

## Backgrounder: Organizational Review by Lands and Natural Resource Operations Secretariat

Land use issues and decisions being made on the land are complex and are central to our relationship with Indigenous Nations and our shared path towards reconciliation. Modernizing land use policies to address current and future complexities is necessary to achieving our economic, social and reconciliation goals. Ensuring effective organizational structures are in place to meet the needs of communities and support an integrated approach across the land base will be key.

The Ministry of Forests Lands and Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development was established in 2010 to foster integrated decision making on the land. Much has changed in the last 10 years and in light of this the Premier has asked Minister of State for Lands and Natural Resource Operations, Nathan Cullen, to assess whether land use objectives that support reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, environmental sustainability, and economic activity can be more effectively achieved through restructuring.

To undertake this work, the Lands and Natural Resource Operations Secretariat (Secretariat), led by Deputy Minister Lori Halls was formed in January 2021. The Secretariat will take a thoughtful and inclusive approach to assessing the effectiveness of the current organizational structure, and in developing restructuring options for the Premier's consideration. In doing this work, one of the options that will be considered is the development of a plan to create a new Ministry for Lands and Natural Resource Operations.

The Secretariat will be guided by the following design principles. Each principle refers to the effectiveness of all organizational components – structure, systems and process, tools and technology, and people. In applying the principles, we will consider how they support the Province's three overarching goals of **reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, environmental sustainability, and economic activity**.

- **Accountability** – Organizational structure will be supported by effective governance across the natural resource sector and ensure accountabilities are aligned with appropriate decision makers.
- **Adaptability** – Organizational structure will be agile and responsive to better meet the needs of our partners, stakeholders and British Columbians. We will design with both the present and future needs of the natural resource sector in mind, ensuring we are ready to meet new challenges and make the most of new opportunities.
- **Integration** – We will build on the success of the past to further integrate the work across the sector where needed.
- **Inclusivity** – In both developing and implementing our design we will be transparent and inclusive, ensuring diverse voices, perspectives and priorities are heard and taken into consideration.

- **Innovation** – The design will embrace opportunities to accelerate the creation, development and implementation of ideas that improve outcomes in our evolving natural resource sector. This includes timely and responsive decisions on authorizations and optimizing the full range of values realized on the land base.
- **Regional Presence** – Recognizing how critical relationships on the ground are, we will continue to ensure the natural resource sector’s leadership and diverse regional presence is maintained.
- **Service Orientation** – We will seek options that maintain or improve relationships, business processes and operations both within government and with our partners, clients and stakeholders.

This work will be conducted in three phases:

- 1) **Assessment** of the effectiveness of the current organizational structure and opportunities for improvement through spring and summer 2021.
- 2) **Design** of options by fall 2021 to better achieve the three goals of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, environmental sustainability, and economic development.
- 3) **Implementation** through spring 2022 of the final decision of government on organizational structure.



As part of the Assessment phase, Minister of State Cullen and Secretariat staff will be engaging with Indigenous peoples to better understand what is working well in the sector, where improvements can be made, and how the natural resource sector could be better structured to achieve the three goals of government. As part of this engagement, Minister of State Cullen will be reaching out to elected and hereditary First Nations chiefs, provincial Indigenous associations and their natural resource councils (First Nations Forestry Council, First Nations Fisheries Council, First Nations Energy and Mines Council), and government partnered Indigenous forums (e.g. Collaborative Stewardship Framework). We will be seeking input from those who work with the ministries within the natural resource sector to hear their perspectives on what is working and what improvements can be made.

During the Assessment Phase, the Province will also be engaging with representatives from industry, non-government organizations, local government, and crown entities.

It is recognized that the implementation of any restructuring decision by government may result in legislative changes. The work to make any legislative changes would not likely begin until spring 2022 and the appropriate engagement will be undertaken as part of the Province’s commitments under the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.