

February 25, 2020

Plug into FCM's Western Economic Solutions Taskforce (WEST)

Western municipal leaders are on the front lines of economic uncertainty. Every day, people in our communities are losing their livelihoods, their homes, and their hopes for the future. As the governments closest to daily life, municipalities are working to find solutions.

That's why the RMA is pleased to represent rural Alberta on the **Western Economic Solutions Taskforce (WEST)**—launched by the **Federation of Canadian Municipalities** after the federal election. WEST is comprised of municipal leaders from across Western Canada who are bringing western voices straight to Ottawa.

WEST is exploring a full range of short, medium, and long-term solutions to support struggling communities. That means solutions on everything from getting resources to market, to economic diversification, to energy and climate policy. Solutions that municipal leaders can press the federal government to adopt. And solutions that communities—rural and urban—can build on themselves.

With a federal budget coming soon, WEST has already put forward fast-action proposals that can make an immediate difference for communities of all sizes:

- Create a federal program to support faster reclamation of abandoned oil and gas wells without relieving industry of its responsibilities - to create jobs in the near term.
- Compensate farmers for the cost of carbon pricing on grain drying - boosting a sector that has been hit hard by trade disputes, transportation issues, and extreme weather.
- Immediately implement the federal commitment to create a new infrastructure fund to support priority projects in communities in oil and gas regions.

Those proposals came out of a full-day summit that WEST held last month in Leduc County. Throughout the day, WEST representatives met directly with Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland, other federal ministers, and opposition Members of Parliament. A priority of WEST is to make sure those municipal-federal conversations continue.

At the same time, WEST needs to hear from *you* about how rural municipalities, through RMA and FCM, can work with the federal government to address economic challenges in your municipality. Please share your ideas through the online form at fcm.ca/west or by emailing west@fcm.ca.

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