

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Federal Funding Provides Boost to Ocean Innovation**

### **Contractor hired for feasibility study and business plan for Ocean Futures Innovation Hub**

VICTORIA – Today South Island Prosperity Partnership (SIPP), the City of Victoria and the Association of BC Marine Industries (ABCMI) are announcing receipt of \$100,000 in federal funding to take the next steps towards an Ocean Futures Innovation Hub for Greater Victoria. To develop the business case and feasibility study, SIPP has contracted a team from Urban Systems in B.C., and Canadian company Hatch, and Engage//Innovate of Norway.

“This investment in the Ocean Futures Innovation Hub is an investment in the future of B.C.’s economy,” says Melanie Joly, Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages and Minister responsible for Western Economic Diversification Canada. “This innovative project will help nurture the growth of several promising sectors while leveraging Victoria’s long-time strengths. It will create good, well-paying jobs and helping diversify the local economy, and I look forward to seeing the impact it has on Vancouver Island and beyond.”

In the fall of 2019, local ocean and marine companies expressed the need for a focused hub to streamline applied innovation, testing and demonstration, which would help the sector elevate its role in securing Victoria's role as an ocean region and Canada's position as an ocean nation. The City of Victoria responded by prioritizing this project in their Victoria 3.0 plan.

The Hub is a strategic priority for ABCMI, which represents over 220 companies in the ocean and marine sector in B.C. It will provide opportunities for companies large, medium and small to grow, increase export capacity, diversify supply chains and create more high-paying local jobs.

The Hub has also been identified as a high priority through the Ocean & Marine Committee of SIPP’s Rising Economy Taskforce, which earlier this month released 40 recommendations for regional economic recovery and is finalizing a *Regional Economic Recovery Plan*. SIPP views the Hub as positioning the industry well for recovery and long-term growth and resilience.

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## Quotes re: Ocean Futures Marine Hub announcement

“We are grateful to the federal government for funding to move this project along at a rapid pace. We’re keen to get working with the team from B.C. and Norway to engage the ocean and marine, tech, innovation sectors, and First Nations as we build the business plan over the next couple of months to set the Ocean Futures Innovation Hub up as a key COVID-19 recovery project for federal, provincial and private sector funders.” — **Mayor Lisa Helps, City of Victoria**

“ABCMI is very enthusiastic about this timely and relevant initiative and applauds the federal government in having the vision and commitment in providing fiscal support in moving this project closer to implementation. The creation of an Ocean Futures Innovation Hub on Canada’s west coast will assist in the region’s economic recovery through the creation of an ecosystem that will help existing and future innovative businesses grow and build their markets nationally and internationally through technological and operational excellence.” — **Alex Rueben, Executive Director, Association of British Columbia Marine Industries (ABCMI)**

"After a really competitive process involving bids from Europe, Canada, USA, and Israel, we are excited to put Urban Systems and their Norwegian partners to work on helping our region develop a world-class Ocean Futures Innovation Hub. The South Island is already home to world-class ocean technologies and a thriving marine sector. A Hub will take this to the next level and help create new 21st-century clean, innovative jobs." - **Emilie de Rosenroll, CEO, South Island Prosperity Partnership** — **Emilie de Rosenroll, CEO, South Island Prosperity Partnership**

"Well located on the southernmost tip of Vancouver Island, our region sits at the gateway to over 27,000 kilometres of resource-abundant Pacific Canadian coastline and is at the heart of the culturally-significant Salish Sea. The world is taking notice that our region, with a long history of world-class ocean and marine sector activity, is primed for abundant growth. The Ocean Futures Innovation Hub will give our province a critical tool for focusing our energy on developing those opportunities that will put BC in a position of world-leaders in ocean innovation." — **Craig Norris, Chair, South Island Prosperity Partnership; CEO, Victoria International Marina**

“We’re excited to be selected to conduct a feasibility study and develop a business plan for the Ocean Futures Innovation Hub. This Hub is an expression of our region’s culture, aspirations and leadership, which are some of the reasons we are so excited to participate. Urban Systems LTD has deep experience in the South Island as planning and engineering consultants, and Urban Matters CCC brings its experience with social venture design and incubation. We are partnering with a consultant team from Norway — HATCH and Engage // Innovate — who are global leaders in innovation hub design and the marine economy. We look forward to helping shape this aspect of the vision for the future of the South Island.” — **Jerome Lengkeek, Social Venture Designer, Urban Matters/Urban Systems**