
NEWS RELEASE

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Community, Sport and Cultural Development

Local elections reform to include four-year terms

VICTORIA – The B.C. government will introduce legislation during the current legislative session to change local elections from a three-year to a four-year cycle beginning with the 2014 elections, Community, Sport and Cultural Development Minister Coralee Oakes announced today.

Subject to legislative approval, the next B.C. local elections after November 2014 will be in October 2018.

Four-year terms will give local governments more time to consult, plan and achieve community goals – and also help to manage election costs.

All other Canadian provinces hold local government elections every four years.

Extending the term of office will apply to B.C.'s mayors and all elected officials serving municipalities, regional districts, parks boards, school boards and the Islands Trust.

Moving to four-year terms was recommended by the Local Government Elections Task Force. Last year, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) passed a resolution supporting extension of the term of office for elected local government officials from three to four years. The BC School Trustees Association also supports the change.

The move to four-year terms is part of a package of local election reforms planned for the current legislative session. The changes will modernize election campaign financing rules ahead of the 2014 local elections.

Quotes:

Community, Sport and Cultural Development Minister Coralee Oakes –

"My experience as a municipal councillor convinced me that to succeed in today's complex world, local governments need enough time to plan and complete projects that build strong, inclusive communities. I'm confident this change, supported by UBCM and the task force, will help local governments continue to make B.C.'s communities great places to live and work."

UBCM president Rhona Martin –

"B.C. local governments endorsed a resolution in support of four-year terms at the 2013 UBCM convention. I am pleased to see another recommendation to update local government elections legislation moving ahead."

Quick Facts:

- In 2010, a joint B.C. government-UBCM Local Government Elections Task Force presented a report with 31 recommendations to update local government elections in British Columbia.
- In September 2013, the B.C. government released the White Paper on Local Government Elections Reform with draft legislation to provide election participants and the public with advance knowledge of anticipated changes to the local elections campaign finance rules for the 2014 local elections.
- The B.C. government continues to consult with stakeholders on reforms to address accessibility, specifically expense limits, for local government elections in 2018.
- Improvement districts are not subject to provincial elections rules and will continue with three-year terms. Improvement districts provide specific local services only in certain communities (e.g., water, fire protection, street lighting, diking, drainage, garbage collection, parks).

Learn More:

See proposed changes to B.C.'s local government elections at:

www.localgovelectionreform.gov.bc.ca

Visit the Union of British Columbia Municipalities website at: <http://www.ubcm.ca/>

Review the joint B.C. government-UBCM Local Government Elections Task Force recommendations at: <http://www.localelectionstaskforce.gov.bc.ca/>

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