

Ministry of Labour
Estimates Debate Binder – 2021/22 Table of Contents

ESTIMATES HIGHLIGHTS	
Ministry of Labour 2020/21 Estimates Summary	1
Budget Qs and As	2
Mandate Letter Commitments	3
Mandate Letter – Honourable Harry Bains	4
Mandate Letter – Parliamentary Secretary Walker	5
<i>Tabs Intentionally Blank</i>	<i>6-8</i>

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS	
Agriculture Sector Compliance	9
Child Employment	10
<i>Employment Standards Act – Exclusions and Alternate Standards</i>	11
Employment Standards Branch Budget, Resources and Service Levels	12
Employment Standards Branch Statistical Summary	13
Employment Standards Transformation	14
Protection of Foreign Workers	15
Updating Employment Standards	16
Minimum Wage and Fair Wages Commission	17
Domestic or Sexual Violence Leave	18
Employment Standards Branch Variance Project	19
Employment Standards Branch Backlog Reduction	20
Paid Sick Leave	21
<i>Tabs Intentionally Blank</i>	<i>22-23</i>

Ministry of Labour
Estimates Debate Binder – 2021/22 Table of Contents

LABOUR RELATIONS	
B.C. Labour Relations Board Update	24
Collective Bargaining	25
Forestry Successorship	26
<i>Labour Relations Code Review</i>	27
<i>Tabs Intentionally Blank</i>	<i>28-30</i>

WORKERS' COMPENSATION	
Asbestos	31
Bullying, Harassment and Mental Disorders	32
Mental Disorders, Including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders and First Responders	33
Protecting the Lives and Safety of Workers	34
Workers' Compensation Review	35
Extending Coverage to Professional Athletes	36
<i>Tabs Intentionally Blank</i>	<i>37-40</i>

CROSS-PROGRAM	
Parliamentary Secretary for the New Economy and its role within the Ministry of Labour	41
Oversight of B.C.'s Labour Tribunals	42
Anti-Racism, GBA+, Equity, Diversity and Inclusiveness	43
<i>Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Implementation</i>	44
Bridging to Retirement Program	45
Job Placement Coordination Offices	46
COVID-19 Pandemic Impacts	47
COVID-19 Pandemic Response	48
<i>Tabs Intentionally Blank</i>	<i>49</i>

Ministry of Labour
Estimates Debate Binder – 2021/22 Table of Contents

CORPORATE NOTES	
Deputy Minister's Office – Budget	50
Executive Compensation (Agencies, Boards and Commissions)	51
Minister's Office – Budget	52
Minister's Office – Travel	53
Ministry 2021/22 – 2023/24 Service Plan	54
<i>Tabs Intentionally Blank</i>	<i>55</i>

**Ministry of Labour
2021/22 Estimates Summary**

(in \$000's)

Estimates - Operating Budget	Restated Estimates 2020/21	Estimates 2021/22	Variance
Labour Programs	15,642	15,787	145
Labour Policy and Legislation	1,759	1,776	17
Employment Standards Branch	13,882	14,010	128
WorkSafeBC Funded Services	1	1	-
Executive and Support Services	1,543	1,587	44
Minister's Office	591	630	39
Corporate Services	952	957	5
	17,185	17,374	189
Variance Explanations:			
Labour Programs (\$145,000 increase)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$145,000 increase attributed to BCGEU (\$128k) and legal services wage increases (\$17k) 			
Executive and Support Services (\$44,000 increase)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$9,000 increase attributed to BCGEU negotiated wage increases • \$35,000 increase attributed to the increase in Minister's Office budgets resulting from a cross Government Review 			
	<small>Cabinet Confidences; Advice/Recommendations</small>	<small>Advice/Recommendations</small>	
	<small>Advice/Recommendations</small>		

Estimates - Capital	Restated Estimates 2020/21	Estimates 2021/22	Variance
Furniture and Equipment ¹	3	3	-
	3	3	-

¹ Budgets are placeholders in the event we need to incur Furniture & Equipment.

Contents

1.	Why has the Ministry of Labour's budget increased by \$189,000 in 2021/22?	1
2.	Why has the Ministers' Office budget increased by \$39,000 in 2021/22?	1
3.	Last year's budget included funding for the implementation of the <i>Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act</i> (TFWPA) and the modernization of the Employment Standards System. Is this funding still in place, and are these initiatives still on track?.....	2
4.	What does the Ministry of Labour's budget provide for?.....	3
5.	How is the Labour Relations Board funded?	5
6.	Is there continued funding for the Forestry Worker Support Programs in 2021/22?	5
7.	What is the status of the Fair Wages Commission's work? Is there funding in Budget 2021 for the Fair Wages Commission?	6
8.	How did the extension of the Temporary Layoff Variance application timelines impact the Ministry's budget in Fiscal 2020/21?	6
9.	What actions has the Ministry taken to assist workers and employers in response to COVID-19?.....	7

1. Why has the Ministry of Labour's budget increased by \$189,000 in 2021/22?

The Ministry of Labour's 2021/22 budget is \$17.374 million, an increase of \$189,000 from the 2020/21 Restated Estimates budget of \$17.185 million.

