

14 Oct 2016 The Vancouver Sun Guest editorial from The Victoria Times Colonist

B.C. municipalities look out of touch

The Union of B.C. Municipalities seems determined to prove its critics right. The organization's convention, which closed last weekend in Victoria, was a bonfire of the vanities.

On the one hand, the province's mayors are calling for a greater share of provincial revenues. This is a recurring theme of municipalities across the country, and it does indeed have a legitimate basis.

Yet, a majority of attendees supported a motion to divest themselves of fossil-fuel investments. As the Municipal Finance Authority pointed out, this can only lead to weaker revenues. A majority of delegates also called for a complete ban on old-growth logging across Vancouver Island. Here, too, it seems they found no inconsistency in asking for more money while backing measures that will depress the province's economy.

Two years ago, the province commissioned a study of wage and benefit packages which showed that between 2001 and 2012, municipal salaries increased twice as fast as provincial government wages and far ahead of inflation.

Uncontrolled salary growth is a legitimate concern, particularly if you mean to plead poverty.