limit of 25 animal units (about 25,000 pounds of live weight). Meat from Farmgate Plus operations can be sold more widely, including restaurants and retailers, anywhere within BC.

Both licenses come with responsibilities: operators must complete SlaughterRight training, prepare a food safety and humane slaughter plan, and register a premises ID. While these licenses give farmers more opportunities to meet local demand for meat, the products

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<sup>2</sup> FarmGate and FarmGate Plus licensing: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/food-safety/meat-inspection-licensing/farmgate-and-farmgate-plus-licences>

cannot be sold outside the province, and all animals processed count toward the annual production limits.

If a Farmgate or Farmgate Plus facility is located on land within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), there are additional rules to consider.<sup>3</sup> Slaughtering animals raised on the same property is considered a permitted farm use, so no extra approvals are required in that case. However, if less than 50% of the animals being slaughtered come from the property itself, the operation may no longer qualify as a permitted farm use, and the license holder would need to apply to the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) for non-farm use approval.

The 50% requirement is calculated based on live weight rather than head count. This means that at least half of the total live weight of animals slaughtered in a year must have been raised on the same property where the facility is located. For example, if a Farmgate Plus facility processes 20,000 pounds of live weight in a year, at least 10,000 pounds must come from animals raised on that property, while the remaining 10,000 pounds may come from other farms. If the proportion of animals raised on-site falls below this threshold, non-farm use approval from the ALC would be required before continuing operations.

### 4.3 Cut & Wrap Operations

Numerous cut and wrap businesses operate throughout both regional districts (see Table 2), serving as a link between abattoirs and on-farm slaughter operations. These facilities, concentrated in communities like Smithers, Telkwa, Houston, Hazelton, Vanderhoof, and Burns Lake, provide various services including meat cutting, wrapping, sausage making, and sometimes value-added options like smoking and curing. Capacity differs widely, causing delays during busy fall and summer seasons. Producers often need to book appointments well ahead, with last-minute slots rarely available, this especially impacts small or new producers.

#### **FarmGate & FarmGate Plus Licenses in BC**

*FarmGate licenses are ideal for producers raising animals for their own consumption and limited sales. The Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine (RDKS) has one FarmGate license holder.*

*FarmGate Plus licenses are more expansive and give the producer increased market access and allow for some custom slaughter. There are three FarmGate Plus license holders in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, and five in the RDKS. See above table for more details.*

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<sup>3</sup> Agricultural Land Commission Act and Agricultural Land Reserve Regulation: <https://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/resources/the-alc-act-and-alr-regulations/>

Geographical distance between processing sites increases logistical challenges and costs, and prolonged transport can affect meat quality. Although these businesses offer flexibility to producers, limited capacity, dispersed locations, and seasonal bottlenecks underscore the need for more infrastructure and better system efficiency. Improved coordination among abattoirs, on-farm operations, and cut and wrap facilities would help address these issues.

Seasonal bottlenecks peak in autumn when livestock and wild game require processing, stretching facility capacity and leading to long wait times. Limited cold storage exacerbates delays, forcing some producers to shorten aging times or sell rapidly, which can negatively affect meat quality and profitability.

Some unregulated or “black market” services were not included in our findings. In rural northwest BC, many homesteaders rely on a collaborative, do-it-yourself approach for tasks such as on-farm slaughter, access to temporary cold storage for ageing meat, and informal meat and produce barter. This community-driven effort helps maintain local traditions, addresses infrastructure gaps, and supports sustainable production despite regulatory constraints.

## 5.0 Results & Discussion

This section presents the findings from surveys and interviews conducted with livestock producers and processors in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako and surrounding areas. The results highlight key demographics, business characteristics, and the operational realities faced by those involved in local meat production and processing. Interpretation of the results presented below should be considered within the broader context of diverse farm business models and producer motivations in Northwest British Columbia. As discussed in **Section 3.4**, mixed-income operations and non-income motivations for livestock production may influence how producers experience regulatory requirements, service costs, and decisions related to licensing, scale, and participation in formal processing systems.

### 5.1 General Information and Demographics

A total of 53 survey responses were collected. Upon review and filtering for completeness, 38 responses remained for analysis. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented below.

In addition, interviews were conducted with nine producers, including one holding a FarmGate license and another with a FarmGate Plus license. Interviews were also completed with two cut and wrap owner/operators.

Among the 38 completed surveys, 79% of respondents belonged to the 41-65 age group, 10.5% were in the 25-40 category, and the remainder were older than 65. There were no participants under the age of 18 or in the 18-24 cohort.

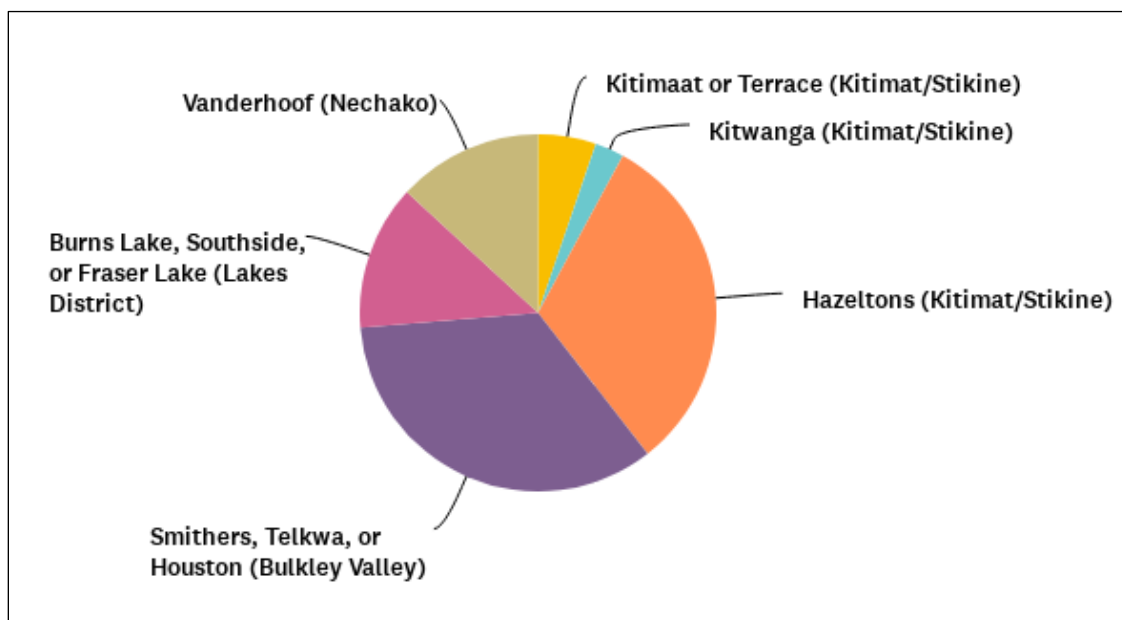
Most survey respondents are women (68.4%), men (21%), with 5.3% each preferring not to say or self-describe; none identified as non-binary. Over 94% own or operate their businesses.

## 5.2 Business Location, Years in Operation, & Type of Business

As shown in Figure 2, many people who filled out the survey operate in Smithers, Telkwa, or Houston areas, followed closely by the Hazeltons, Vanderhoof and Burns Lake/Southside/Fraser Lake areas.

When asked how long their business had been in operation, we received replies in every answer category. Almost a third of survey respondents (29%) are relatively new to the livestock industry and have been in operation for 1-5 years, with a spread across longer durations. Results analyses indicated that 34% of the respondents have been in business for over 20 years.

