

DATE: October 26, 2020 **FILE:** 6750-20

TO: Chair and Directors
Regional District Board

FROM: Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

RE: Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program - Food Hub Grant Application

Supported by Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

R. Dyson

Purpose

To provide an update on the submission of a grant application to the Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program (CERIP) for a Food Hub.

Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:

THAT staff apply for a Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program (CERIP) grant for a Food Hub project located in the Merville Community Association Hall.

Executive Summary

The Province is looking to support projects that provide job opportunities and immediate stimulus through CERIP grants of up to \$1 million; each local government, first nations, or not for profit organization can submit up to two applications. The Province has committed up to \$100 million to the program to support community economic resilience, tourism, heritage and urban and rural economic development projects under four streams:

- Community Economic Resilience
- Destination Development
- Unique Heritage Infrastructure
- Rural Economic Recovery

The Electoral Areas Services Committee received correspondence from the Comox Valley Economic Recovery Task Force at its October 5, 2020 meeting and passed the following motion:

“THAT staff collaborate with the Comox Valley Economic Development Society and the Comox Valley Food Policy Council regarding a grant application to the Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program for a food hub.”

Comox Valley Economic Development Society has worked with various community groups to prepare the detailed estimates and information for the Comox Valley Regional District to submit a grant application to upgrade the Merville Community Association Hall with a commercial kitchen and supporting food processing and distribution infrastructure in order to establish a Rural Community Food Hub in the Comox Valley. The final budget details are still being prepared, but the grant application for the food hub is \$996,923. The Rural Community Food Hub will create and support long term economic growth and recovery in the community by providing:

- Greater access to food processing capabilities
- Enhanced farm viability
- Greater value added product volume and diversification
- Agricultural business incubator

- Improved food security and self-sufficiency
- Increased local product availability

Prepared by:

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Concurrence:

M. Foort

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