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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Community Development

### **ATLIN RESIDENTS GET IMPROVED LOCAL GOVERNANCE**

VICTORIA – Following the wishes of Atlin residents, the government of British Columbia has officially approved a new form of community governance for the northern community, announced Blair Lekstrom, Minister of Community Development, and Dennis MacKAY, MLA for Bulkley Valley-Stikine.

“This order-in-council is the final step in approving a governance solution that meets needs of the community of Atlin, without municipal incorporation,” said Lekstrom. “Atlin is in a unique area of the province and we are pleased to approve this unique solution that will improve community-based decision making.”

Atlin is a community of about 500 in northwestern B.C., located approximately two-and-a-half hours from Whitehorse. It is unique as it is neither a municipality, nor is it located within an incorporated regional district.

In the past, the Atlin Improvement District (AID) provided basic services such as fire protection, landfill and street lighting while the Atlin Advisory Planning Commission (AAPC) provided advice to provincial agencies and the Ministry of Community Development on local land issues. The order-in-council combines the responsibilities of the two organizations into one enhanced improvement district.

“This change represents a first in the Province of British Columbia,” said MacKAY. “It will give the residents more local control. They will be better able to consider both servicing and local land use when making decisions on what is best for their community.”

The newly combined organization, called the Atlin Community Improvement District, will enhance community decision-making, and reduce ministerial approvals. It will also reduce volunteer workload, with seven trustees, compared to 13 people serving the former two organizations.

Implementation of the new governance structure will take place over the next six to nine months. The election of two new trustees is scheduled to take place by March 1, 2009. They will join the five trustees of the existing improvement district to form the new board of the Atlin Community Improvement District.

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