Most survey participants are engaged in primary livestock production, with the majority producing red meat (cattle, hogs, sheep, etc.). A significant number (43%) of livestock producers raise poultry (e.g., broilers, turkeys, etc.). A smaller number of people operate cut and wrap operations, FarmGate Plus custom slaughter facilities, and two operated licensed abattoirs.



**Figure 2.** Business Locations of Survey Respondents

### 5.3 Survey Pathway: Livestock Producers

Livestock producers in both regions filled out a survey section detailing their operation, processing needs, barriers, and views on sustainable food systems.

Many of the 34 survey respondents who identified as livestock producers sell directly to consumers (82.35%). Other answers included friends and family, and camp sales.

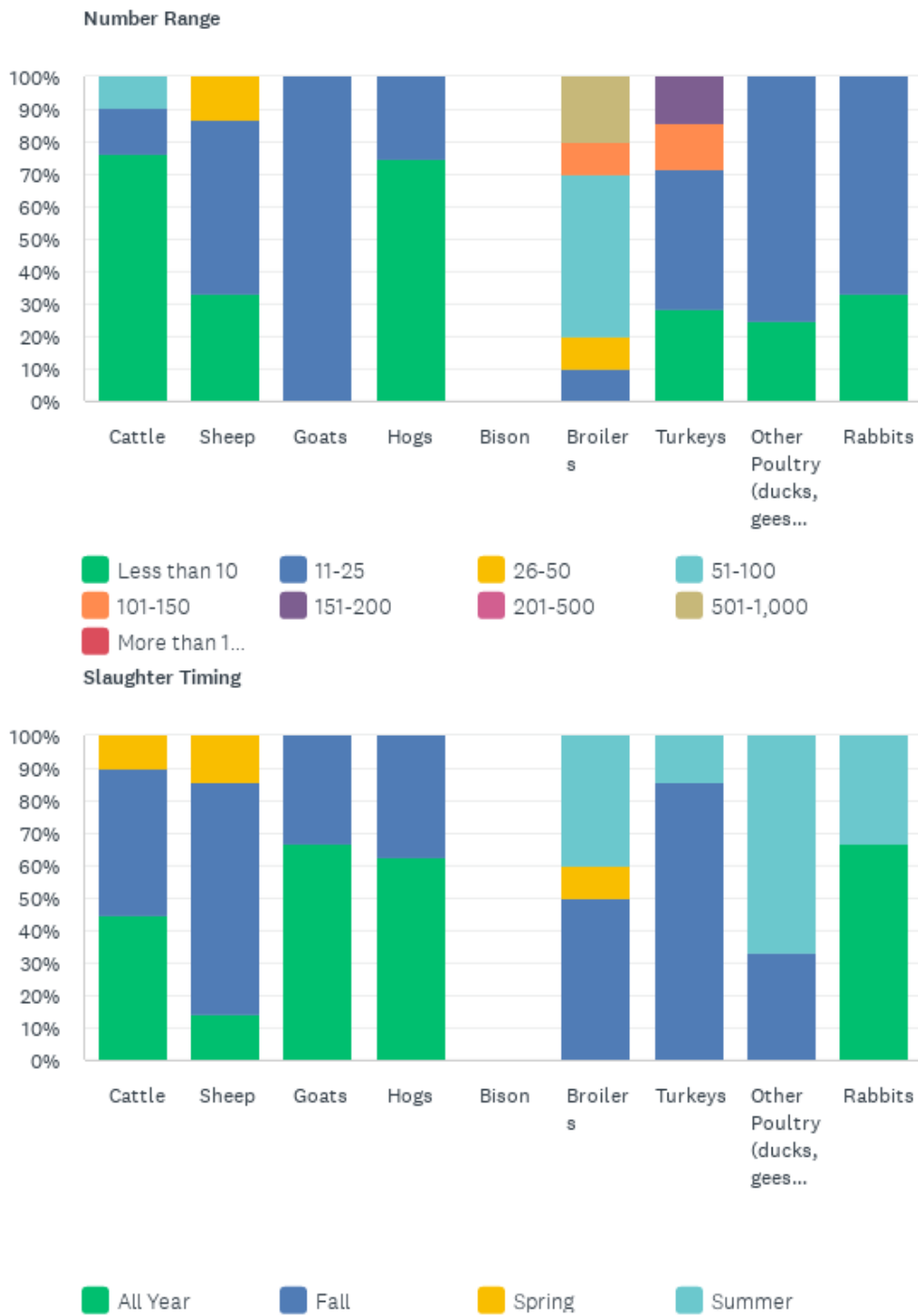
Livestock producers were asked to indicate the type of livestock that they raised in 2024, approximately how many, and the time of year that they required slaughter services (Figure 3).

Most survey respondents raising cattle indicated that they raised 25 animals or less and require livestock services year-round or mainly in the fall. Poultry producers generally require livestock services in the fall or summer months.

Red meat producers (n=32) and poultry producers (n = 23) were asked to indicate how much their business relies on various livestock services. The results show that red meat producers are extremely reliant on cut & wrap services (60%) and inspected slaughter (50%). Freezing services also play a significant role. Reliance on smoking and curing services is lower but still valued. The demand for uninspected slaughter (allowed for home consumption) was significantly lower than for inspected slaughter.

Almost 22% of poultry producers (n=23) were extremely reliant on inspected slaughter, and 19% were extremely reliant on un-inspected slaughter. Over 60% of poultry producers answered that they were either not reliant at all or not applicable to either kind of slaughter service.

A similar trend was observed for freezing and cut and wrap services. This suggests that, overall, many poultry producers that responded to the survey tend to have low reliance on external slaughter, processing, and freezing services. The results also indicate that there are poultry producers in both regions that consider both inspected and uninspected slaughter to be an essential service.



**Figure 3.** Survey results indicate the approximate number of animals raised by livestock producers that responded and the slaughter timing per livestock species.

### *Distance Travelled to Livestock Service(s)*

Of the producers that do use meat processing services, the majority travel greater than 50 km to access livestock slaughter services (n=32, 47%) and freezing/cut and wrap services (n=33, 45%). Approximately 20% of the participants have on-farm processing (19% for slaughter, and 21% for freezing/cut and wrap).

When asked how many kilometres producers would be willing to travel for livestock processing services, many answered that they would travel 100 km to 250 km (n=32, 23 respondents). The rest of the answers were quite varied, but a few people mentioned that they would prefer shorter distances than those they are currently travelling.

Red meat livestock producers located west of Kitwanga typically make use of the licensed, inspected slaughterhouse in Telkwa, and choose among various licensed custom cut & wrap businesses.

### *Barriers to Livestock Production*

To get a sense of potential gaps within the livestock services ecosystem, producers of both red meat and poultry were asked to rank potential production barriers. Of 33 participants, 12 ranked getting dates for slaughter services as their number one barrier, and 14 ranked a lack of services as their main barrier. Getting dates for cut and wrap services was indicated to be an intermediate barrier; the cost of services was similar but slightly less important. Travel time to livestock processing services and issues with the service itself were barriers for some but overall were ranked lower than the other options.

Survey data and interviews indicate scheduling livestock services in the Bulkley Valley is challenging, mainly due to bottlenecks in custom cut and wrap services. Demand for these services and the number of animals processed have increased. According to Kelly Leffers of the Sausage Factory in Smithers, the busy season now runs from August to January. As a testament to this situation, lamb producers interviewed for this project are strategically booking slaughter and processing dates before their lambs are born.

Several producers reported that cut and wrap services cannot handle enough animals at once, requiring them to make multiple trips.

The survey results indicated that livestock producers would be likely or very likely to increase their production levels if their livestock processing needs were met (18% likely, 30% very likely). When asked if they felt that FarmGate and FarmGate Plus licensing would meet the remaining needs of the region's meat production capacity, half of the respondents said no, 29% were unsure, and 20% said yes (n=34).