The increase is primarily due to a small increase of \$154,000 for BCGEU and Legal Service wage increases. Labour's overall budget increase of \$189,000 is due to the following:

- \$154,000 for BCGEU and Legal Services wage increases, and
- \$35,000 increase in Minister's Office funding as a result of a cross Government review led by the Premier's Office and Ministry of Finance (in addition to BCGEU wage increases of \$4,000).

2. Why has the Ministers' Office budget increased by \$39,000 in 2021/22?

- The Minister's Office received an increase of \$35,000 as a result of a cross Government review

Cabinet Confidences; Advice/Recommendations
Advice/Recommendations

- The increase of \$35,000 is comprised of the following:
 - \$50,000 increase to salary and benefits to match current staffing levels and salary rates for Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries,
 - \$10,000 increase to better align the budget for office expenses and information systems.
 - These Increases were offset by a \$25,000 reduction in “other expenses” for IT charges that have now been centralized within the Ministry of Citizen Services.
- The remaining \$4,000 increase is attributed to BCGEU wage increases.
- Any questions on the review of Minister’s Office budgets should be directed to the Minister of Finance.

3. Last year’s budget included funding for the implementation of the Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act (TFWPA) and the modernization of the Employment Standards System. Is this funding still in place, and are these initiatives still on track?

Modernization of the Employment Standards System and implementation of the TFWPA remain a priority for the Ministry. These initiatives are on track and funding is still in place. During 2020/21 the following progress was made:

- We fully implemented the *Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act* by establishing the Employer Registry in Fall, 2020. We currently have more than 3,000 employers registered to hire Temporary Foreign Workers so we can monitor to ensure employers are complying with BC law and foreign workers are protected.
- The modernization of the Employment Standards System is well underway; we continue our focus on making the Branch more accessible by streamlining our processes, providing a multi-lingual information line for workers and employers to get the information they need, and hiring more than 36 new staff to process the increased number of complaints received by the Employment Standards Branch.
- We also launched a new, online variance process to permit workers and employers to jointly apply to extend a temporary layoff and stay connected during the COVID-19 pandemic to avoid terminations and severance payments. This year we are continuing with improvements including a compliance and enforcement team that will undertake more proactive enforcement, and education and outreach so workers know their rights and employers know their responsibilities.

Through Budget 2018 and Budget 2019 Labour received funding of \$17.786 million over four years for the implementation of these initiatives (2018/19 to 2021/22). There is no increase to the annual funding in 2021/22 compared to the prior year.

	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	Total
Budget 2018	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	4.000
Budget 2019		3.786	3.786	3.786	13.786
			1.214	1.214	
Cumulative Budget Increase	1.000	4.786	6.000	6.000	17.786

- In 2020/21 The ministry received an additional \$300,000 to hire temporary staff to make progress in reducing a backlog of worker complaints in the Employment Standards Branch.
- Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information

4. What does the Ministry of Labour's budget provide for?

The Ministry of Labour's 2021/22 budget of **\$17.374M** provides for the programs, operations, and other activities under the following core businesses: Labour Programs, and Executive and Support Services.

Labour Programs (2021/22 Budget of \$15.787M)

Labour Programs provides for services promoting harmonious labour and employment relations by establishing a fair and balanced labour and employment law framework that promotes a growing sustainable economy. The Ministry works to promote worker health and safety, labour relations stability and to ensure British Columbia's employment standards reflect the needs of British Columbians.

Labour Programs includes the following areas: Labour Policy and Legislation, WorkSafeBC Funded Services and the Employment Standards Branch.

- **Labour Policy and Legislation (2021/22 Budget of \$1.776M)**

Labour Policy and Legislation includes the Labour Policy and Legislation Branch, and the Assistant Deputy Ministers' Office.

The Labour Policy and Legislation Branch provides labour and employment-related research and expertise and is responsible for developing legislation and regulations. The branch also provides a range of corporate support services such as representing the Ministry at major events and participating in cross government initiatives.

The Assistant Deputy Minister's Office provides leadership, strategic guidance and support to all Labour staff and program areas, including the forest workers support programs.

- **Employment Standards Branch (2021/22 Budget of \$14.010M)**

This budget provides for the administration of the *Employment Standards Act* and Regulation, which set minimum standards for wages and working conditions

in most workplaces including resolving complaints, ensuring compliance and dispute resolution services.

The branch also administers the *Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act*. The *Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act* allows for better protection of vulnerable workers. Under the legislation, recruiters of foreign workers must be licensed and employers intending to hire foreign workers must be registered with the Province. Unlicensed recruiters and unregistered employers will be expressly prohibited from engaging in the process of recruiting or hiring foreign workers. Any recruiters or employers who work outside the law will face significant penalties, including possible jail time.

