

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### New Consortium to Study Cumulative Impacts of Development

**Prince George, BC** – The cumulative impacts of resource development across Northern British Columbia will be the research focus of a new consortium at UNBC, which will give a voice to communities being affected by these changes.

The Cumulative and Community Impacts Research Consortium (CCIRC) will provide a platform for research and dialogue on recent and proposed increases for resource development across Northern British Columbia and the effects on communities and regions. The CCIRC will bring together experts, knowledge, and resources from three existing UNBC institutes—the Community Development Institute, the Health Research Institute, and the Natural Resources and Environmental Studies Institute.

There has been a tremendous increase in resource development in recent years including oil and gas pipeline proposals, more hydraulic fracturing exploration for natural gas, a growing liquefied natural gas industry, the Site C hydroelectric project proposal, new transmission lines, mountain pine-beetle recovery, and new mines.

“As British Columbia and Canada continue to look north, it is important that we gain a robust understanding of effects associated with development,” says UNBC President Dr. Daniel Weeks. “The CCIRC is an exciting new platform to have these important discussions that will lead the way to inform future policy decisions.”

In late spring, the CCIRC will start engaging First Nations, local businesses, industry groups, residents, government officials, and other stakeholders. Its activities will include supporting community workshops and discussions, and creating an online information hub of academic, traditional and experiential knowledge on cumulative impacts.

“The CCIRC will draw on diverse expertise to engage in dialogue with regional voices and conduct research on the cumulative and long-term impacts of resource development,” says CCIRC Project Lead Chris Buse. “Our work seeks to integrate environmental, community, and health perspectives to improve policy and practice.”

Funding for the new consortium is currently provided by the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS), which is contributing \$225,000 over three years, and UNBC’s Office of Research. The CCIRC will be pursuing additional funding partnerships in the future.

“This innovative, tri-institute endeavor will raise awareness across BC about the on-the-ground realities and opportunities that the north is facing due to this unprecedented scale of resource development,” says UNBC PICS Coordinator Kyle Aben. “These pockets of development will have major cumulative impacts so this research is timely and essential.”

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