Three small-scale producers in the Hazeltons unanimously indicated that they would not pursue licensing to operate their own FarmGate or FarmGate Plus facilities. Their decision is primarily due to labour requirements, infrastructure limitations, and challenges associated with scaling operations. All three noted that current government support for small-scale production is insufficient to enable them to expand meat production profitably, even before considering licensed on-farm slaughter.

### *Elements of a Sustainable Food System*

For clarity, this report adopts the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' definition of a sustainable food system as one that delivers food security and nutrition for all while maintaining the economic, social, and environmental foundations required to support food security and nutrition for future generations.<sup>4</sup>

To understand how local producers and processors interpret sustainability within their own communities, survey respondents were asked an open-ended question about which elements of a sustainable food system they felt were missing or insufficient. No examples or predefined response options were provided, allowing participants to identify priorities based on lived experience rather than respond to a prescribed framework.

Across responses, several recurring themes emerged. Livestock producers frequently identified gaps in processing-related infrastructure and services, including limited access to poultry processing, insufficient cut and wrap capacity, a lack of commercial kitchens, cold storage, and local retail markets. These gaps were often described as directly affecting the economic viability of small-scale operations and the ability to meet local demand for meat products.

Many respondents expressed strong support for mobile or shared processing solutions that would reduce the need for animals to leave the farm. This preference was linked to concerns about transportation costs, animal welfare, labour demands, and time constraints—factors that influence both economic sustainability and humane production practices in rural and remote regions.

Beyond infrastructure, respondents frequently emphasized the need for clearer, more practical, and more navigable regulatory requirements. Interview participants noted that regulatory complexity and uncertainty can act as a barrier to maintaining or expanding production, particularly for small-scale producers who lack dedicated administrative capacity. While FarmGate and FarmGate Plus licensing were seen as important tools,

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<sup>4</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' report:  
<https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/b620989c-407b-4caf-a152-f790f55fec71/content>

respondents cautioned that relying on individual producers to shoulder regulatory, infrastructure, and labour burdens can undermine long-term sustainability.

Interviewees also highlighted that a sustainable food system must prioritize investment in people as much as in physical infrastructure. Respondents consistently stressed the importance of skilled labour, training opportunities, mentorship, and workforce retention, noting that infrastructure alone cannot address service gaps without qualified individuals to operate and maintain facilities.

Overall, respondents described a sustainable food system as one that supports existing producers and service providers to continue and improve their operations, reduces unnecessary logistical burdens, and aligns regulatory and infrastructure investments with the realities of rural food production. These perspectives closely align with the FAO's emphasis on balancing economic viability, social well-being, and environmental responsibility across the full food system, while ensuring resilience for future generations.<sup>5</sup>

#### 5.4 Survey Pathway: FarmGate and FarmGate Plus Operations

Two out of 38 participants filled out the survey section for FarmGate and FarmGate Plus operations (one of whom was also interviewed). They indicated that they had obtained their FarmGate/FarmGate Plus license because of facility capacity limitations and a scarcity of alternatives. One survey respondent found it very easy to obtain the license, and the other found it difficult. Challenges identified were the regulatory requirements, land use regulations, and the financial commitment necessary to build the infrastructure required to pass inspection. Both licensees invested more than \$30,000.

## IMPROVING PROCESS

The application process for Farm Gate status could be simplified. The process should be "here are the SOPs, lets walk through how they would look on your farm and then develop the variances." Instead, applicants must wade through a process of developing their own procedures, have them reviewed, adapt them, have them reviewed, adapt them, etc.

In addition, it could be helpful to break the process down into different scenarios. The province could lay out the standards and then support applicants to meet them, rather than requiring applicants to develop their own version of the standards.

In sum, the application process can be improved upon with a ready-to-use template. Be collaborative, not prohibitive."

— Small-scale Producer (Terrace)

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<sup>5</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Sustainable food systems concept and framework: [[openknowle...ge.fao.org](https://openknowledge.fao.org)]

The FarmGate Plus licensees that completed the survey slaughter poultry, mainly broilers and turkeys. They reported that the number of birds processed per week ranged from 250 to 500 for broilers, and 100 to 200 for turkeys. Summer was identified as the busiest season, followed by fall and then spring.

With respect to booking schedules, one FarmGate Plus license holder indicated they are booking three to six months in advance, and the other is booking more than a year in advance. Neither had any issues with customers wanting to reschedule or cancel bookings.

Currently, neither FarmGate Plus license hires external staff regularly. Both cited limited funding and licensing restrictions as barriers to business growth.

**Table 3:** FarmGate and FarmGate Plus licences identified in 2025.

Regional District	FarmGate licences	FarmGate Plus licences	Total licences
Bulkley-Nechako	0	3	3
Kitimat-Stikine	1	5	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>

FarmGate and FarmGate Plus licence holders identified in northwest British Columbia were cross-referenced against the Province of British Columbia's Licensed Seafood and Meat Operators database, which lists all provincially licensed FarmGate, FarmGate Plus, and abattoir facilities by location and licence type. The provincial database is maintained by the Food Safety Inspection Branch and was last updated on January 14, 2026.

### *Elements of a Sustainable Food System*

Producers in the Terrace area are a two-and-a-half-hour drive from the nearest licensed, inspected slaughter facility. While there are a few producers that are willing to travel this distance, many find it to be an impractical option and describe it as being too time-consuming, expensive fuel-wise, and inhumane for animal transport. FarmGate and FarmGate Plus licensing is enabling producers to continue producing meats for direct sale to consumers while avoiding the travel – this is evident in the high number of licensees in Terrace, relative to the rest of the study area. There are six red meat FarmGate or FarmGate Plus licensees in Terrace compared to one red meat and two poultry FarmGate Plus licensees in the entire RDBN.

The challenges encountered when livestock producers go through the process of obtaining FarmGate or FarmGate Plus licensing are varied. SlaughterRight training is required. It was

suggested that the Slaughter Right training could move to digital modules, with assistance and mentoring from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food District Agrologists in each region. With respect to infrastructure, each site is inspected and must meet the provincial requirements. FarmGate Plus licensees who filled out the survey indicated that they had spent over \$30,000 investing in the infrastructure required to get their licenses approved.

## 5.5 Pathway: Abattoir and Cut & Wrap Services

Although two respondents indicated that they operate abattoirs, only one filled out the abattoir portion of the survey. The abattoirs offer slaughter services only and are booking animals in three to six months in advance. Producers travel over 50km to access abattoir services. Staff are trained on-site. The business would grow if more producers required the service year-round rather than just in the fall.

A beef producer in Fraser Lake indicated that they routinely use Country Locker in Vanderhoof and have had no issues getting processing dates. This business direct markets their beef products in their local community.

Red meat producers located from Kitwanga and westward typically make use of the licensed, inspected slaughterhouse in Telkwa.

Six of the survey respondents identified as offering cutting and wrapping services; three of them offer the services from a facility built on farm, the remainder are brick and mortar businesses. They all offer cutting and wrapping services; four of them do both domestic livestock and wild game animals. Almost all of them offer freezing services. Two offer smoking and curing services. Skeena Valley Meats does cut and wrap for local FarmGate and FarmGate Plus licensees and reports that the current system for on-farm slaughter is working for Terrace producers so long as producers are able to keep their carcasses clean and get them efficiently cooled.

Five businesses indicated approximately how many of each kind of livestock they were able to process in a week. There was quite a bit of variability per type of livestock, as indicated in Table 4 below.

