

For immediate release
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Regional District undertakes Fire Services Resiliency Project

Working with fire associations, the SLRD aims to provide a framework for regional fire service

Pemberton, BC – The Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) is working with local fire associations and societies to launch a Fire Services Resiliency Project, aimed at developing a clear and consistent framework for fire service governance across the region.

Initiated in September 2025, the project builds on fire service reviews conducted in 2013 and 2024, which identified opportunities to strengthen the SLRD's approach to fire services across the region. Key recommendations from those reviews highlighted the need for clearer service delivery models, greater support for rural fire services, and modernized governance and policy structures. This project will put those recommendations into action.

At the January 28, 2026 Board meeting, the SLRD Board confirmed its commitment to the project, directing staff to take the next steps, including policy development and service agreements, while investigating the development of a wildfire operations service level for society-run fire departments that have difficulty meeting the Fire Commissioner's Exterior Firefighter level of service.

The SLRD currently operates two fire departments in Electoral Area D: the Garibaldi Volunteer Fire Department, serving the communities of Black Tusk and Pinecrest and the Britannia Beach Volunteer Fire Department, serving Britannia Beach. In addition, several independently managed fire service associations and societies receive funding from the SLRD and provide fire protection in other communities throughout the region. The latter group is the focus of the Fire Service Resiliency Project.

“What we’ve seen through past reviews is a continued divide between two distinct service models — the departments that formally operate under the SLRD and the independently-managed, community-based fire associations,” said SLRD Board Chair, Jen Ford. “This project gives us an opportunity to work collaboratively to close any gaps and support consistent, sustainable fire service delivery across the region.”

The Fire Services Resiliency Project aims to address existing gaps in policy and governance, while collaborating directly with independently managed fire service associations/societies. The project will focus on the communities of Gun Lake and Bralorne in Electoral Area A, and Birken and Pemberton Meadows in Electoral Area C, where existing fire services are provided by voluntary third-party associations. The expectation is that, through the project, a framework will be developed that can be used to guide future collaboration with additional fire service associations throughout the region.

“Fire service delivery in a region as diverse as the SLRD can be challenging and complex, particularly in rural areas where funding, capacity, and resource limitations often create barriers,” said Ford. “Through the Fire Services Resiliency Project, our goal is to establish a clear, consistent, and accountable governance framework that supports safe, effective, and sustainable fire protection for all communities.”

The first phase of the Fire Services Resiliency Project involved direct engagement with fire service associations and societies in Gun Lake, Bralorne, Birken and Pemberton Meadows. This consultation will continue in early 2026. The information gleaned from that direct engagement will help inform the work moving forward.

“The dedication and local knowledge of volunteer fire association/society members is vital to this process,” said Ford. “Their input will ensure that the outcomes of this project reflect the realities, strengths and needs of the communities they serve.”

For more information about this project, including the project timeline, please visit the SLRD website: [Fire Service Resiliency Project | Squamish-Lillooet Regional District](#)

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About the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District

Located in southwestern BC, the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) is a local government federation consisting of four member municipalities (the District of Lillooet, the District of Squamish, the Village of Pemberton and the Resort Municipality of Whistler) and four unincorporated, rural electoral areas (A, B, C, and D). Headquartered in Pemberton, which is the approximate geographic centre of the region, the SLRD delivers a wide range of local, regional and sub-regional services to approximately 50,496 residents (2021 Census as certified by the Minister of Municipal Affairs).

The Squamish-Lillooet Regional District is found within the traditional territories of several First Nations, including the Sḵwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), St'át'imc and Lílwat. Small parts of the SLRD also overlap with the traditional territories of the Stó:lō, Tsleil-Waututh, Nlaka'pamux, Tsilhqot'in, and Secwepemc Nations. While the SLRD does not provide direct services to the residents of the First Nations communities located within the region, the organization is committed to enhancing relations with the Indigenous communities and First Nations within whose territories the SLRD operates.

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