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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2016TRAN0011-000096  
Jan. 27, 2016

Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

### **Province commits \$10 million for B.C. ground search and rescue**

NORTH VANCOUVER – Ground search and rescue volunteers are known for providing an outstretched hand-of-help to the lost or injured in British Columbia. The provincial government is reaching out to them and will be providing \$10-million in one-time funding to help bolster training, administrative support and equipment renewals.

“It’s a small army of 2,500 volunteers that comb the province’s backcountry, rappel into steep ravines and weather the worst of the elements, while leaving behind the comforts of home to go seek and find those who are lost or injured,” said Minister of State for Emergency Preparedness Naomi Yamamoto. “Their selflessness is woven into the fabric of their service, and today’s investment continues on our commitment to strengthening them and the tapestry of public safety throughout the province.”

Over the coming months, the BC Search and Rescue Association will work with its membership to bolster ground search and rescue services throughout the province. Once allocated, the funding will be spent according to the needs of the local ground search and rescue teams, replacing or updating equipment, providing administrative support and paying for new or additional training.

“The service that search and rescue groups provide in their communities is recognized as an invaluable asset to the people of this province and today we welcome the additional support of the B.C. government to help strengthen the work that’s being done,” said president of BC Search and Rescue Association Chris Kelly. “While we continue to work with the province on the proposed alternate support model for search and rescue, this money will help relieve some of the funding pressures and provide for increased training and other tools for those who tirelessly serve as volunteers.”

In the last year, Emergency Management BC (EMBC) has had a number of positive and promising discussions with the BC Search and Rescue Association on an alternate support model for the service. This funding will help meet the 80 ground search and rescue team’s immediate needs while EMBC continues to work together with BC Search and Rescue Association on a long-term solution.

This investment will build on the \$6.3 million that the B.C. government is already providing each year to cover ground search and rescue operational costs for deployment, as well as training and equipment costs, and the insurance and liability for the members of the 80 groups serving across the B.C. landscape.

“We are fortunate within B.C. to have such a dedicated group of individuals who make serving the safety of others their passion,” said Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Todd

Stone. “Within ground search and rescue there are roughly 100,000 hours of volunteer time donated to searches; to replace these would cost more than \$5 million annually in direct salary dollars. We are grateful for their commitment and in turn, government is strengthening its commitment with this one time grant.”

“We all know it takes a whole community of frontline workers like police, paramedics, fire fighters, coroners, and volunteers like those from search and rescue, to keep our communities safe,” said Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General Mike Morris. “Public safety is our number-one priority and this additional resource will help bolster support to the front lines of search and rescue operations in communities throughout B.C.”

**Learn more:**

BC Search and Rescue Association: [www.bcsara.com](http://www.bcsara.com)

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