Survey results indicated that the busiest season for all the cut and wrap operations is fall (September to November); the rest of the year is quite consistent. There was considerable variability with respect to how far ahead each business's clientele must book for this service, ranging from at least one month to six months to a year. The majority do not have issues with customers wanting to reschedule or cancel bookings.

**Table 4.** Data for type and number of animals processed per week for cut and wrap operations in the northwest.

Type of Livestock	# C/W Responses	Average (est.)	Range
Beef	5	7	2 to 15
Sheep/Goat	5	17	5 to 25
Hogs	5	9	2 to 15
Broilers	1	150	150
Turkeys	1	20	20
Other Poultry	0	N/A	N/A
Other Red Meat	2	7	2 to 8

Survey respondents were asked if they have had to discontinue any services, and if so, the main reasons behind this decision. Difficulty finding staff was the main reason, but people also made general comments on the discontinued service being too expensive to offer, a lack of time, and not being able to compete with respect to wages.

### *Staffing and Labour*

At least three of the businesses have found it difficult to find enough staff to meet labour needs, although when they are able to find staff, the majority can usually find people with some basic skills. Two people mentioned that they train on-site. Four of the businesses that answered the survey indicated that staff turnover is an ongoing issue.

The three cut and wrap operations interviewed responded differently to questions about labour. The smaller, on-farm operation does not currently have issues with staff turnover and train personnel onsite. The other two businesses interviewed have brick and mortar storefronts (one in Smithers, and one in Terrace). They both train staff on-site as well; all three mentioned that getting staff with post-secondary training (right now offered at Olds in Alberta or Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, B.C.) is advantageous. Both larger cut and wrap businesses find that custom work can be time consuming, mostly due to communication issues with clientele.

### *Customer Profile*

Customers of these businesses come from nearby within the local community but are also willing to travel more than 50km. Customers' profiles range from repeat customers to those that book once a year. Some businesses have people bringing in multiple animals, multiple times a year.

### *Elements of a Sustainable Food System*

Cut and wrap operations were asked what the major obstacles were that limited them in offering services. Finding qualified butchers was identified as a challenge by more than one respondent. Businesses also mentioned that they would like to have enough business to be able to keep staff hired and working year-round. One business owner mentioned that customers expect the prices of the services to be lower than can be expected.

As with the other survey respondents, the owners of cut and wrap operations were asked what ideas they had to make the livestock services ecosystem more sustainable for their business. Comments included increased access to government inspected slaughter and a joint booking system with the abattoirs to increase efficiency.

## 6.0 Partnerships Supporting Livestock Processing Capacity

Strengthening livestock processing services in Northwest British Columbia requires collaboration across producers, service providers, local governments, and Indigenous-led initiatives. Stakeholder engagement throughout this project highlighted that partnerships are most effective when they are tied to concrete service delivery, workforce development, or infrastructure support, rather than solely information-sharing.

### 6.1 Small-Scale Meat Producers Association (SSMPA)

The Small-Scale Meat Producers Association (SSMPA) plays an important role in supporting producers operating outside the conventional industrial meat system. MASH has worked with SSMPA to ensure that regional resources developed through this project align with provincial initiatives and avoid duplication.

SSMPA provides guidance related to slaughter and butchery, regulatory navigation, training opportunities, and funding programs through its website and outreach activities. Of particular relevance to Northwest BC is SSMPA's work to develop a fleet of mobile slaughter trailers intended primarily for emergency response. SSMPA also provides a mechanism for producers or service providers to express interest in operating mobile slaughter units, which may present future opportunities for regional capacity building.

## 6. 2 Indigenous-Led Livestock Processing and Food Sovereignty Initiatives

Indigenous communities across Northwest British Columbia are advancing food sovereignty through agricultural, training, and food processing initiatives that integrate cultural, economic, and community priorities. Several of these initiatives already contribute directly or indirectly to regional meat processing capacity and workforce development.

The Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs, through the Gitanyow Huwilp Society, operate a recently completed Food Security Centre in Gitanyow Village that includes dedicated infrastructure for meat handling and processing. The facility was developed through a partnership with the Prince Rupert Port Authority, which provided capital funding through its Community Investment Fund.

The Food Security Centre is equipped with a commercial kitchen and a temperature-controlled walk-in cooler designed to safely age and store wild and farmed meats prior to processing. While the facility is primarily intended to support community food security, traditional harvesting, and cultural programming, it also represents a significant regional asset for meat handling, storage, and processing in a rural and remote context.

The Gitanyow facility demonstrates how targeted infrastructure investments can support safe meat processing, training, and food system resilience without relying on conventional commercial abattoir models. While not a licensed commercial slaughter facility, it contributes practical experience, infrastructure, and governance models that are relevant to broader regional discussions about meat processing capacity and workforce development.<sup>6</sup>

The Sik-E-Dakh (Glen Vowell) community has opened a meat processing facility primarily serving Indigenous needs. In partnership with Kwantlen Polytechnic University, they run a Farm School where students raise livestock and learn meat processing skills at the facility.

Sik-E-Dakh provides a working example of small-scale, community-governed meat processing in a rural setting and contributes practical experience related to operations, governance, and food safety that is relevant to regional livestock processing discussions.

Tea Creek Farm operates as an Indigenous-led agricultural training and food systems initiative with a strong focus on education, skill-building, and community food security. While Tea Creek is not a commercial livestock processing operation, it plays an important

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<sup>6</sup> [[gitanyowchiefs.ca](http://gitanyowchiefs.ca)], [[rupertport.com](http://rupertport.com)]

role in workforce development and applied learning related to meat production and handling.

Through collaboration with the Small-Scale Meat Producers Association (SSMPA), Tea Creek now has access to a mobile slaughter trailer that is used primarily for educational and training purposes. The trailer supports hands-on learning in humane slaughter practices and meat handling and may also be made available for lending to other users, contributing to regional capacity building and shared learning.

Tea Creek's role highlights the importance of partnerships that integrate training and mentorship with physical infrastructure, particularly in addressing long-term labour constraints within the livestock processing sector.

### 6.3 Role of Partnerships in Addressing Service Gaps

Findings from this project suggest that partnerships are most effective when they support existing operations, workforce development, or practical infrastructure solutions. Stakeholders consistently emphasized that new facilities or programs should not be developed in isolation from labour availability, regulatory requirements, or demonstrated demand.

Partnerships that align regional governments, producer organizations, service providers, and Indigenous-led initiatives around shared objectives, such as training, coordinated scheduling, or mobile infrastructure, offer the greatest potential to strengthen livestock processing services in Northwest BC.

Indigenous-led initiatives such as the Gitanyow Food Security Centre, Sik-E-Dakh processing facilities, and Tea Creek's training-focused use of mobile slaughter infrastructure illustrate how locally governed partnerships can meaningfully support meat processing capacity, workforce development, and food security when aligned with regional service needs.

## 7.0 Toolkit Development

The Livestock Processing Services Toolkit ([MeatUHere.ca](http://MeatUHere.ca)) was developed to translate the findings of this sector analysis into practical, accessible resources for livestock producers, processors, and entrepreneurs. Stakeholder feedback consistently highlighted the need for clearer guidance on licensing pathways, infrastructure requirements, workforce considerations, and viable business models suited to rural and small-scale contexts.

The Toolkit provides consolidated information on:

- Livestock slaughter and processing options for red meat, poultry, and rabbits.

- FarmGate and FarmGate Plus licensing requirements, including regulatory considerations related to land use and scale.
- Mobile processing and slaughter trailer models.
- Business planning tools, including high-level feasibility considerations.
- Workforce training pathways and labour considerations.
- Funding and financing opportunities.
- Potential partnerships with regional, provincial, and First Nations organizations.

