
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Agriculture

Professional sled dog mushers hold inaugural meeting

KAMLOOPS – The B.C. government and industry are taking another step toward strengthening animal welfare in British Columbia by providing oversight of the sled dog industry, when the Professional Mushers Association of BC meets for the first time today.

Several association members are coming together today in Kamloops for an inaugural planning workshop to share information, and discuss the group's governance, direction, and views. The session is jointly hosted by the Ministries of Agriculture and Jobs, Tourism, and Innovation.

The Professional Mushers Association of BC's mandate is to:

- Join and network commercial sled dog tour operators in B.C. for the purpose of information exchange, professional support, and operator unity.
- Be leaders in establishing and maintaining standards for kennel guidelines, sled dog care, and mandatory operator guidelines in B.C.
- Inform and educate the government, as well as the public, on the working sled dog and professional tour operations in B.C.

Sled dog mushers' proactive efforts to form this industry-led association complements a Sled Dog Task Force report recommendation that the sled dog industry be encouraged to develop a self-sustaining association that incorporates a certification and auditing program. On April 5, 2011, Premier Christy Clark announced the Province is acting on all 10 of the report's recommendations.

Also earlier this year, B.C. amended legislation to give this province the toughest animal cruelty laws in Canada with higher penalties and greater accountability.

Quotes:

Minister of Agriculture Don McRae –

“The formation of the Professional Mushers Association of BC is an important step toward the Province's commitment to ensuring the welfare and safety of working sled dogs in B.C. It will also give the industry a strong, unified voice and I look forward to building a solid relationship with the new PMABC.”

South Thompson MLA Kevin Krueger –

“The creation of the Professional Musers Association of BC, combined with the toughest animal cruelty laws in the country, demonstrates both the Province and industry are serious about putting a stop to animal cruelty.”

Sled Dog Task Force chair Dr. Terry Lake –

“As chair of the Sled Dog Task Force, I'm pleased the Professional Musers Association of BC has started work on their mandate. With responsibilities such as certification, auditing, and both public and professional education, PMABC will be active and effective.”

Professional Musers Association member Tim Tedford –

“Our association sees this meeting as one of the major steps in ensuring that the best interest of the dogs always comes first. We look forward to working with the ministries, now and in the future.”

Learn More:

The Professional Musers Association of BC:

<http://professionalmusersofbc.weebly.com/index.html>

Sled Dog Industry Task Force:

<http://www.gov.bc.ca/agri/taskforce.html>

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