



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

of BRITISH COLUMBIA

Honourable John Horgan, MLA
Premier of British Columbia
West Annex
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC
V8V 1X4

May 11, 2020

Dear Premier:

On behalf of the BC Liberal Official Opposition, I am writing further to our letter of May 5, 2020 on the reopening of the British Columbia economy.

Last week, you outlined a broad plan that would allow different components of the economy to reopen, while continuing the efforts of Dr. Henry to protect all residents from the health impacts of COVID-19. We fully support the need to maintain public health and safe workplaces, while also restoring economic activity.

However, since your announcement opposition MLAs offices have received a multitude of inquiries and concerns related to the exact procedure and cost to reopen in ways that protects workers and customers at the same time.

Businesses report conflicting information coming from WorkSafeBC, local health authorities and from provincial officials – they are desperately looking for clarity so they can begin the work of rebuilding our economy.

In addition, members of the public and businesses are having great difficulty sourcing and affording safety measures and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

The Official Opposition is, therefore, calling on your government to take the following immediate actions to support both businesses and workers:

- Provide greater clarity on the rules for reopening businesses of all types;
- Provide and advertise a single source for those seeking information on re-opening, instead of expecting them to visit multiple sites with conflicting information;
- Create a central information hub for B.C. small business to find PPE that meets WorkSafeBC standards, with clear prices stated to prevent price gouging;
- Give refunds to employers from the WorkSafeBC surplus for their costs of PPE – up to a maximum of 30% of the premiums they have paid, since WorkSafeBC will see reduced claims in 2020; and

BC Liberal Official Opposition
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

of BRITISH COLUMBIA

- Match the actions of other provinces and the Federal government to ensure that the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) supports employees directly by offering a retroactive rebate or credit on the WorkSafeBC premiums and payroll taxes being applied to these wages.

Now is the time to take advantage of WorkSafeBC's significant surplus to keep workers safe and avoid further compensation claims as we navigate through B.C.'s economic recovery. Maintaining healthy and safe workplaces is critical to restoring economic activity while keeping workers as safe as possible.

I should also note that I was pleased to hear that the finance minister is considering our suggestions to provide immediate relief to British Columbians through a tax holiday on Provincial Sales Tax, hotel tax and Employers' Health Tax.

We urge you to move quickly on providing this relief so that British Columbians can get back on their feet, as we all work together to defeat the virus.

Now is the time to be bold and brave.

