



Elected Officials Launch a Call to Action on Community Climate Resilience

Date: Friday, November 15, 2019

For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC – Today the City of Victoria and ICLEI are releasing the “Victoria Call to Action.” Recently, more than 350 delegates from across Canada and the United States gathered in downtown Victoria for the 2019 Livable Cities Forum, “Building Better Communities Through Resilience,” which was hosted by the City of Victoria and ICLEI Canada, in partnership with SHIFT Collaborative and the Adaptation to Climate Change Team (ACT).

Cities and towns across North America are on the front lines of floods, fires and other climate-related disasters. In response and to be ready in the face of coming climate-related disasters, 50 mayors and councillors from Canada and the US convened for a day-long, interactive session focusing on building social resilience, community belonging and inclusion as a key resilience strategy.

“It was so inspiring to have local elected officials join us from coast to coast to coast to discuss and develop practical, hands-on solutions,” said Mayor Helps, who hosted the day. “To hear about the community and resilience building activities happening in towns and cities across the country was inspiring and motivating.”

The Leadership & Legacy session highlighted a coordinated story of leadership at the local level and provided a showcase of the tangible outcomes that real action on resilience is having in cities. The day’s sessions culminated in a collective Call to Action (attached) for locally elected officials to build resilience through thriving and inclusive communities.

Yellowknife Mayor Rebecca Alty, after attending the Elected Officials workshop, said “It was a great opportunity to discuss what communities across Canada are doing to address and mitigate climate change. It was an opportunity to discuss current barriers and challenges, and strategies that others have used to overcome them, as well as pushing us to think outside of the box when it comes to cross-sector partnerships and collaboration. Moving forward, we need to continue to work together to address this global crisis”.

Following remarks from Mary Rowe, President & CEO of Canadian Urban Institute and Gleam Davis, Mayor of Santa Monica, the Elected Officials discussed building neighbourhood and community resilience and social cohesion. They shared examples of existing community resilience and social cohesion and how an equity lens could be applied to increase cohesion. They also identified key challenges to building social cohesion and what they might take back to their community based on the dialogue.

Mayor Gleam Davis, City of Santa Monica shared her thoughts on the importance of having the opportunity to connect with other elected officials: “Coming from California where destructive cycles of drought and fire caused

by climate change have caused the devastating loss of life and property, it truly is important to connect with other elected officials to share our experiences, possible solutions, and, most importantly, the commitment to addressing the climate crisis that threatens us all.”

The 2014 National Climate Assessment acknowledged that all Canadians are at risk from the health impacts of climate change. But vulnerability to health-related climate impacts is often socially determined. Income, social support networks, culture, gender, education and literacy all influence individual and community capacity to adapt to climate impacts.

The mayors and councillors tackled the challenging question of what tangible actions they can take to advance progress on this complex issue, and what kinds of partnerships are necessary to do so. Elected officials from across Canada recognized that municipalities can and should do more to bring health and equity into the climate conversation.

“It was incredible to hear the conversations and have practical solutions being brought up, ones that could be taken home and implemented by this group of local leaders” said Megan Meaney, Executive Director of ICLEI Canada. “In organizing the day with the City of Victoria, we had hoped that these stories and ideas would emerge, but the day far exceeded what we imagined!”

The day of dialogue and networking ended with elected officials finalizing a collective Call to Action for local leaders to advance work on the health, well-being and social cohesion aspects of resilience.

ATTACHMENTS:

Photo: 2019 Livable Cities Forum Delegates

Call to Action: Building Resilience Through Thriving and Inclusive Communities

– 30 –

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