Rather than producing a static collection of documents, the Toolkit was developed as a web-based resource to allow for ongoing updates and responsiveness to regulatory changes, emerging best practices, and evolving regional needs. The Toolkit is hosted on the MeatUHere website and is supported by Making Agriculture Sustainable in the Hazeltons (MASH), ensuring continued relevance and accessibility for users across Northwest BC.

## 8.0 Conclusions

This project demonstrates that livestock production remains a foundational component of northwest British Columbia's agricultural system, supporting local food supply, rural economies, and community resilience. Despite strong producer commitment and growing demand for locally produced meat, access to livestock slaughter and processing services remains uneven across the region.

Stakeholder engagement highlights persistent challenges, including limited inspected slaughter capacity, long travel distances to abattoirs, seasonal bottlenecks in cut and wrap services, labour shortages, and regulatory complexity. These constraints directly affect producers' ability to expand production, improve profitability, and respond to local market demand.

FarmGate and FarmGate Plus licensing has played an important role in enabling continued meat production in areas far from licensed abattoirs, particularly in the Terrace area. However, reliance on these licensing pathways alone is insufficient to address regional service gaps. Producers and licence holders face significant financial, labour, and administrative burdens, and many are operating at or near the limits of their capacity.

Overall, the findings indicate that a sustainable livestock services ecosystem in Northwest BC requires coordinated investment in infrastructure, workforce development, regulatory clarity, and partnerships. Addressing these needs will be essential to strengthening food security, supporting existing producers, and enabling future growth.

## 9.0 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this report, the following recommendations are proposed:

### 1. Strengthen Regional Slaughter and Processing Capacity

- Support the maintenance and long-term viability of existing licensed abattoirs.
- Explore opportunities for mobile or modular slaughter infrastructure to reduce travel distances and seasonal bottlenecks, particularly for poultry and small-scale red meat producers.

### 2. Improve Access to Cut and Wrap Services and Cold Storage

- Encourage coordinated planning between abattoirs and cut and wrap operators to improve scheduling efficiency.
- Support infrastructure investments such as cold storage and forced-air cooling to improve carcass handling and throughput.

### 3. Invest in Workforce Development

- Expand access to local or regionally delivered training pathways for butchers, meat cutters, and slaughter personnel.
- Support mentorship, on-the-job training, and retention strategies to address ongoing labour shortages.

### 4. Simplify and Clarify Regulatory Pathways

- Improve guidance and support for FarmGate and FarmGate Plus applicants through standardized templates, clearer processes, and collaborative review approaches.
- Review land-use and licensing requirements to ensure they are practical and proportionate for small-scale and rural operations.

### 5. Support Existing Operators Before Creating New Infrastructure

- Prioritize investments that help existing producers and processors expand or stabilize their operations rather than creating new facilities without sufficient labour or demand. This includes investment in cold storage education and low cost on-farm solutions.
- Align funding programs with the operational realities of small-scale and rural businesses.

## **6. Maintain and Update the Livestock Processing Services Toolkit**

- Use the Toolkit as a living resource to support informed decision-making, reduce duplication, and respond to regulatory or market changes.
- Continue partnerships with regional, provincial, and First Nations organizations to ensure the Toolkit remains relevant and accessible.

## **7. Recognize and Support Composting as Part of the Livestock Processing Ecosystem**

- Acknowledge composting and organic waste management as an integral component of the local meat supply chain, particularly for on-farm slaughter, FarmGate and FarmGate Plus operations, and cut and wrap facilities operating in rural and remote areas.
- Improve access to clear, practical guidance on composting regulations and land-use requirements, including distinctions between agricultural and non-agricultural composting, ALR-specific considerations, and applicable provincial and local approvals. Clear guidance would help producers and processors manage organic waste in compliance with environmental regulations while minimizing administrative burden.
- Consider future research or pilot initiatives to better understand composting practices, capacity, and constraints within the regional livestock services ecosystem, including opportunities to integrate composting with existing food security, land stewardship, and waste reduction efforts.

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## Appendix I: Survey Questions



## Community Food Systems Development

### Livestock Services Project Survey for Stakeholders

#### Welcome to our Survey

**The Society for Making Agriculture Sustainable in the Hazeltons (MASH), in an exciting collaboration with the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako and the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine, is spearheading a project designed to create new opportunities in livestock processing services across Northwest British Columbia. Tangible outcomes are:**

- **a comprehensive sector analysis to explore untapped potential within the current livestock services ecosystem for these two regions, and**
- **a powerful Toolkit specifically designed to empower producers and other entrepreneurs through sample business plans, equipment recommendations and suppliers, training and licensing guidance, and financing options based on your business structure.**

**This anonymous survey is a crucial project component as the data will illuminate potential for expanded service areas and greater profitability. The intent is to get a comprehensive picture of our current livestock services ecosystem in the northwest, identify clear pathways for business growth, and explore potential opportunities to achieve greater success and profitability. The survey contains sections for both livestock producers (including homesteaders) and service providers.**

**This vital project was made possible with funding from the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction and dedicated facilitation from the Public Health Association of British Columbia and Food Banks BC.**

*Please note, when you are finished the survey, you must hit **DONE** to save and exit the survey. If you would like to follow up with questions or ideas, please contact [mashazeltons@gmail.com](mailto:mashazeltons@gmail.com) after the survey closes on July 15. For more information please visit [www.mashazeltons.org](http://www.mashazeltons.org).*

## **Demographics of the Northwest Livestock Services Industry**

1. In what age group do you belong?

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-40
- 41-65
- Over 65

2. Gender: How do you identify?

- Man
- Non-binary
- Woman
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self-describe, below

Self-describe:

3. In which area is your business operation located?

- Prince Rupert (North Coast)
- Haida Gwaii
- Kitimaat or Terrace (Kitimat/Stikine)
- Kitwanga (Kitimat/Stikine)
- Hazeltons (Kitimat/Stikine)
- Smithers, Telkwa, or Houston (Bulkley Valley)
- Burns Lake, Southside, or Fraser Lake (Lakes District)
- Vanderhoof (Nechako)

Other (please specify)

4. Please choose the answer that best describes your role as a producer or meat processor (both slaughter and cut & wrap).

- Owner/Operator
- Full-time staff
- Part-time/Seasonal staff
- Other (please specify)

5. How many years has your farm/ranch or meat business been in operation?

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> 1-5 years   | <input type="radio"/> 31-40 years      |
| <input type="radio"/> 6-10 years  | <input type="radio"/> 41-50 years      |
| <input type="radio"/> 11-15 years | <input type="radio"/> 51+ years        |
| <input type="radio"/> 16-20 years | <input type="radio"/> I am an employee |
| <input type="radio"/> 21-30 years |  |

6. Please indicate below which business(es) that you operate (or where you are employed). Select all that apply. Producers are defined as anyone growing livestock for meat, including commercial operations and hobby farmers and everything in between.

- Producer - red meat (cattle, hogs, sheep, etc.)
- Producer - poultry
- Cut and wrap operation
- FarmGate Plus custom slaughter operation
- Licensed abattoir with inspection





**Community Food  
Systems Development**

Livestock Services Project Survey for Stakeholders

Livestock Producers

**Scope of Operation**

7. If you are a livestock producers (red meat or poultry), do you raise meat animals and sell directly to consumers?

Yes

No

8. Please indicate below the number and type of livestock and/or poultry you processed for meat in 2024, and the time of year that you require slaughter services.