Sincerely,

Andrew Wilkinson, Q.C., MLA
Leader of the Official Opposition

Name of Proposal/Topic	Stakeholder Submitting	Cost (M)	Date Sent	Notes	Recommendation Count	s.13
tourism relief	Andrew Wilkinson MLA, Vancouver-Quilchena Michelle Stilwell MLA, Parksville-Qualicum Doug Clovechok MLA, Columbia River-Revelstoke		07-Jul-20	I am requesting that you immediately engage the federal government and request that British Columbia receive its fair share of tourism investment given the significant contributions made to Quebec and Atlantic Canada. Further, on behalf of our province, I am requesting you to publicly call on Ottawa to ensure that there is equitable treatment across all regions of our country during these unprecedented times.	2	
opioid crisis	Andrew Wilkinson MLA, Vancouver-Quilchena Jane Thornthwaite MLA, North Vancouver-Seymour		16-Jun-20	1. British Columbia desperately needs a ministry properly equipped to handle this issue — your approach is a ministry with the smallest annual budget of any ministry — less than the sum spent by the Ministry of Health every four hours. 2. British Columbia needs a prescription drug monitoring program to help prevent cases of addiction in the first place. 3. Your government must fund proper scientific clinical trials related to the safe supply program to determine what actually works — just like any other medical intervention, it must be properly and publicly assessed and disclosed to scientific standards. 4. People who are addicted need a pathway to recovery — something that Alberta spends \$180 million per year on and something that your government spends almost nothing on. This is a	4	
strata insurance market	Andrew Wilkinson MLA, Vancouver-Quilchena Todd Stone Official Opposition Critic for Municipal Affairs & Housing MLA for Kamloops-South Thompson		16-Jun-20	1. Implement a temporary tax holiday on the 4.4% Insurance Premium Tax applicable on strata property to leave these dollars in the pockets of strata owners. 2. Extend on a temporary basis the Property Tax Deferral Program to enable strata owners who have faced extraordinary additional expenses related to soaring strata insurance costs to defer a portion of their property taxes. 3. Implement changes to the Strata Property Act and regulations that ensure annual contributions are made to the strata corporation's Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) at levels acceptable considering the building's age, claims history and other unique circumstances; require strata corporations to have a depreciation report detailing necessary maintenance every year; and require a strata corporation to inform owners and tenants of any material change in insurance coverage, including an increase in any deductible, as soon as feasible. 4. Develop a mandatory education and training program for strata council members, with particular emphasis on risk mitigation. 5. Review the B.C. Building Code and implement new requirements focused on the prevention and severity of water damage events. 6. Require the B.C. Financial Services Authority to make public the data and information it is gathering from insurance companies to better understand the current climate of rapidly rising strata insurance.	6	
seniors in long-term care (LTC) facilities	Andrew Wilkinson, Q.C. MLA Leader of the Official Opposition		10-Jun-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promptly launch a thorough independent review of LTC in British Columbia to clearly define where our LTC system performed well, and where it failed. • Create a comprehensive long-term human resources strategy to meet the growing demand for staffing in seniors' care • Support residents and staff to implement COVID-19 health and safety measures in LTC, home care and assisted living residences • Review funding sources for home care and assisted living, both private and public, to provide more of our province's seniors with the choice to remain in their own homes, while also ensuring that all seniors can expect the same quality of care and support across our province. • Provide British Columbians with a timeframe and clear guidelines for additional protective measures that will allow in-person visits and family members of seniors residing in LTC, home care and assisted living residences as outlined by British Columbia's Provincial Health Officer. 	5	
Affordable Housing	Andrew Wilkinson, Q.C. MLA Leader of the Official Opposition		08-Jun-20	1. Working with local governments, implement opportunities to accelerate and reduce the cost of new housing development approval processes 2. To ensure existing rentals remain viable during COVID-19, enable landlords to apply directly for financial supports available within the B.C. Temporary Rental Supplement program if their tenants do not apply for this support and do not pay their rent, retroactive to March 2020. 3. Extend the same COVID-19 property tax reductions and deadline extensions that were announced for commercial land owners to housing developments for Class 1 properties, to avoid passing increased costs of pandemic-related delays onto homebuyers and renters. 4. Noting that the average rental apartment in Vancouver is more than 60 years old, implement the promised 'above guideline rent increase' regulations (AGIs) and establish more rebates and energy efficient improvements in buildings to encourage reinvestment into the aging stock of existing rental units so renters have safe and decent places to live.	4	
Childcare	Andrew Wilkinson, Q.C. MLA Leader of the Official Opposition		01-Jun-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify the risk that parents and children, providers and ECEs, are undertaking when they return; • Clearly define what is meant by a daily 'screening' of children, and assure providers that they can require a COVID-19 test of any child or worker as a condition of entry; • Establish a 'Provider Guarantee' which will ensure that no provider is forced into insolvency as a result of COVID-19; • Make personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies part of the ongoing basic Child Care Operating Fund program, including simple diagnostic tools such as thermometers; and • Publish a comprehensive report on the state of the system, including the numbers of spaces and providers lost, program saving or extra costs, the numbers of centres and spaces open and closed, and the number of children attending versus enrolled during the crisis. 	5	

