



## OMINECA BEETLE ACTION COALITION (OBAC)

### News Release

#### Local Government Leaders Preparing a Beetle Trust Proposal

June 2, 2005

##### For Immediate Release

**Vanderhoof** – A group of Mayors, Chairs, Councilors and Directors across the Bulkley Omineca region have banded together to establish an Interim Executive Committee to prepare a proposal for a community-based Coalition and a Beetle Trust Fund, similar to the Cariboo-Chilcotin Beetle Action Coalition (CCBAC) announced April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

“The mountain pine beetle epidemic has led to increased cut levels of infested pine forests and we know this cut level will be reduced in the future. This proposal is about sharing in the Provincial revenues now so we can work with the government towards long-term community economic development strategies”, said Vanderhoof Mayor Len Fox.

Joining Mayor Fox in this Interim Executive Committee, are Mayors Colin Kinsley, Jim Togyi, James Davidson, and Bernice Magee and Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Chair, Rosanne Murray. “Rural residents and municipalities will be represented in the proposal to the Province including, Smithers, Telkwa, Houston, Burns Lake, Fraser Lake, Granisle, Vanderhoof, Fort St James, and Prince George”, Roseanne Murray said.

“We see our proposed Coalition and a Beetle Trust Fund as a way of ensuring that the communities from Smithers to Prince George remain fully engaged in beetle mitigation strategies at all levels”, said Mayor Kinsley.

The Interim Executive Committee is forming an interim coalition to finalize the proposal and present to Government sometime this summer. “Work is underway to seek other interim memberships, including representation from a First Nations community perspective, and from the forest industry, the environmental interests and land use planning”, said Mayor Fox. Once Beetle Trust funding has been secured for the Coalition, additional discussions will take place to establish the long-term membership of the Coalition.

“This is a community-driven approach supporting and working with the Province in tackling the mountain pine beetle issues and maintaining vibrant rural communities well after the beetle has come and gone”, said Mayor Fox.

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