



## ALBERNI-CLAYOQUOT REGIONAL DISTRICT

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Regional District receives funding to support food security emergency planning**

ALBERNI-CLAYOQUOT REGIONAL DISTRICT –The Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD) has been awarded a \$223,655 grant through the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food to conduct a two-phase study on food security needs in relation to emergency planning and preparedness in the ACRD.

This is a collaborative project and the ACRD looks forward to partnering with interested First Nations, local municipalities, and the City of Port Alberni.

“Living on an island means we must focus on food security to ensure we are more self-sufficient and prepared than we currently are, especially in the case of an emergency that may leave some communities cut off from suppliers,” explains John Jack, chair of the ACRD Board of Directors. “We hope to work with all interested collaborators to identify specific gaps in food security and emergency management for both short-term emergency events and long-term capacity building.”

The first phase of the project focuses on developing a livestock emergency plan for the Alberni Valley. This is required under the new Emergency and Disaster Management Act that came into effect last November. This phase will also explore food security concerns and needs in the City of Port Alberni and Alberni Valley electoral areas. City Council has already passed a certified resolution to partner with the ACRD on this project.

“Food security and emergency management is a regional issue that concerns us all. The need for this plan became clear to all of us following the Cameron Lake wildfire last summer,” says Port Alberni Mayor Sharie Minions. “As we head into a summer with only a fraction of our usual snowpack, the City is excited to have the opportunity to work in collaboration with the ACRD and other interested organizations and First Nations to address this timely issue.”

The second phase will explore concepts of food security on the West Coast, including aquaculture, non-traditional food production, and Indigenous food sovereignty. This study may be just the beginning, opening the door to collaboration in future grant applications for infrastructure, equipment, and training. The funding is part of the BC government’s Food Security Emergency Planning and Preparedness Fund, which is delivered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC.

“It can be challenging living on an island during emergencies. That is why supporting communities plan for disasters is crucial,” said Pam Alexis, B.C. Minister for Agriculture and Food. “ACRD’s two-phase study is a step towards building a prepared regional district, equipped with the tools for responding to emergencies, as well as protecting and strengthening food security in the community.”



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