- **WorkSafeBC Funded Services (2021/22 Budget of \$1,000)**

The **Workers' Advisers Office** provides free advice and assistance to workers and their dependants on disagreements they may have with WorkSafeBC decisions.

The **Employers' Advisers Office** provides advice, assistance, representation and education related to the workers' compensation system for employers operating in British Columbia.

The **Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal** hears appeals of decisions made by the Review division of WorkSafeBC and is the final level of appeal in the workers' compensation system of British Columbia.

The Workers' Advisers Office, Employers' Advisers Office, and Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal operates independently from WorkSafeBC.

The gross operating budget for WSBC funded programming is \$30.535 million and all costs are fully recovered from the accident fund established pursuant to the Workers Compensation Act.

- **Executive and Support Services (2021/22 Budget of \$1.587M)**

Executive and Support Services provides for the Minister of Labour's Office and Corporate Services, which includes the Deputy Minister's Office and the Management Services Division.

Minister's Office (2021/22 Budget of \$630,000)

This provides for the office of the Minister of Labour, including salaries, benefits, allowances, and operating expenses for the Minister and the Minister's staff.

Corporate Services (2021/22 Budget of \$957,000)

The Deputy Minister's Office provides strategic advice and direction for the Ministry of Labour.

The Management Services Division provides administrative services for the operating programs of the Ministry of Labour, including financial administration and budget coordination, strategic and business planning and reporting, human resources, office management, and accommodation and information systems,

some of which are provided by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation.

5. How is the **Labour Relations Board** funded?

- B.C.'s Labour Relations Code provides important protections for workers such as the right to unionize and job security when a unionized business changes ownership.
- In 2019, we modernized the Labour Relations Code after it hadn't been substantially reviewed since 1992; the changes we made improved job security for contracted service workers while delivering more stable and harmonious labour relations for employers and unions.

Any questions relating to the LRB's budget should be directed to the Ministry of Attorney General. The Labour Relations Board Chair has indicated additional resources were required to fully implement the recent Code improvements; we worked with the Ministry of Attorney General, which is the ministry responsible for the LRB's budget.

6. Is there continued funding for the **Forestry Worker Support Programs in 2021/22?**

- The Ministry is delivering two programs designed to support Interior B.C. forest workers, their families and communities through a \$40M millworker transition to retirement program (funded through FLNRORD) and \$2M (\$1.5M funded through deferred federal funds remaining from the Community Development Trust under JERI, \$0.5M funded through FLNRORD) for Job Placement Coordination Offices located in five impacted communities.
- In 2020/21, under the StrongerBC recovery initiative an additional \$10M was approved to expand the program to include a Coastal Early Retirement Bridging Program, as well as an incremental \$8M for the Interior Bridging program (**Note: The \$8M in additional funding was included in the Budget and Fiscal Plan released on April 20, 2021** Advice/Re Advice/Recommendations)
- These two programs work together: the Retirement Bridging Program creates vacancies for younger, impacted workers in working mills and the Job Placement Offices help fill those vacancies with workers through a Job Match program.
- There has been strong uptake with more than 950 workers successfully bridged to retirement since the program began, with over 600 jobs created for younger impacted workers.
- The Job Placement Coordination Office will have a budget of approximately

\$900,000 in 2021/22.

- The Retirement Bridging Program has a \$4M budget allocation for 2021/22 which is funded through FLNRORD.

	(In \$ Millions)			
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Total
Interior ERBP (Funded through FLNRORD)	20.000	16.000	4.000	40.000
Interior ERBP (Funded through Stronger BC) ¹		8.000		8.000
Coastal ERBP (Funded through Stronger BC)		10.000		10.000
Total	20.000	34.000	4.000	58.000

¹ The additional \$8M of Stronger BC Funding was released in the Budget and Fiscal Plan 2021/22 - 2023/24 Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information

7. What is the status of the Fair Wages Commission’s work? Is there funding in Budget 2021 for the Fair Wages Commission?

Established in October 2017, the Fair Wages Commission is working independently to advise government on how to raise minimum wages with increases that are regular, measured and predictable.

In the Budget 2017 September update, the Ministry of Labour was provided \$490,000 over two years for the purposes of funding the Commission’s activities.

The first stage of the Commission’s consultations occurred in November and December 2017 to inform findings for the first and second reports. The first report was delivered to Minister of Labour, the Honourable Harry Bains, in early 2018 with recommendations about the timing of increases for the general minimum wage.

The Commission’s second report was delivered in April 2018 with recommendations on wage increases for alternate minimum wage earners; a Study was recently completed of the province’s Agricultural Piece Rate System for hand-harvested crops to supplement the commission’s work.

The Commission’s final report is expected in the Summer of 2021. The minor costs of completing this report will be managed within the Ministry’s Budget 2021 allocation.

8. How did the extension of the Temporary Layoff Variance application timelines impact the Ministry’s budget in Fiscal 2020/21?

In June 2020, the Ministry was directed to design and implement a streamlined Temporary Layoff Variance process to avoid COVID-19 related mass terminations and employers’ obligation to pay severance.

