

**For Immediate Release**  
**September 9, 2016**

**Community builders, ideas people, regional champions invited to join free Community & Regional Economic Action Forum on October 14**

**Lillooet, British Columbia** – Local champions, entrepreneurs and passionate community members are invited to take action for the regional economy on Friday, October 14, at a free day-long forum designed to identify economic players, instigate partnerships and transform opportunities into action.

Taking place at the P'egp'ig'lha Community Centre on October 14, 2016, from 8:30 am – 5:00pm, the *Community & Regional Economic Action (CREA) Forum* will bring representatives from St'át'imc and municipal/regional governments, businesses and community organizations together with industry experts and any interested citizens, to collectively tackle community economic development in the northern Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) / northern St'át'imc Territory.

Spearheaded by the Northern Economic Development and Initiatives (NEDI) Committee, a Committee of the SLRD Board, the Forum follows the success of a Community to Community Forum held in January between St'át'imc and local government leaders to strengthen relationships between the communities. The October 14 event provides an opportunity for businesses, community groups and residents from around the region to join those conversations with a focus on innovation, opportunity and collaboration. It is also an opportunity to help shape the Terms of Reference and action plan that will guide the formation of a regionally-based and community-driven working group to coordinate community economic development initiatives in the region.

“We all share a desire to create a strong, vibrant and sustainable economy capable of supporting the long-term health and wellbeing of our communities,” says Debbie Demare, SLRD Electoral Area A Director and Chair of the NEDI Committee. “Our greatest opportunity is to work together and support each other. We hope people will come out on October 14 with their ideas, energy, talents and vision to add their voices to this important community conversation.”

The Forum is being designed to actively engage a wide range of people in practical discussions that will inspire cooperation and mobilize the collective action needed to foster sustainable economic development in the northern St'át'imc Territory / northern SLRD. Several small-group action-planning sessions will be facilitated by EcoPlan International to identify the actions, resources and support needed to move key initiatives forward. The event will also include structured and informal networking opportunities, and will feature a trade show to showcase the many projects underway in the region and the resources available to support them.

The CREA Forum is being planned by a Forum Organizing Committee composed of local and St'át'imc government, business and community representatives with the support of EcoPlan International. Funding for the event is being provided by the SLRD.

Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m., with the program running from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The event will conclude with an informal networking session between 4:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. Admission is free and lunch and refreshments will be provided. However, space is limited so advance registration is required.

To learn more, to register, or to find out how your organization or business can support the event, visit: <https://creaforum.eventbrite.ca> or email [creaforum@ecoplan.ca](mailto:creaforum@ecoplan.ca).

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**About the NEDI Committee:** The Northern Economic Development and Initiatives (NEDI) Committee is a Standing Committee of the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) Board. Composed of elected officials from both the SLRD and the District of Lillooet, its purpose is to develop and recommend strategies and implement plans that support and enhance economic development opportunities in the northern areas of the SLRD.

**About EcoPlan International:** EcoPlan is an award winning, multi-disciplinary firm of planners, urban designers, facilitators, decision analysts and economic development specialists. They were hired by the SLRD in 2015 to implement the recommendation from the [Economic Development Governance Model Feasibility Study](#) to establish an inclusive, multi-party economic development working group and provide secretariat support during the initial development phase.

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