	Number Range	Slaughter Timing
Cattle	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Sheep	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Goats	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Hogs	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Bison	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Broilers	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Turkeys	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Other Poultry (ducks, geese, guinea fowl, etc.)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Rabbits	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

## 9. Where do you sell your product(s) to your customers?

- Farmgate
- Online Farm Store
- Farmers' Market
- Smaller Retail (e.g., Out of Hand, health food stores, etc.)
- Larger Retail
- Restaurant(s)
- Butcher Shop
- Other (please specify)

**Livestock Producer Service Needs**

10. If you produce **red meat**, please indicate below how much your business relies on the listed livestock services.

	Not at all reliant	Slightly reliant	Moderately reliant	Highly reliant	Extremely reliant	N/A
Slaughter - inspected	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Slaughter - uninspected	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cut & wrap	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Freezing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Smoking, curing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. If you produce **poultry**, please indicate below how much your business relies on the listed livestock services.

	Not at all reliant	Slightly reliant	Moderately reliant	Highly reliant	Extremely reliant	N/A
Slaughter - inspected	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Slaughter - uninspected	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cut & wrap (piecing out, sausage)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Freezing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. At present, approximately how far do you travel for your livestock slaughter services?

- On-farm
- Less than 15 km
- 15 to 50 km
- Greater than 50 km

13. At present, approximately how far do you travel for your freezing and/or cut & wrap services?

- On-farm
- Less than 15 km
- 15 to 50 km
- Greater than 50 km

14. How many kilometres would you be willing to travel for livestock processing services (either slaughter, cut & wrap, or both)?

15. Please rank the potential barriers listed below with respect to how significant they are to your levels of production (1 = most significant, 6 = least significant).

- ☰  Getting dates for slaughter services
- ☰  Getting the dates for cut & wrap
- ☰  Travel time to livestock processing services
- ☰  Cost of service
- ☰  Issues with the service itself (e.g., booked dates get changed, not able to accommodate number of animals, etc.)
- ☰  Lack of services.

### **Looking to the Future...**

Note: FarmGate Plus licensing allows slaughter of up to 25 animal units (25,000 pounds) and off-farm sales anywhere in the province. A FarmGate license allowing slaughter of up to five animal units (5,000 pounds) and sales within 50 km of the licensee as well as within the licensee's regional district.

16. How likely would you be to increase your production levels if all of your livestock processing needs were met?

- Very likely
- Likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely

17. Keeping in mind that the northwest currently has two licensed, red meat abattoirs (Country Locker in Vanderhoof, and DJ Meat Locker Inc. in Telkwa), do you feel that FarmGate and FarmGate Plus licensing can meet the remainder of the need of our region's capacity for meat production?

- Yes
- No
- I am not sure

18. In your opinion, what other sustainable food system services are lacking in your community?

19. In addition to raising livestock, please indicate if you offer any of the services below.

- FarmGate Plus custom slaughter
- Slaughter at licensed abattoir
- Meat cutting and wrapping (licensed)
- None of the above

20. Have you considered obtaining a FarmGate or FarmGate Plus license?

- Yes
- No





**Community Food  
Systems Development**

Livestock Services Project Survey for Stakeholders

**FarmGate & FarmGate Plus Operations**

FarmGate Plus licensing allows slaughter of up to 25 animal units (25,000 pounds) and off-farm sales anywhere in the province. A FarmGate license allowing slaughter of up to five animal units (5,000 pounds) and sales within 50 km of the licensee as well as within the licensee's regional district.

21. What made you decide to obtain a FarmGate or FarmGate Plus license?

22. Please indicate below how difficult you found it to obtain your FarmGate or FarmGate Plus license.

- Very easy
- Easy
- Neither easy nor difficult
- Difficult
- Very difficult

23. What was the biggest challenge in obtaining your FarmGate or FarmGate Plus license?

24. Approximately how much did it cost you to set up for slaughter/processing under this license?

- Under \$5,000
- \$5,000 to \$10,000
- \$10,001 to \$20,000
- \$20,001 to \$30,000
- More than \$30,000

**Scope of Service for FarmGate Plus**

25. Approximately how many of each kind of animal/bird are you able to process in a week?

Beef

Sheep/Goat

Hogs

Broilers

Turkeys

Other Poultry

Other Red Meat

26. Approximately how many of each kind of animal/bird are you able to process in a calendar year?

Beef

Sheep/Goat

Hogs

Broilers

Turkeys

Other Poultry

Other Red Meat

27. Please rank the seasons based on how busy you are with custom work.




Spring (March to June)




Summer (July and August)




Fall (September to November)




Winter (December to February)

## Your Customer Profile

28. How far ahead are you typically booking custom services?

- One to two weeks
- At least one month
- Two to three months
- Three to six months
- Six months to a year
- More than a year

Comments:

29. Do you have issues with customers wanting to reschedule or cancel bookings?

- Yes
- No

30. How far do your customers travel for your services (check all that apply)?

- Within my community (under 15 km)
- 15 - 50 km
- Greater than 50 km

31. How would you describe your customer profile (e.g., number of animals/birds per customer, frequency of bookings, etc.)?

## **Staffing**

32. Are you able to find enough staff for your labour needs?

- Yes
- No
- Other (please specify)

- None of the above

33. Are you able to find trained staff, or are you training them on-site?

- I am able to find staff with the appropriate training.
- I usually train my staff after I hire them.
- I can usually find staff with some basic training, but need to do on-the-job training to make sure that they meet my expectations.
- Other (please specify)

34. Is staff turnover an issue?

- Yes
- No

### **Looking to the Future...**

35. What are the major obstacles or most limiting factors for you in offering your services?  
Please describe.

36. What new livestock services or changes in existing services or systems would make your job easier?

37. Do you offer meat cutting and wrapping services?

- Yes
- No



**Community Food  
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Livestock Services Project Survey for Stakeholders

Abattoir Operations

**Scope of Service**

38. What kind of livestock services do you offer?

- Slaughter
- Cut & wrap
- Freezing
- Other (please specify)

39. Approximately how many of each kind of animal/bird are you able to process in a week?

Beef

Sheep/Goat

Hogs

Broilers

Turkeys

Other Poultry

Other Red Meat

40. Approximately how many of each kind of animal/bird are you able to process in a calendar year?

Beef	<input type="text"/>
Sheep/Goat	<input type="text"/>
Hogs	<input type="text"/>
Broilers	<input type="text"/>
Turkeys	<input type="text"/>
Other Poultry	<input type="text"/>
Other Red Meat	<input type="text"/>

41. Please rank the seasons based on how busy you are with custom work.

	<input type="text"/>	Spring (March to June)
	<input type="text"/>	Summer (July and August)
	<input type="text"/>	Fall (September to November)
	<input type="text"/>	Winter (December to February)

## Your Customer Profile

42. How far ahead are you typically booking custom services?

- One to two weeks  
 At least one month  
 Two to three months  
 Three to six months  
 Six months to a year  
 More than a year

Comments:

43. Do you have issues with customers wanting to reschedule or cancel bookings?

- Yes  
 No

44. How far do your customers travel for your services (check all that apply)?

- Within my community (under 15 km)  
 15 - 50 km  
 Greater than 50 km

45. How would you describe your customer profile (e.g., number of animals/birds per customer, frequency of bookings, etc.)?

