



February 11, 2022

Ref: 268985

Their Worship Mayor Fred Haynes  
District of Saanich  
770 Vernon Ave  
Victoria BC V8X 2W7

Dear Mayor Haynes:

Thank you for your letters of December 13, 2021, addressed to the Honourable John Horgan, Premier, and me, advising of the District of Saanich's resolution endorsing the Vote16BC campaign to lower the voting age to 16 in British Columbia, and requesting consideration of this change.

As you may be aware, this issue was the subject of an endorsed resolution at the 2019 Union of BC Municipalities Convention. I recognize the interest in lowering the voting age to 16 in B.C. and that there may be benefits to lowering the voting age, such as those identified in the council meeting minutes enclosed in your letter. However, there are challenges associated with lowering the voting age, including inconsistency with federal and provincial age requirements set out in statute.

In the context of local elections, careful consideration and analysis is needed to understand the possible implications for the broad range of elections to which the new lowered voting age would apply. For example, the age requirement for local elections in B.C. apply to elections for over 250 local bodies, including elections for school board trustees. The age limit also applies to assent voting.

Government has an interest in encouraging active civic engagement among all British Columbians. In 2021, changes to improve the accessibility of local elections were included in the *Local Elections Statutes Amendment Act, 2021* (which received royal assent on March 25, 2021) to remove the requirement that an individual must have been a resident of a jurisdiction where an election is taking place, for at least 30 days prior to registration. In addition, informed by the circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, new amendments in the *Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2021* (which received royal assent on June 17, 2021) expanded eligibility for mail ballot voting to all electors.

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These changes will remove significant barriers to participation while enabling fair and transparent local elections to continue to take place. We will continue to explore opportunities to encourage greater civic engagement among British Columbians. This work will include further analysis of the possibility of lowering the voting age in municipal elections.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Josie', followed by a long, horizontal, wavy line.

Josie Osborne  
Minister of Municipal Affairs

pc: Honourable John Horgan, Premier



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

3400 - 30TH STREET VERNON, BRITISH COLUMBIA V1T 5E6

TELEPHONE (250) 545-1361 FAX (250) 545-4048

File: 0410-01

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

September 8, 2021

Honourable John Horgan  
Premier of British Columbia  
Box 9041, STN PROV GOVT  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E1

Honourable Josie Osborne  
Minister of Municipal Affairs  
Room 310 – Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Premier Horgan and Minister Osborne:

Council, at their Regular meeting held on August 16, 2021, passed the following resolution:

"THAT Vernon City Council endorses lowering the municipal election voting age from eighteen (18) to sixteen (16);

AND FURTHER, that Council authorize the Mayor to write a letter to the Premier and the Minister of Municipal Affairs informing them of their endorsement.

**CARRIED"**

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Victor I. Cumming', is written over a horizontal line.

Victor I. Cumming  
Mayor

copy: City of Vernon Council



May 16, 2022

Ref: 270162

Dear <sup>s.22</sup>

Thank you for your email of April 20, 2022, to Honourable Nathan Cullen, Minister of Municipal Affairs, regarding lowering the voting age to 16 for local elections. I am pleased to respond on Minister Cullen's behalf.

The provincial government has an interest in encouraging active civic engagement among all British Columbians and continues to explore opportunities to encourage greater civic engagement among voters.

I recognize that there are some benefits of lowering the voting age for local elections but there are also challenges; including inconsistency with federal and provincial age requirements set out in statute. Lowering the voting age to 16 would need to be done in conjunction with the federal and provincial governments to help ensure consistency with voting requirements across Canada and to limit confusion for electors.

In the context of local elections, as the age requirement for local elections in B.C. applies to elections for over 250 local bodies, further careful consideration and analysis would be needed to understand the possible implications for the broad range of local elections to which the new lowered voting age would apply.

