



*Southern Interior Local
Government Association*

February 22, 2022

via email Tracy.gray@parl.gc.ca

Tracy Gray, MP
Kelowna-Lake Country
102-1420 St. Paul Street
Kelowna, BC
V1Y 2E6

Dear MP Gray,

Re: Federal Emergency Response to Natural Disasters

2021 was a devastating year for communities and citizens in British Columbia as they dealt with the overwhelming consequences of catastrophic fires and floods. Unfortunately these natural disasters are occurring more frequently, with greater severity, and with rising financial impacts.

While Federal and Provincial governments, along with relief agencies such as the Red Cross, have the best intentions to deal with the immediate disaster and ensuing recovery efforts, there is no one ministry or agency that directs the decision making and funding to get communities and displaced people back on their feet. The results are communication breakdowns, funding delays and massive frustration.

SILGA is recommending the Federal Government establish an organization that will be able to immediately direct and fund natural disasters across Canada, similar to the US based Federal Emergency Management Agency. This organization would be funded on a yearly basis with a reserve created to be drawn upon when needed. The agency will have staff trained in all aspects of emergency management to assist communities and their residents dealing with the three stages of natural disasters (prior to, during, and after). Funding and support will be available immediately, rather than waiting months for approvals from a myriad of Federal and Provincial ministries and other relief agencies.

As these natural disasters appear to be exacerbated by our changing climate, could this new agency be funded through monies raised from the Federal Carbon Tax?

As an MP for one of the hardest hit areas in the past number of years, we know you've been instrumental in communicating the needs of your constituents and communities to the Federal

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government. We ask that you now take this idea of establishing a FEMA type agency to your colleagues and appropriate ministries quickly before the next natural disaster befalls other communities and provinces. Please note that we will be reaching out to all SILGA MPs with the same request.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact SILGA President Karla Kozakevich at 250-809-2557. Alternatively, if you would like to speak directly to a community who is currently dealing with recovery approval and funding challenges, please reach out to Princeton Mayor and SILGA Director Spencer Coyne at 250-295-5553 or Merritt Councillor and SILGA Director Tony Luck at 604-217-5825.

Thank you for your attention to this request. We look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

Karla Kozakevich

Karla Kozakevich
SILGA President

cc. **MP Tracy Gray, Kelowna-Lake Country**
MP Dan Albas, Central Okanagan-Similkameen-Nicola
MP Frank Caputo, Kamloops-Thompson-Cariboo
MP Mel Arnold, North Okanagan-Shuswap
MP Rob Morrison, Kootenay-Columbia
MP Richard Cannings, South Okanagan-West Kootenay