Small business support	Andrew Wilkinson Leader of the Official Opposition		27-May-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • temporary tax breaks — not simply deferrals — on PST, the EHT, and the Hotel Tax; • a small business hardship grant as other provinces have already done; • a moratorium on new regulations and policies that would add costs for B.C. businesses; • funding from the WorkSafeBC surplus to secure personal protective equipment; and • a short-term commercial rent relief plan that flows relief directly to tenants if landlords do not apply, and that includes a no-eviction backstop. 	5	s.13
Hockey team support	Jackie Legart MLA Fraser Nicola		26-May-20	Urge government to consider taking immediate action to support the Cents and other BCHL teams.	1	
hospitality industry	Andrew Wilkinson, Q.C., MLA Leader of the Official Opposition		13-May-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Double the tax deduction for business related meals to 100%; • Help municipalities to expedite permits for patio and outdoor dining for food and liquor service; • Consider any increased patio or outdoor space a continuation of an existing provincial liquor approval and not require additional applications or fees; • Permanently allow restaurants with a liquor or food primary licence to deliver alcohol offsite; • Allow restaurants, bars, and hotels to purchase liquor at wholesale prices from any liquor store, as was recommended by the government's own panel over two years ago; and • Create a small business hardship grant of up to \$5,000 a month, based on 15 per cent of a business's monthly sales revenue, as both Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia have already done. 	6	
actions to support both businesses and workers	Andrew Wilkinson, Q.C., MLA Leader of the Official Opposition		11-May-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide greater clarity on the rules for reopening businesses of all types; • Provide and advertise a single source for those seeking information on re-opening, instead of expecting them to visit multiple sites with conflicting information; • Create a central information hub for B.C. small business to find PPE that meets WorkSafeBC standards, with clear prices stated to prevent price gouging; • Give refunds to employers from the WorkSafeBC surplus for their costs of PPE — up to a maximum of 30% of the premiums they have paid, since WorkSafeBC will see reduced claims in 2020; and • Match the actions of other provinces and the Federal government to ensure that the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) supports employees directly by offering a retroactive rebate or credit on the WorkSafeBC premiums and payroll taxes being applied to these wages. 	5	
Economic Recovery Plan actions	Andrew Wilkinson, Q.C., MLA Leader of the Official Opposition		05-May-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish an increased testing and monitoring plan to ensure we remain in control of the ongoing COVID-19 public health threat; • Develop and release a transparent pandemic management plan, including a long-term procurement strategy for health supplies and PPE; • Establish a timely review process for sector-by-sector re-opening plans developed by the private sector, including timelines; • Launch a B.C. is Back economic growth and job creation plan for British Columbians, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o a 60-90-day holiday on Provincial Sales Tax, Hotel Tax and EHT; o a short-term commercial rent relief plan that includes a no-eviction backstop to help small businesses, particularly retailers, who have seen a significant loss of revenue; o an increase in our tourism marketing budget to attract visitors when it is safe to do so; o a rural B.C.-specific strategy that helps position rural B.C. for post COVID-19 prosperity; and o a moratorium on new regulations and policies that would add costs for B.C. businesses. 	9	
Economic Recovery Task Force	Greg Kylo MLA, Shuswap John Rustad MLA, Nechako Lakes		01-May-20	<p>ensuring B.C. Timber Sales volume is being made available to the market and that specialty producers have the ability to compete for the fibre they need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - deferring stumpage payments until the end of the year, - lowering stumpage rates to reflect the recent drop in lumber prices, - taking into the consideration the higher costs due to the pandemic in field operations, logistics, and production, and - freezing recent initiatives (like the Provincial Caribou Recovery Program and establishment of more old growth reserves) and regulatory changes until the postpandemic forestry and economic landscape is understood. 	4	
Furthering the Production and Marketing of Beef Cattle in the Cariboo	Donna Barnett		27-Apr-20	provide support for ranchers to ensure food security	1	
Support for Newspapers during COVID 19	Donna Barnett		20-Mar-20	Support of keeping our newspapers as part of the Provincial Communications plan	1	
Total					58	