No additional funding for the Temporary Layoff Variance process has been provided for 2021/22.

9. What actions has the Ministry taken to assist workers and employers in response to COVID-19?

The Ministry made the following legislative and regulatory changes to assist BC's workers and employers in response to COVID-19:

- Employment Standards Amendment Act (No. 2), 2020 (Bill 16)
 - On March 23, 2020, Government introduced and passed Bill 16 to provide unpaid, job-protected leave to employees during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Bill 16 supports employees who, in relation to COVID-19, cannot work because they are ill, they are required to self-isolate, their employer is concerned they may place others at risk, they are unable to return home to BC, or they need to care for their minor child or a dependent adult, including when a school or day care has closed.
 - Employees are entitled to the leave for as long as a specified COVID-19-related situation applies to them.
- B.C. Reg 94/2020:
 - Effective May 4, 2020, the Employment Standards Regulation was amended to extend the maximum period for a temporary layoff to 16 weeks (formerly 13 weeks) if the layoff was due to COVID-19-related reasons and the employee agrees.
 - The 16-week layoff period coincided with what was then the length of time that the federal Canada Emergency Response Benefit of \$500 per week is available.
- B.C. Reg 148/2020:
 - Effective June 25, 2020, the Employment Standards Regulation was amended to extend the maximum period for a temporary layoff to August 30, 2020, if the layoff was due to COVID-19-related reasons and the employee agrees.
- B.C. Reg. 185/2020:
 - Employees and employees who wished to extend the layoff (see above)

beyond August 30 were required to utilize the existing temporary layoff variance request process under the Employment Standards Act.

- In order to expedite the application process and enhance safety, amendments were made to the Employment Standard Regulation that streamlined the approval process for temporary layoff variance requests, which included the development of an online application tool.
- B.C. Reg 216/2021:
 - Effective April 1, 2021, the Employment Standards Regulation was amended to expand the availability of the COVID-19-related leave to include the following employees:
 - those who have underlying conditions, are undergoing treatment, or have contracted another illness that makes them more susceptible to COVID-19; or,
 - those who are caring for family members that require care due to COVID-19.
 - The amendment also required employers to provide employees receiving the COVID-19 vaccination, or who are providing support to dependants receiving, the COVID-19 vaccination with unpaid job-protected leave.

WorkSafeBC

- WorkSafeBC has been actively monitoring and adjusting to the COVID-19 situation to determine how to best support workers and employers across the province, including launching a province-wide inspection initiative to ensure employers are taking the appropriate steps to reduce the risk of workplace COVID-19 exposure.
 - As of March 5, 2021 WorkSafeBC, had conducted 24,221 workplace inspections and 4,494 consultations related to COVID-19. A total of 2,232 orders had been issued for health and safety violations.
- In April 2021, the provincial health officer (PHO) delegated specific powers of the Public Health Act to WorkSafeBC prevention officers to serve a closure order on a business with a known COVID-19 outbreak.
- WorkSafeBC has also been a key partner in ensuring the safe implementation of BC's "restart plan" developing detailed sector specific resources and guidelines for industries.
 - In spring of last year, WorkSafeBC worked with employer groups to develop protocols for more than 30 industries to operate safely during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- WorkSafeBC introduced an occupational disease presumption for COVID-19 so that workers in occupations impacted by COVID-19 will have quicker access to workers' compensation benefits. The Workers Compensation

Amendment Act, 2020 (Bill 23) added a provision to shorten the statutory timeframe for this presumption to come into effect, so that it has been in effect since August 2020.

2021/22 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Labour
Minister Responsible: Hon. Harry Bains

Title: Mandate Letter Commitments

Revised: May 25, 2021

Issue: Key Minister of Labour 2020 Mandate Letter Commitments

Response:

- Through our mandate priorities, the Ministry of Labour and government more broadly are committed to supporting all British Columbians and not just those at the top.
- The Ministry of Labour's work will support government's foundational principles, including putting people first, equity and anti-racism, Indigenous reconciliation and an economy that works for everyone.
- We are early in the mandate and working through the planning process for how to approach the new mandate commitments and the timing.
- The establishment of new consultative mechanisms to engage employer and worker representatives is among my top priorities for this year. A new mechanism will help ensure that future changes to workplace legislation receive the widest possible support and contribute to a fair and balanced economy that works for everyone.
- Some of the mandate commitments build on work that was a priority during government's previous term and that remains important to us – for example, increasing workplace safety inspections to help ensure that all workers return home healthy and safe at the end of their shift.

