

## The Case for Increased Funding from British Columbia

Avalanche Canada has received regular funding from BC since our inception in 2004. In fact, BC was the first government to commit to supporting public avalanche safety and we are grateful for that.

However, our home province has not been contributing its fair share for a long time. The majority of all avalanche fatalities in Canada (about 75%) occur in BC. Likewise, the majority of our programs and services are delivered in this province. All 14 of our forecast regions are in BC, wholly or in part, and most of our youth outreach occurs here.

Currently, Emergency Management BC (EMBC) gives us \$150K annually, an amount that hasn't changed since 2010. (It was \$125K from 2004 – 2008 and \$140K in 2009). This funding has never been part of a written agreement and has never been a multi-year commitment. The province has occasionally funded specific projects for two or three years. And we have sometimes received one-time funding, such as in 2016 when EMBC gave us \$500K on top of their annual funding. We spread out that particular contribution over three years.

When AvCan began making its case to the federal government for increased funding, we built the proposal on the basis of shared and increased funding from the provinces. In 2018, the Government of Canada announced its one-time endowment of \$25 million for AvCan. This endowment funds a 15-year business plan, and is paying for Avalanche Quebec as well as the expansion of our program to the Yukon and Nfld & Labrador.

In May of 2019, BC Minister of Public Safety Mike Farnworth announced in the legislature that he would be seeking funding for AvCan of \$1million/annually. This has not transpired.

It's important to note that AvCan is also the beneficiary of BC Gaming. But BC Gaming is not committed government funding; these are grants that we apply for each year and that are generally not confirmed until we are months into our operating season. Nonetheless we are grateful to BC Gaming, which has also been an important source of funding for some capital projects as well.

In comparison with other provinces, BC lags far behind in funding for avalanche safety. For example, on a per-capita basis, Yukon outspends BC by about 20:1, and that's with gaming grants included. BC residents receive, by far, the best avalanche accident prevention programs from AvCan. Our services are used by many different government agencies and it is long past time that this province start paying its fair share.