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WESTERN ECONOMIC SOLUTIONS TASKFORCE**

Statement from FCM President Bill Karsten on the creation of a municipal Western Economic Solutions Taskforce

November 8, 2019

“The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) has long understood that—for Canada to thrive—its communities need to thrive. Yet right now, countless communities in western Canada are hurting. When the economic downturn hit there, the impacts touched all of us.

“No order of government has been closer to the impact of this downturn than our municipalities, as the government closest to the daily lives of Canadians. No matter the size of the community—both urban and rural—we see Canadians losing their livelihoods, losing their homes, and worrying about their family’s future.

“For over a century, FCM has united the cities and communities that millions of Canadians call home. When they confront a crisis like the economic downturn facing western Canada today, it is a shared one. There is no doubt that this crisis has left families and workers in these provinces feeling alone in the search for solutions, and we are now facing growing concern about that feeling of isolation within our proud Confederation.

“FCM knows the challenges that come with trying to speak with one voice from coast to coast to coast. When federal or provincial politics leave us feeling at odds with our fellow Canadians, municipal leaders are able to step beyond the politics to share solutions. Local governments are the bridge builders.

“Right now, this national conversation about unity and how best to support western communities struggling with the economic downturn demands engagement from every level of government. That is why FCM has struck a subgroup of municipal leaders from western Canada and beyond, called the Western Economic Solutions Taskforce (or WEST). Together, this group of elected officials will convene important conversations between the municipal and federal orders of government to ensure the perspectives of western communities are voiced, and to drive new solutions on how to best support them through this economic crisis.

“This taskforce will, in the coming weeks, seek to engage a respectful direct dialogue with the federal government on how to support communities impacted by this economic crisis. FCM has already called on the Government of Canada to support our country’s energy producing regions through nation-building energy infrastructure projects, including projects that support a

responsible transition to renewable energies. Now, we are taking the next step by actively fostering more of those solutions to this complex array of challenges.

“We look forward to those conversations as we do what local governments often do, reach across traditional and regional boundaries to collectively address a national challenge.”

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