Background/Status:

- The Mandate letter for the Minister of Labour contains the following priority initiatives that the Minister of Labour will lead:
 - Continue working collaboratively with worker and employer representatives to address the impacts of COVID-19. [see Tab 48]
 - Continue working with the federal government on paid sick leave for COVID-19 and beyond. [see below]

2021/22 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Labour
Minister Responsible: Hon. Harry Bains

- Create new consultative mechanisms to engage worker and employer representatives on workplace legislation changes. [see below]
 - Tie the minimum wage to the rate of inflation after the June 1, 2021, increase in the general minimum wage to \$15.20 an hour. [see Tab 17]
 - Ensure every worker has the right to join a union and bargain for fair working conditions. [see Tab 27]
 - Increase the number of WorkSafeBC caseworkers and workplace safety inspections. Advice/Recommendations
 - Develop better options for chronic work-related pain, including improved pain management practices and access to treatment. Advice/Recommendations
- The Mandate letter for the Minister of Labour also directs the minister to support the work being led by other Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries; on closing the gender pay gap and the development of pay transparency legislation; improving working conditions for workers in farming communities; establishing a new Worker Training and Job Opportunity Office; and, restoring the compulsory trades system. [see below]
 - The Mandate letter for the Parliamentary Secretary for the New Economy contains the following priorities to work on closely with the Minister of Labour [also see Tab 41]:
 - Work with labour and business organizations to develop a precarious work strategy that reflects modern workplaces' diverse needs and unique situations.
 - Propose employment standards for precarious and gig workers.
 - Investigate the feasibility of a collective benefit fund and a voluntary pooled-capital pension plan for workers who otherwise do not have coverage.

Further Information on the Specific Mandate Items:

Paid Sick Leave:

- In March 2020 government amended the *Employment Standards Act* (ESA) to provide unpaid, job-protected leave to employees during the COVID-19 crisis. It also amended the ESA to provide up to three days of unpaid, job-protected

2021/22 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Labour
Minister Responsible: Hon. Harry Bains

personal illness or injury leave per year – which is a permanent improvement that will remain in place beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The Premier's mandate letter directs the Minister of Labour to continue working with the federal government on a paid sick leave program to protect workers and businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.
- BC has identified possible gaps in the federal income support programs. For example, benefits are limited to four weeks under the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit, even though a worker may be ill with COVID-19 for far longer. The Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit is also not available if a worker receives a negative COVID-19 test and can return to work after only one- or two-days' absence.
- Minister Bains raised this issue with his colleague Labour Ministers at a Federal/Provincial/Territorial annual meeting on March 1, 2021.
- On May 11, 2021, the Minister introduced Bill 13, the *Employment Standards Amendment Act (No. 2), 2021*. Bill 13 establishes up to three days of COVID-19 related paid sick leave for BC employees. These days are available to employees until December 31, 2021.
- Bill 13 also establishes permanent paid leave for illness and injury to be effective January 1, 2022. The number of permanent paid illness and injury leave days will be established in regulation after consultations with employer and worker stakeholders.

Suggested Response:

- *My mandate letter includes a commitment to continue working with the federal government on a paid sick leave program that protects workers and businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.*
- *Our government has continued to raise concerns about gaps in the program with the federal government and work with them on possible solutions.*
- *I raised this issue with my colleague Labour Ministers at our annual meeting on March 1.*
- *We were disappointed that the recent Federal Budget did not contain measures to address this issue.*
- *As you know, on March 11, I introduced Bill 13, which establishes new COVID-19 related paid sick leave for BC employees. It also establishes permanent illness and injury paid leave provisions to address ongoing concerns about the need for paid sick leave for the long term, past the pandemic.*

2021/22 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Labour
Minister Responsible: Hon. Harry Bains

Consultative Mechanisms:

- The Ministry is currently considering options for new consultative mechanisms to achieve this mandate letter commitment.
- Cabinet Confidences; Advice/Recommendations

Suggested Response:

- *The establishment of new consultative mechanisms to engage employer and worker representatives is among my top priorities for this year. A new mechanism will help ensure that future changes to workplace legislation receive the widest possible support and contribute to a fair and balanced economy that works for everyone.*

WorkSafeBC Caseworkers and Inspections

- The Minister of Labour's mandate letter includes direction to increase the number of WorkSafeBC caseworkers and increase workplace safety inspections.

Suggested Response:

- *Since 2017, I have been working with WorkSafeBC to ensure that an appropriate culture and proper resources are in place to help ensure that workers return home healthy and safe at the end of their shift, and that injured workers are treated with dignity and respect.*
- *The new mandate priority will continue to build on this existing work.*

Advice/Recommendations

Chronic Work-Related Pain

- The mandate letter directs the Minister to partner with WorkSafeBC and with support from the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, to develop better options for chronic work-related pain.

2021/22 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Labour
Minister Responsible: Hon. Harry Bains

Suggested Response:

- *Chronic work-related pain is an extremely difficult disability for workers who experience it.*
- *Historically, it has also been a challenging issue for the worker's compensation system in terms of treating, managing and compensating chronic pain.*
- *It is important to me that we develop better options for chronic-work related pain.*
- *It is vital to have the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions supporting this initiative so that chronic pain is managed in a way that avoids opioid and other addictions.*
- *WorkSafeBC is currently reviewing its chronic pain policies to better support and treat injured workers with chronic pain.*

Advice/Recommendations

Precarious Work Strategy

- Non-standard work (including part-time and casual work, web-based “gig” work, and contract work) is becoming increasingly common. Such work is often associated with job insecurity, irregular earnings, and few, if any, employment protections. Women, recent immigrants, Indigenous people, Black people, people of colour, individuals with high school education or less, and single parents are consistently more likely to participate in non-standard employment.