46. If you have had to discontinue any services, what were the main reasons?

- Service was too expensive to offer any longer
- Too difficult to meet the current rules and regulations
- Too hard to find staff
- Personal business decision
- Not enough customers
- Other (please specify)

## **Staffing**

47. Are you able to find enough staff for your labour needs?

- Yes
- No
- Other (please specify)

- None of the above

48. Are you able to find trained staff, or are you training them on-site?

- I am able to find staff with the appropriate training.
- I usually train my staff after I hire them.
- I can usually find staff with some basic training, but need to do on-the-job training to make sure that they meet my expectations.
- Other (please specify)

49. Is staff turnover an issue?

- Yes
- No

## **Looking to the Future...**

50. What are the major obstacles or most limiting factors for you in offering your services?  
Please describe.

51. What new livestock services or changes in existing services or systems would make your job easier?

52. Do you offer meat cutting and wrapping services?

- Yes  
 No



**Community Food  
Systems Development**

Livestock Services Project Survey for Stakeholders

**Cut & Wrap Operations**

53. Please select the infrastructure(s) that applies to your business.

- Brick & mortar storefront
- On-farm
- Mobile
- Other (please specify)

**Scope of Service**

54. What kind of livestock services do you offer?

- Cut & wrap - domestic
- Cut & wrap - wild meat
- Freezing
- Smoking, curing
- Other (please specify)

55. Approximately how many of each kind of animal/bird are you able to process in a week?

Beef

Sheep/Goat

Hogs

Broilers

Turkeys

Other Poultry

Other Red Meat

56. Approximately how many of each kind of animal/bird are you able to process in a calendar year?

Beef

Sheep/Goat

Hogs

Broilers

Turkeys

Other Poultry

Other Red Meat

57. Please rank the seasons based on how busy you are with custom work.




Spring (March to June)




Summer (July and August)




Fall (September to November)




Winter (December to February)

## Your Customer Profile

58. How far ahead are you typically booking custom services?

- One to two weeks
- At least one month
- Two to three months
- Three to six months
- Six months to a year
- More than a year

Comments:

59. Do you have issues with customers wanting to reschedule or cancel bookings?

- Yes
- No

60. How far do your customers travel for your services (check all that apply)?

- Within my community (under 15 km)
- 15 - 50 km
- Greater than 50 km

61. How would you describe your customer profile (e.g., number of animals/birds per customer, frequency of bookings, etc.)?

62. If you have had to discontinue any services, what were the main reasons?

- Service was too expensive to offer any longer
- Too difficult to meet the current rules and regulations
- Too hard to find staff
- Personal business decision
- Not enough customers
- Other (please specify)

## **Staffing**

63. Are you able to find enough staff for your labour needs?

- Yes
- No
- Other (please specify)

- None of the above

64. Are you able to find trained staff, or are you training them on-site?

- I am able to find staff with the appropriate training.
- I usually train my staff after I hire them.
- I can usually find staff with some basic training, but need to do on-the-job training to make sure that they meet my expectations.
- Other (please specify)

65. Is staff turnover an issue?

- Yes
- No

## **Looking to the Future...**

66. What are the major obstacles or most limiting factors for you in offering your services?  
Please describe.

67. What new livestock services or changes in existing services or systems would make your job easier?





## Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Committee of the Whole

**To:** Chair and Committee  
**From:** John Illes, CFO  
**Date:** April 16, 2026  
**Subject:** **Continuity of Reserves**

**RECOMMENDATION:** **(all/directors/majority)**

Receive and Discussion.

### BACKGROUND

The continuity of reserves is included as an attachment to this memo. The purpose of this table is to show the change in reserve balances, and staff will walk the Board through the various reserves and answer any questions. When the Dec. 31, 2025 financial statements are brought forward for approval, staff will correlate the applicable notes to the financial statements to the continuity of reserves schedule.

The table also shows the suggested target values. These recommended target values will be refined as the asset management plan is completed and will drive future budget discussions. Those funds at or above the suggested targets are highlighted in light gray.

- Glacier Gulch reserve has a target of \$50,000. This value is the estimated rebuild cost of the freshwater diversion after a catastrophic flood event.
- Cluculz Lake Sewer reserve has a target of \$500,000. This value is the estimated major repair cost of the system. Staff will be working on a better estimate through the asset management planning project.
- Topley, Southside, Fort Fraser, and Topley fire reserves each have a target reserve value of \$600,000. This is based on the estimated cost of one new fire truck. These reserves have target values which may be increased in the future to include the replacement cost for the regional fire halls. Luck Bay fire reserve target is set at \$250,000. This target is based on the major repair or renewal of the Luck Bay Fire Hall.
- The fire department reserves that are serviced by contracts with a member municipality are being phased out. The member municipalities charge the Regional District for a portion of the reserves they budget each year in their asset management plan. Before this practice happened, these reserves were necessary to pay the "Regional District's share" of new equipment.

- The following reserves are being phased out – the plotter reserve and the administration equipment reserve. These reserves were utilized to balance the taxation when photocopiers or plotters were purchased. These reserves are now being replaced by operational reserves.
- The 911 reserve target is set at \$500,000 and will be utilized for planned replacement or upgrade of 911 towers and equipment.
- The Lakes District Airport Capital Reserve is set at \$750,000 and is the current estimate of replacing the pavement for the runway of the airport.
- The Bulkley Valley Pool reserve target is set at \$10 million and is the estimated cost to rebuild the pool according to the Regional District's latest insurance appraisal.
- The Vanderhoof Pool reserve target is set at \$1 million and is the estimated cost to rebuild the Vanderhoof pool x 10%. The District of Vanderhoof will hold the majority of the reserve for this replacement.
- The Lakes District TV tower reserve target is set at \$75,000. This is the estimated cost of a tower replacement project.
- The Administration Building Reserve target is set at \$10 million. This is the estimated cost to rebuild the current administration building according to the Regional District's latest insurance appraisal.
- The administration vehicle reserve, the bylaw vehicle reserve, and the Building Inspection building vehicle reserve targets, in combination, is the estimated cost to replace six vehicles.
- The Insurance Reserve target is set at \$250,000. This reserve is to be utilized to pay the deductible (\$50,000) for any liability claim and the deductible (\$25,000) for any property insurance claim. This reserve is at its target level.
- The Landfill closure reserve is set at \$5,000,000. This is an estimate of the current value of the landfill closure costs and will be utilized when Knockholt and Clearview landfills are closed. In the 2026 Five Year Financial Plan the Board supported allocating \$400,000 per year to this reserve.
- The Election Reserve is the cost of running an election every four years. All elections, including byelections, are drawn from this fund.
- The Legal Reserve target is set at \$250,000. The legal reserve is not to be used to defend against legal claims (the insurance reserve is used for this purpose) rather this reserve is to be utilized by the Board to assert the moral authority of the Regional District over such things as zoning infractions, bylaw infractions, and planning infractions.

- The current reserve target for Fort Fraser Sewer and Water reserves is \$3.5 million each. This value will be updated through the asset management planning process but is to be the current replacement value for all the assets in this utility systems.
- The Operational Reserve target is set at 60% or more of the requisition revenue of the Regional District in any one year.
  - This reserve has several very important functions. The first is to provide the funds necessary each year for the Regional District to operate from January to the beginning of August (when the regional district receives its requisition) without the need to borrow additional funds to get through the first part of the year
  - The second is that operational reserves are to be used to “smooth taxes” from one year to the next. Without this ability, major departments may see large fluctuations in taxation year to year instead of slowly increasing the taxation by an inflationary amount (for example).
  - The third reason is to accumulate funds for projects that are not capital in nature. An example would be to save for new busses (if required) for the Regional Transit Service.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Table of the Continuity of Reserves

**STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

This topic aligns with the following Strategic Focus Area(s) from the RDBN Strategic Plan:  
4. Community and Economic Sustainability

## REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO CONTINUITY OF RESERVES

Beginning of Year (Jan 1, 2025)	<u>24,254,966</u>
Contribution To General Funds	729,050
Contribution to Gas Tax	923,045
Contribution to NWRS	8,655,699
Contribution to Operational Reserve	2,373,116
Interest Earned on Funds	1,244,547
Withdrawal of Funds	<u>- 5,767,069</u>
	<b>32,413,354</b>
Less	
Unearned Revenue - NCPG	1,089,402
Unearned Revenue - Climate Action	310,191
Unearned Revenue - NWRS	9,486,204
Unearned Revenue - Gas Tax	6,057,713
Subtotal of Unearned Revenue	<u>16,943,511</u>
<b>Total Net Reserves (Dec 31, 2025)</b>	<b><u>15,469,844</u></b>

