

8. CLIMATE RESILIENCE



GOAL: *Adapt and ensure the PRRD is prepared for a changing climate.*

As with the rest of the world, the climate in the PRRD is changing due to global heating. The effects of this warming have already been experienced and will continue to impact the entire region, our communities and our regional economy over the coming years.

The PRRD has been experiencing a changing climate with more extreme weather events, storms, flooding, heat and drought. These changes drive other hazards, including increased wildfire activity, notably the 2023 Donnie Creek fire, which became the largest in BC's history. The 619,000-hectare fire burned through the winter of 2023 into the summer of 2024.

FIGURE 13: Summary of projected regional climate impacts



1. Support climate resilience programs and initiatives in the PRRD.

- a) Support implementation of the Regional Climate Resiliency Strategy.
- b) Work with PRRD member municipalities, Northern Health, the Province, First Nations in the PRRD and others on regional climate adaptation initiatives, including green infrastructure programs, floodplain management and resilient regional water and wastewater infrastructure.
- c) Work with PRRD member municipalities, Northern Health, the province, First Nations in the PRRD and others to raise awareness of climate impacts on health and wellbeing.
- d) Advocate for provincial support to carry out a regional project that builds on outputs of the 2024 PRRD Geohazards Workshop to improve understanding of the existing vulnerabilities and reduce the risk of disasters over the longer term³.
- e) Support ongoing public engagement and awareness of climate hazards in the PRRD and what the PRRD and member municipalities are doing to address current and likely future climate change impacts.
- f) Support municipal members (Fort St. John, Dawson Creek, Tumbler Ridge, Chetwynd) in implementing actions from climate change vulnerability assessments completed through the Northeast Climate Resilience Network.
- g) Develop PRRD staff and technical capacity to measure and report community-wide emissions data.
- h) Support member municipalities with provincial requirements for minimum provincial Step Code targets.

2. Support improved regional emergency response for climate-related events.

- a) Work with member municipalities, regional First Nations and other partners on developing a permanent space for emergency operations in the region⁴.
- b) Work with member municipalities, regional First Nations and other partners to identify and secure the necessary resources (human resources, staffing, equipment) for effective emergency response and create protocols for future events.
- c) Encourage local government staff across the region to complete emergency management training.
- d) Consider developing a PRRD emergency/hazard response plan that incorporates knowledge and experience gained by local emergency personnel and residents in recent emergencies.

³ In November 2023, the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George received \$1 million for a similar project.

⁴ As recommended in a 2023 wildfire response report.