

**From:** Minister Joly / Ministre Joly (IC)  
**Sent:** Friday, June 18, 2021 10:25 AM  
**To:** Blaney, Rachel - M.P.  
**Subject:** Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages

Minister of Economic Development  
and Official Languages



Ministre du Développement économique  
et des Langues officielles

Dear Ms. Blaney:

Thank you for your correspondence of February 22, 2021, regarding the development of a dedicated regional development agency (RDA) for British Columbia (BC) and outlining the challenges of the communities in your riding.

Beyond expressing your deep affinity for your region and its people, you raised important points about how the Government of Canada can help rural communities flourish. I believe, as do many others, that a separate BC RDA may be part of the solution and can help the government better respond to local circumstances in rural communities.

I welcome your suggestion to consider locating a branch of the new BC RDA in North Island–Powell River. A recurring theme in discussions with communities across the province has been the importance of a new BC RDA working directly with rural communities and having a presence in them. We have heard the message that a new BC RDA should be embedded in local economic ecosystems to better address local opportunities. I can assure you that Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada officials will duly consider your suggestion for a branch location as we continue to work through the details of establishing a new BC RDA.

I recognize that coastal waters are significant to your communities and that your region's economic solutions will be ocean-focused. As you noted, I am working with the Honourable Bernadette Jordan, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, to develop a Blue Economy Strategy (BES) for Canada's oceans that advances economic development, sustainability, and reconciliation. On February 8, 2021, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) began a public engagement to inform this strategy. This engagement will continue over the next several months. Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) and, subsequently, the new BC RDA will work with DFO to develop a BES that reflects the unique needs and perspectives of BC communities. I hope that you will join in these conversations and help ensure that these deliberations reflect the input of your constituents in the emerging strategy.

I sincerely appreciate your taking the time to provide me with a deeper understanding of the challenges facing your riding. I hope you will continue to lend your voice to helping all Canadians understand the importance of rural and coastal communities and, specifically, how the BC RDA and the BES represent opportunities for these communities to realize their potential in a sustainable manner. More information regarding the development of the new RDA will be

made public as it becomes available. I look forward to our continued dialogue on how we can realize BC's full economic potential.

Once again, thank you for writing, and please accept my best wishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Joly', with a stylized flourish at the end.

The Honourable Mélanie Joly, P.C., M.P.

The word 'Canada' in a serif font, with a small red and white Canadian flag icon positioned above the letter 'a'.