

ONE VISION, MANY VOICES: RECOMMENDATIONS

- These recommendations are about working together better as a nation to create a more sustainable rural Canada.
- Investing in a modern and sustainable rural Canada will contribute to the growth and prosperity of the entire country.
- A dedicated federal ministry will help provide the focus necessary to understand the unique challenges and opportunities of rural Canada.
- Cooperation and communication between all levels of government – local and national – are essential if we are to reach our goal.
- To ensure stable and predictable funding for local and regional governments ... population based funding methods need to be revised to account for the varying circumstances of rural and remote communities.
- Change will not happen overnight ... but we need to work closely with all levels of government to build on the ideas and recommendations of this report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The seven recommendations for a sustainable rural Canada:

1. Increase **cooperation** and **partnerships** among rural municipalities, senior levels of government, industry, rural stakeholders and Aboriginal communities.
 - Engage communities in regional-decision making and promote partnerships and efficiencies.
2. Increase **educational opportunities** for rural Canadians by **reducing the barriers** to access post-secondary opportunities.
 - Further develop both mobile and virtual training opportunities.
3. Increase **high-speed connectivity** in rural and remote regions of Canada to ensure readily available access to critical information and promote opportunities.
4. Ensure **stable, predictable funding** for local and regional governments, not necessarily based on population.
 - Adjust the current cost-sharing arrangements to better suit the needs of municipalities.
5. Establish a **federal ministry** dealing solely with issues and opportunities of rural and remote Canada.
 - Formal recognition of municipalities as a level of government and restructure jurisdiction and taxation instruments.
6. Establish a **rural network** to share best practices for rural economics, infrastructure, environment and governance across all jurisdictions of Canada.
7. **Communicate** the messages from the Rural Matters! symposium to decision makers, rural organizations and community leaders.