



22 March 2019

Letter of Intent to Form a Wildfire Services Contract Advisory Committee:

The Western Forestry Contractors' Association (WFCA) and BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) are announcing their intention to form a Wildfire Services Contract Advisory Committee (WSCAC). The purpose of the committee will be to provide wildfire contractors and the BCWS an opportunity to collectively address lessons, feedback and challenges to strengthen and improve wildfire preparedness and response in British Columbia. Focus will be on developing the private sector's wildfire services competence, worker safety and business sustainability. Subject to developing the terms of reference of this proposed group, both parties expect it to comprise initially fire crew service providers along with selected specialized service providers.

The formalizing of relations between the two organizations follows, in part, advice received from the fire crew service providers community at the WFCA-hosted provincial contractors 2018 provincial fire season debrief held this fall. The WFCA will work with both its members and non-members along with the association's various affiliations with government, regulators and industry organizations to provide input and resources for the committee's work. The principal partners from the BCWS side will be senior management and senior staff in the Wildfire Operations Program out of the Headquarters Kamloops office with field support from their regions' staff.

The initial work of developing the proposal is being handled by a joint steering group of the WFCA and Wildfire Operations. Its immediate goals include drawing up the terms of reference of the intended committee and outlining a draft workplan for 2019. Many of the goals of the committee are likely to require a long-term outlook including ongoing collaboration and regular scheduled meetings of its members. The WSCAC is expected to have a multi-year life span.

There is agreement between the WFCA and BCWS that we are headed into times where wildfires are likely to continue increasing in frequency, intensity and severity. In that context the private sector will continue to be relied on by our government to provide support in preparing and defending the province from the threat of catastrophic wildfires. The contractor community has also recognized the advantages to cooperating and working collectively when it comes to relations with government on matters of business and policy. BCWS believes there are benefits in working with the WFCA and the contracting community as a whole as a way to solve problems, maintain constructive relations and deliver benefits to all stakeholders.