• Cabinet Confidences; Advice/Recommendations

In addition, the Minister and the Parliamentary Secretary for the New Economy have engaged in several meetings with interested parties who have expressed preliminary views/input.

Suggested Response:

- *We need to continue to do all that we can to support vulnerable workers and ensure BC labour laws are responsive to the changing economy.*
- *Parliamentary Secretary Walker and I are committed to working with business and labour representatives, to develop a precarious work strategy for British Columbia.*
- *This includes looking at gaps in employment standards and in pension and benefit coverage for precarious and gig workers.*

2021/22 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Labour
Minister Responsible: Hon. Harry Bains

Gender Pay Gap and Pay Transparency

- The mandate letter directs the Minister to support the Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity's work to close the gender pay gap by addressing systemic discrimination in the workplace and through new pay transparency legislation.
- The Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity (MLA Grace Lore) is under the direction of the Minister of Finance.
- Cabinet Confidences; Advice/Recommendations

Suggested Response:

- *Working to close the gender pay gap in British Columbia and to improve the transparency around how pay practices is an important priority for this government.*
- *My role is to support the Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity's work on this issue and I look forward to making progress on this priority.*

Improving working conditions for workers in farming communities

- The mandate letter directs the Minister to support the work of the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries to continue improving working conditions for all workers including temporary foreign workers and temporary domestic workers working in farming communities.
- Cabinet Confidences; Advice/Recommendations

Suggested Response:

- *Improving conditions in the agricultural sector in a way that benefits workers, but also the industry as a whole, is an important priority for this government.*
- *My role is to support the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries work on this issue and I look forward to making progress on this priority.*



November 26, 2020

Honourable Harry Bains
Minister of Labour
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, British Columbia V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Bains:

Thank you for agreeing to serve British Columbians as Minister of Labour. You are taking on this responsibility at a time when people in our province face significant challenges as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 has turned the lives of British Columbians upside down. None of us expected to face the challenges of the past number of months, yet British Columbians have demonstrated incredible resilience, time and time again. We will get through the pandemic and its aftereffects by building on this resilience and focusing on what matters most to people.

British Columbians voted for a government focused on their priorities: fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, providing better health care for people and families, delivering affordability and security in our communities, and investing in good jobs and livelihoods in a clean-energy future.

I expect you – and the work of your ministry – to focus on the commitments detailed in our platform, *Working for You*, along with the following foundational principles:

- **Putting people first:** Since 2017, our government has focused on making decisions to meet people's needs. That focus drove our work in our first term and will continue to be our priority. British Columbians are counting on the government to keep them safe and to build an economic recovery that works for everyone, not just those at the top. Keeping people at the centre of everything we do means protecting and enhancing the public services people rely on and working to make life more affordable for everyone.
- **Lasting and meaningful reconciliation:** Reconciliation is an ongoing process and a shared responsibility for us all. The unanimous passage of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* was a significant step forward in this journey. True

.../2

Office of the
Premier

Web Site:
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PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9E1

Location:
Parliament Buildings
Victoria

reconciliation will take time and ongoing commitment to work with Indigenous peoples as they move toward self-determination. Our government – and every ministry – must remain focused on creating opportunities for Indigenous peoples to be full partners in our economy and providing a clear and sustainable path for everyone to work toward lasting reconciliation.

- **Equity and anti-racism:** Our province's history, identity and strength are rooted in its diverse population. Yet racialized and marginalized people face historic and present-day barriers that limit their full participation in their communities, workplaces, government and their lives. Our government has a moral and ethical responsibility to tackle systemic discrimination in all its forms – and every ministry has a role in this work. While our caucus elected a record number of women, more work remains to address gender equity. Delivering on our commitments to address racial discrimination will require a commitment by all of government to ensure increased IBPOC (Indigenous, Black and People of Colour) representation within the public service, including in government appointments. Our efforts to address systemic discrimination must also inform policy and budget decisions by reviewing all decisions through a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens.
- **A better future through fighting climate change:** In 2018, our government launched our CleanBC climate action plan. CleanBC puts British Columbia on the path to a cleaner, better future by building a low-carbon economy with new clean-energy jobs and opportunities, protecting our air, land and water and supporting communities to prepare for climate impacts. It is every Minister's responsibility to ensure your ministry's work continues to achieve CleanBC's goals.
- **A strong, sustainable economy that works for everyone:** We will continue our work to support British Columbians through the pandemic and the economic recovery by investing in health care, getting people back to work, helping businesses and communities, and building the clean, innovative economy of the future. Our plan will train the workforce of tomorrow, help businesses hire and grow and invest in the infrastructure needed to build our province.