	2026	2025	Target
Glacier Gulch	14,997	14,401	50,000
Clucluz Lake Sewer	101,040	97,022	500,000
Topley Fire	51,948	44,483	600,000
Luck Bay Fire	66,774	64,118	250,000
Smithers Fire	103,126	118,814	-
Telkwa Fire		9,698	-
Round Lake Fire	6,933	6,657	-
911	625,845	710,331	500,000
Protective Services Emergency Reserve	67,402	64,721	-
Lakes District Aripport Capital Reserve	258,725	416,901	750,000
Bulkley Valley Pool	3,121,185	2,751,660	10,000,000
Vanderhoof Pool	114,543	109,987	1,000,000
Lakes District TV Tower Reserve	61,760	59,303	75,000
Admin Building Reserve	916,145	683,400	10,000,000
Admin Vehicle Reserve	209,366	102,886	200,000
Building Inspection Vehicle	15,704	58,100	55,000
Bylaw Enforcement Vehicle	43,844	32,285	55,000
Fort Fraser Fire	64,854	30,866	600,000
Southside Fire	27,806	26,700	600,000
Insurance Reserve	270,132	257,866	250,000
Landfill Closure Reserve	469,051	450,395	5,000,000
Admin Equipment Reserve	27,215	44,777	-
Plotter Reserve		33,155	-
Election Reserve	55,246	43,234	55,000
Operating Reserve	6,954,341	4,423,500	9,100,000
Legal Reserve	263,424	154,794	250,000
Growing Community Reserve	574,780	1,055,161	-
Fort Fraser Sewer	495,611	475,899	3,500,000
Fort Fraser Water	488,044	449,002	3,500,000
Unearned Revenue - NCPG	1,089,402	1,673,993	-
Unearned Revenue - Climate Action	310,191	348,952	-
Unearned Revenue - NWRS	9,486,204	2,160,330	-
Unearned Revenue - Gas Tax	6,057,713	7,281,575	-
End of the Year	<u>32,413,354</u>	<u>24,254,966</u>	
Less Unearned Revenue Reserves	<u>- 16,943,511</u>		
<b>Ending of Year</b>	<b><u>15,469,844</u></b>		

**From:** [Wendy Wainwright](#)  
**To:** [Wendy Wainwright](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Resolution Co-sponsors – Improved Access to Publicly Funded Mental Health Services  
**Date:** March 19, 2026 12:35:27 PM  
**Attachments:** [2026-03-10 NCLGA Resolution - Improved Access to Publicly Funded Mental Health Services.docx](#)

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**From:** Bettina Johnson <[bjohnson@nclga.ca](mailto:bjohnson@nclga.ca)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 19, 2026 9:23:45 AM  
**To:** Judy Greenaway <[judy.greenaway@rdbn.bc.ca](mailto:judy.greenaway@rdbn.bc.ca)>; Curtis Helgesen <[curtis.helgesen@rdbn.bc.ca](mailto:curtis.helgesen@rdbn.bc.ca)>  
**Cc:** Sandra Moore <[admin@nclga.ca](mailto:admin@nclga.ca)>  
**Subject:** Resolution Co-sponsors – Improved Access to Publicly Funded Mental Health Services

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Please do not click on links on open attachments from unknown sources.

EXTERNAL EMAIL - This email was sent by a person from outside your organization. Exercise caution when clicking links, opening attachments or taking further action, before validating its authenticity.

To: NCLGA Member Signatories of the Mental Health and Addictions Accord – *Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako*:

NCLGA has received a resolution titled “*Improved Access to Publicly Funded Mental Health Services*” (see attached) from the City of Dawson Creek for consideration at the 2026 NCLGA AGM.

In the spirit of promoting collaboration and joint advocacy between the Accord Signatories, we are connecting with NCLGA members who are also Accord Signatories on their interest to co-sponsor this resolution.

Please advise if you would like to join as a co-sponsor by April 17 at noon (late resolution deadline), by submitting a confirmation note to [bjohnson@nclga.ca](mailto:bjohnson@nclga.ca), and cc'ing [admin@nclga.ca](mailto:admin@nclga.ca). This can be an email confirmation or a certified letter via email.

Thank you,

Bettina Johnson  
Communications Support  
North Central Local Government Association



[www.nclga.ca](http://www.nclga.ca)  
ph 250-299-7220



March 10, 2026

North Central Local Government Association  
155 George Street  
Prince George, BC V2L 1P8

Email: [admin@nclga.ca](mailto:admin@nclga.ca)

To Whom It May Concern:

**Re: Council Resolution and Supplementary Memo for NCLGA Annual General Meeting in 2026**

At the Regular Meeting of Council held Monday, March 9, 2026, the Council of the City of Dawson Creek passed the following resolution regarding Improved Access to Publicly Funded Mental Health Services for consideration at the 2026 North Central Local Government Association (NCLGA) Annual General Meeting:

**Improved Access to Publicly Funded Mental Health Services**

***WHEREAS** local governments experience increasing pressures on emergency services, policing, bylaw enforcement, homelessness response, and community safety systems associated with gaps in timely and accessible mental health services;*

***AND WHEREAS** access to counselling and other mental health supports is often dependent on private insurance coverage, employer benefits, session limits, or out-of-pocket costs, creating barriers to equitable access, particularly in rural and northern communities;*

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the North Central Local Government Association and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities request that the Province of British Columbia take steps to improve access to universal, publicly funded mental health services, including counselling and related supports, with a focus on early intervention and prevention.*

Sincerely,

Tabatha Young,  
Corporate Officer

CERTIFIED A TRUE AND CORRECT COPY OF THE RESOLUTION OF  
COUNCIL FROM THE REGULAR MEETING HELD MARCH 9, 2026.

Tabatha Young  
Corporate Officer



## **Improved Access to Publicly Funded Mental Health Services – Supplementary Memo**

This request is being brought forward in the wake of the tragedy in Tumbler Ridge on February 10, 2026, where nine lives were lost and several others were injured in one of the deadliest school shootings in Canadian history.

This devastating event has prompted renewed reflection on mental health supports, early intervention pathways, and system coordination across British Columbia. As communities grieve, there is also a shared responsibility to strengthen preventive mental health systems and improve access to supports that may help reduce the likelihood of future tragedies.

Local governments across British Columbia are facing increasing pressures related to gaps in timely and accessible mental health services. In rural and northern communities, these challenges are often intensified by limited local services, workforce shortages, long travel distances, and reduced access to specialized care. When early intervention and community-based supports are unavailable, impacts frequently shift to municipal systems such as emergency services, RCMP detachments, bylaw enforcement, and homelessness response.

Access to counselling and related mental health supports in British Columbia is currently delivered through a mix of public and private funding. In many cases, services depend on private insurance coverage, employer benefits, session limits, or out-of-pocket costs, creating barriers to equitable care, particularly in smaller communities where alternatives may be limited.

Improving access to universal, publicly funded mental health services, including counselling and related supports, would help ensure individuals can access care regardless of income or private insurance coverage. Strengthening these services within the broader health system, with a focus on early intervention and prevention, may help reduce reliance on crisis-based responses and improve community stability. As the order of government most directly managing many of the local impacts, municipalities have a strong interest in advocating for improved access to these services, particularly in rural and northern communities, where service gaps are often most acute.