



For Immediate Release

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## **ACCELERATE KOOTENAYS GIVES ELECTRIC VEHICLES A BOOST IN A CANADA-FIRST INITIATIVE**

*Creston, B.C.* – Canada’s first regional and community-driven strategy to accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles celebrated its Kootenay-wide network of electric vehicle charging stations this week.

The initiative has installed 10 out of the 13 Direct Current Fast Chargers (DCFCs) planned across the region, and will have installed 40 Level 2 charging stations by the end of the summer. Electric vehicle drivers now have a fast charging corridor across Highway 3 in the Kootenays, and by project completion, the Kootenays will have over 1,800 kilometres of connected electric vehicle travel.

Fast charging stations are critical infrastructure to allow electric vehicle drivers to travel to and within the Kootenay region, connecting communities from Sparwood to Greenwood, Revelstoke to Field, and all communities in between. The new charging stations not only make electric vehicle ownership feasible for Kootenay residents, they have the benefit of allowing tourists driving electric vehicles to visit their favourite local destinations.

This week’s event in Creston celebrated the success of the Accelerate Kootenays initiative with many of the partners and funders involved over the past two years. In attendance at the launch on Friday, May 25<sup>th</sup> was Hon. Michelle Mungall, Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources and Nelson-Creston MLA, who celebrated the project alongside Rob Gay, Board Chair of the Regional District of East Kootenay; Karen Hamling, Board Chair of the Regional District of Central Kootenay; Bree Seabrook, Manager, Special Initiatives for Columbia Basin Trust; Doug Stout, VP Market Development & External Relations at FortisBC; Maureen Daschuk, Sr. VP Integrated Planning at BC Hydro; and Catherine Adair, Community Relations Leader at Teck Trail Operations.

“British Columbians are keen to adopt electric vehicles, and increasing charging stations to all corners of the province is essential to that adoption,” said Michelle Mungall, Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources. “The Government of British Columbia is pleased to be a part of these initiatives as well as making electric vehicle purchases more affordable. Reducing carbon emissions by increasing clean energy vehicle use is part of our plan to build a better B.C.”

A regional strategy was developed two years ago, which designed a base network of electric vehicle charging infrastructure that would enhance tourism and economic opportunities for Kootenay communities while also providing an opportunity for residents to transition to cleaner fuel vehicles. Fast charging infrastructure is owned and operated by BC Hydro and FortisBC, in their respective service areas. Level 2 stations are installed in partnership with local governments, in strategic locations that will optimize economic co-benefits in the community.



Regional District of Central Kootenay Chair, Karen Hamling, emphasized the local context of the project: “The Accelerate Kootenays project is an opportunity for our communities to show off what’s great about the region, and to draw attention to the innovation that exists here at the community and regional level. We expect the project to attract new visitors to the region, benefitting our communities in a variety of ways.”

The two-year, \$1.8 million project is the result of an innovative collaboration between all levels of government as well as funding agencies that have worked together to address the charging infrastructure gap across the region. The initiative highlights the opportunities for electric vehicles in the Kootenays, using communications and marketing to bring a local context to the growing technology.

The project has been made possible by an unprecedented local collaboration led by the Regional Districts of East Kootenay, Central Kootenay and Kootenay Boundary, and includes in-kind and funding contributions from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities’ Green Municipal Fund™ (GMF) and the Government of Canada, Columbia Basin Trust, B.C. Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, Teck, FortisBC, BC Hydro and Powertech Labs.

Under the [Green Municipal Fund](#), the Government of Canada and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities announced a grant to support Accelerate Kootenays in February. GMF supports initiatives that advance innovative solutions to environmental challenges.

The Accelerate Kootenays project is facilitated by Community Energy Association. For more information visit [www.acceleratekootenays.ca](http://www.acceleratekootenays.ca).

**Jim Carr, Canada’s Minister of Natural Resources:**

“Canada is proud to support projects like Accelerate Kootenays. By supporting infrastructure for electric vehicles and alternative fuels, we are making it easier for Canadians to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to our climate goals. Making Canada’s roads greener starts at the regional level. With the collaboration of all levels of government, Canada is moving forward towards a clean energy future.”

**Jenny Gerbasi, President, Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM):**

“The model created by Accelerate Kootenays demonstrates the innovation that exists at a local level and the impact municipalities and regional governments can have in advancing clean transportation. We are very happy to support this initiative which takes into account the unique geographical and climatic characteristics of the Kootenays to create a strategy that other rural communities can replicate to advance electric vehicle technology.”



**Johnny Strilaeff, Columbia Basin Trust President and Chief Executive Officer:**

“Basin residents told us that finding ways to conserve energy, and generate renewable and alternative forms of energy, was important to them. Accelerate Kootenays is one of the ways we’re addressing this priority. This initiative is innovative, it promotes clean energy, and it brings together many partners for the benefit of the entire Columbia Basin.”

**Marcia Smith, Senior Vice President, Sustainability and External Affairs, Teck**

“We’re proud to be part of this innovative partnership that will benefit the Kootenays, including our many employees that live and work in the region. Teck is working to support the transition to a low-carbon economy through initiatives like this one, and by providing the metals and minerals required for clean technology such as electric vehicles.”

**Doug Stout, FortisBC Vice President of Market Development & External Relations**

“This partnership has done a tremendous job in expanding the network of fast charging stations and helping Canada meet its climate goals – we’re proud to be a part of it. Projects like this are one of the ways we are meeting our customers’ needs for cleaner energy options, especially for transportation, and we look forward to participating in more projects like this.”

**Maureen Daschuk, BC Hydro Sr. Vice President Integrated Planning**

“With 98% of the electricity B.C. generates coming from clean and renewable sources, electric vehicle technology represents a tremendous opportunity to reduce our emissions and support the province’s climate goals. We are excited to be a part of this innovative partnership and make this long-term commitment to the B.C. communities that host the charging stations.”

**Lawrence Chernoff, Chair of the Highway 3 Mayors’ and Chairs’ Coalition and Founding member of the BC Mayor’s Climate Leadership Council**

“A key priority of the Highway 3 Mayors’ and Chairs’ Coalition is to create economic opportunities and drive more visitors to the Highway 3 corridor. Supporting the development of electric vehicle charging stations along that corridor creates opportunity for new tourists to access and travel within the region. The vision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure along the Highway 3 corridor is now a reality, and to the great benefit of all communities along the route.”