The pandemic has reminded us that we're strongest when we work together. Delivering on our commitments to people will require a coordinated effort with your cabinet and caucus colleagues, supported by the skilled professionals in the public service. You will also support your cabinet colleagues to do their work, particularly where commitments cross ministry lines.

British Columbians expect their elected representatives to work together to advance the broader public good despite their partisan perspectives. That means seeking out, fostering and championing good ideas, regardless of their origin. I expect you to reach out to elected members from all parties as you deliver on your mandate. Further, you will build thoughtful and sustained relationships through public and stakeholder engagement plans that connect with people to incorporate their perspectives early in the policy development process. These plans must include measurable outcomes and ensure active dialogue and ongoing outreach in your ministry's actions and priorities.

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Over the course of our mandate, I expect you will make progress on the following items:

- Continue a collaborative approach in working with representatives of workers and employers to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on people and businesses.
- Continue working with the federal government on a paid sick leave program to protect workers and businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.
- Create new consultative mechanisms to engage employer and worker representatives in consideration of any changes proposed to workplace legislation to ensure the widest possible support.
- Once the minimum wage reaches \$15.20 per hour in June 2021, provide predictability for employers and workers by tying the minimum wage to the rate of inflation.
- Ensure that every worker has the right to join a union and bargain for fair working conditions.
- Increase the number of WorkSafeBC caseworkers and increase workplace safety inspections.
- In partnership with WorkSafeBC and with support from the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, work to develop better options for chronic work-related pain, including improving pain management practices for injured workers and providing treatment on demand to those with chronic pain as a result of workplace injuries.
- Support the work of the Minister of Advanced Education to restore the compulsory trades system to improve safety and give more workers a path to apprenticeship completion.
- Support the Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity's work to close the gender pay gap by addressing systemic discrimination in the workplace and through new pay transparency legislation.
- Support the work of the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries to continue improving working conditions for all workers including temporary foreign workers and temporary domestic workers working in farming communities.
- Support the Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Development to guide the establishment of a new Worker Training and Job Opportunity Office to maximize the impact of our economic recovery plan for workers and communities during COVID-19 and beyond – with a focus on retraining workers, supporting resource communities facing job loss, developing higher value goods, and accessing new global markets and opportunities for B.C. products.

To assist you in meeting the commitments we have made to British Columbians, you are assigned a Parliamentary Secretary for the New Economy. You will work closely together and

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ensure your Parliamentary Secretary receives appropriate support to deliver on the following priorities, outlined in the mandate letter issued to them:

- Work with labour and business organizations to develop a precarious work strategy that reflects modern workplaces' diverse needs and unique situations.
- As part of the precarious work strategy, propose employment standards targeted to precarious and gig economy workers, and investigate the feasibility of a government-backed collective benefit fund and access to a voluntary pooled-capital pension plan for workers who do not otherwise have coverage.

Our work as a government must continually evolve to meet the changing needs of people in this province. Issues not contemplated in this letter will come forward for government action and I ask you to bring such matters forward for consideration by the Planning and Priorities Committee of cabinet, with the expectation that any proposed initiatives will be subject to the usual cabinet and Treasury Board oversight. Your ministry's priorities must reflect our government's overall strategic plan as determined by cabinet.

All cabinet members are expected to review, understand, and act according to the *Members' Conflict of Interest Act* and conduct themselves with the highest level of integrity. As a minister of the Crown, your conduct will reflect not only on you but on cabinet and our government. You are responsible for providing strong, professional and ethical leadership within cabinet and your ministry. You will establish a collaborative working relationship with your deputy minister and the public servants under their direction who provide the professional, non-partisan advice that is fundamental to delivering on our government's priorities. You must ensure your minister's office meets the highest standards for integrity and provides a respectful and rewarding environment for all staff.

My commitment to all British Columbians is to do my level best to make sure people's lives are better, safer and more affordable. I believe the challenges we face can and will be overcome by working together. By way of this letter, I am expressing my faith that people can expect the same commitment from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John J. Horgan", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John Horgan
Premier



November 26, 2020

Adam Walker, MLA
Parliamentary Secretary for the New Economy
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, British Columbia V8V 1X4

Dear Parliamentary Secretary Walker:

Thank you for agreeing to serve British Columbians as Parliamentary Secretary for the New Economy, supporting the Minister of Labour. You are taking on this responsibility at a time when people in our province face significant challenges as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 has turned the lives of British Columbians upside down. None of us expected to face the challenges of the past number of months, yet British Columbians have demonstrated incredible resilience, time and time again. We will get through the pandemic and its aftereffects by building on this resilience and focusing on what matters most to people.

British Columbians voted for a government focused on their priorities: fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, providing better health care for people and families, delivering affordability and security in our communities, and investing in good jobs and livelihoods in a clean-energy future.

I expect you – and the work of your ministry – to focus on the commitments detailed in our platform, *Working for You*, along with the following foundational principles:

- **Putting people first:** Since 2017, our government has focused on making decisions to meet people's needs. That focus drove our work in our first term and will continue to be our priority. British Columbians are counting on the government to keep them safe and to build an economic recovery that works for everyone, not just those at the top. Keeping people at the centre of everything we do means protecting and enhancing the public services people rely on and working to make life more affordable for everyone.
- **Lasting and meaningful reconciliation:** Reconciliation is an ongoing process and a shared responsibility for us all. The unanimous passage of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* was a significant step forward in this journey. True

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Office of the
Premier

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Victoria BC V8W 9E1

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reconciliation will take time and ongoing commitment to work with Indigenous peoples as they move toward self-determination. Our government – and every ministry – must remain focused on creating opportunities for Indigenous peoples to be full partners in our economy and providing a clear and sustainable path for everyone to work toward lasting reconciliation.

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- **A strong, sustainable economy that works for everyone:** We will continue our work to support British Columbians through the pandemic and the economic recovery by investing in health care, getting people back to work, helping businesses and communities, and building the clean, innovative economy of the future. Our plan will train the workforce of tomorrow, help businesses hire and grow and invest in the infrastructure needed to build our province.

As Parliamentary Secretary, you will assist your Minister in carrying out their duties. You may be asked to represent the Minister at public events, deliver speeches on behalf of the Minister, or act as a spokesperson for the government's position. You will reach out to stakeholders, businesses, civil society and individuals across B.C. to better understand their perspectives and bring their views to the Minister.

You are also being given special responsibility to support your Minister in specific areas within their mandate. You will work with, and be supported by, B.C.'s professional public service in this role.

Over the course of our mandate, I expect you will make progress on the following items:

- Work with labour and business organizations to develop a precarious work strategy that reflects modern workplaces' diverse needs and unique situations.

- As part of the precarious work strategy, propose employment standards targeted to precarious and gig economy workers, and investigate the feasibility of a government-backed collective benefit fund and access to a voluntary pooled-capital pension plan for workers who do not otherwise have coverage.

Your Minister is ultimately responsible and accountable for their ministry and their mandate; thus, all key decisions will be made by them. Your role is to understand your Minister's policy goals, develop a deep understanding of the issues, participate in consultations with key stakeholders, Indigenous peoples and the broader public, in order to give your best advice to the public service as it develops options for a decision by the Minister.

You will collaborate with your Minister, Ministry and the Premier's Office to develop a workplan to guide your efforts, including detail on how the professional public service will support your work through briefings, supporting consultations, and keeping you apprised of policy development.

All members are expected to review, understand and act according to the *Members' Conflict of Interest Act* and conduct themselves with the highest level of integrity. As a Parliamentary Secretary, your conduct will reflect not only on you, but on your Minister and our government.

You are accountable for providing strong, professional and ethical leadership. I expect you to establish a positive, respectful and collaborative working relationship with your Minister, their staff and the public servants who provide the professional, non-partisan advice fundamental to delivering on our government's priorities.

My commitment to all British Columbians is to do my level best to make sure people's lives are better, safer and more affordable. I believe the challenges we face can and will be overcome by working together. By way of this letter, I am expressing my faith that people can expect the same commitment from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John J. Horgan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

John Horgan
Premier

2020/21 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Labour
Minister Responsible: Hon. Harry Bains

Title: Agriculture Sector Compliance

Revised: April 15, 2021

Issue: Employment Standards and Safety Protection for B.C Farm Workers

Response:

- Government is committed to ensuring that workplaces are safe, healthy and fair so that employers and workers can prosper and contribute to B.C.'s economic growth.
- Government fully appreciates the contributions that B.C. farm workers make to our domestic and export food production and is committed to protecting the health and safety of farm workers and to ensuring that vehicle safety and employment standards are enforced.
- As part of my government's commitment to focus on increased compliance to protect the lives and safety of workers, I have been taking steps with WorkSafeBC to make British Columbia the safest jurisdiction in Canada for all workers, including farm workers.
- The Employment Standards Branch also plays an important role in protecting farm workers; it has authority to cancel or suspend a farm labour contractor's licence where the relevant WorkSafeBC or motor vehicle laws have been violated; maintains an agriculture compliance team that conducts site inspections (including worker interviews) and payroll reviews; participates in roadside vehicle inspections; and provides education to employers and workers in the agriculture sector.
- The Employment Standards Branch continues to work actively with employers, employees, stakeholder groups and the Ministry of Agriculture in promoting compliance with the employment standards to which farm workers are entitled.

Background/Status:

- Farm workers are protected by the same employment standards that apply to all other workers in British Columbia. However, exemptions are provided in the areas of hours of work, overtime and statutory holiday pay.
- Farm workers are also fully covered by occupational health and safety standards, and employers in the agriculture sector are required to provide workers with a level of protection against a wide range of work-related hazards, including the handling of chemicals and pesticides.