In the Fall of 2022, a general local election will be held, and General Voting Day will be Saturday, October 15. Given the tight legislative timelines and the scope of the proposed changes, it would not be possible to amend the various statutes to enable such a significant change in time for 2022 General Voting Day. The provincial government will continue to consider the possibility of lowering the voting age in municipal elections for future local elections.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

Kara Woodward  
Executive Director  
Local Government Policy, Research & Legislation Branch

**From:** s.22  
**To:** [Minister, MUNI MUNI:EX](#)  
**Subject:** s.22 Incoming Vote16 BC  
**Date:** April 20, 2022 7:37:05 PM

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**[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.**

Hi Nathan,

I'm s.22, I'm co-lead of vote16. We are working to lower the voting age to 16 in BC. The motion to lower the voting age to 16 got passed at UBCM and many other municipalities have voiced their support. We are looking at seeing if we can get the voting age lowered for municipal elections. I was wondering if you would be able to have a quick call with me to talk about this.

Thanks,

s.22



October 5, 2021

Ref: 268249

Their Worship Mayor Victor Cumming  
City of Vernon  
3400 30th St  
Vernon BC V1T 5E6

Dear Mayor Cumming:

Thank you for your letter of September 8, 2021, addressed to the Honourable John Horgan, Premier, and me, regarding lowering the municipal election voting age. As Minister of Municipal Affairs, I am pleased to respond on the Premier's behalf.

At the 2019 Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Convention, the membership endorsed a resolution calling on the Province of British Columbia to revise the voting age for local government elections to 16 years of age. The province's response to the 2019 UBCM resolution B108, reads as follows:

"Government is interested in encouraging active civic engagement among all British Columbians. Traditionally, the voting age in local and provincial elections have been the same and requires voters to be 18 years of age at the time of voting; this ensures both consistency and helps to minimize public confusion in relation to voting. Lowering the voting age for local elections would require careful consideration and analysis including considering matters such as exploring reasons of age requirements on voter eligibility, ease of administration and the implications of a divergence in the voting age for federal, provincial and local elections. Issues such as the adoption of provincial voters lists for local elections and voter identification requirements would also need to be considered. Currently, no Canadian jurisdiction permits youth to vote in regular elections. Several jurisdictions worldwide, including Austria, Argentina, and Scotland, have lowered the voting age to 16. Future work will include reviewing the experiences of these and other jurisdictions."

The province has been reviewing this matter, including undertaking policy analysis to identify the implications of such a change including the experiences of other jurisdictions that have lowered the voting age. Any change to the current voting requirements would involve further consultation with citizens, local governments and UBCM.

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Their Worship Mayor Victor Cumming  
Page 2

Thank you again for sharing your views with me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Josie', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Josie Osborne  
Minister

pc: Honourable John Horgan, Premier

**From:** Anita Huberman  
**To:** Anita Huberman  
**Subject:** MEDIA RELEASE: Reduce Voting Age to 16 in all Elections Says Surrey Board of Trade  
**Date:** July 14, 2022 7:31:53 AM

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 14, 2022

## **REDUCE VOTING AGE TO 16 IN ALL ELECTIONS SAYS SURREY BOARD OF TRADE**

The Surrey Board of Trade recommends that federal, provincial and municipal governments reduce the voting age to 16 for all elections. The reduction is needed to ensure civic engagement, education, and sustained participation in elections into their future.

“Those individuals that are 16+ are contributing to the economy - paying taxes, participating in our workforce - but they have no say in how it operates,” said Anita Huberman, President & CEO, Surrey Board of Trade. “They participate in a system that is regulated and governed, however, cannot vote for elected representatives that make decisions that impact their lives. Their voice and perspective should count in all government elections.”

Many individuals in Surrey under the age of 19 are entrepreneurs and contribute to their local communities through various initiatives, as evidenced through the 2,000 + students that have engaged in Surrey Board of Trade entrepreneurial and career programming.

There is an opportunity through the K-12 education system to enhance education and awareness of government systems, such as which level of government makes which decisions, why it is important to vote, how democracy works, and much more.

Young citizens need to be involved in the decisions that determine the future that they’re going to inherit. They also need to be able to participate in elections as some already work in the system.

The positive impacts of lowering the voting age have been demonstrated around the world.

[SURREY BOARD OF TRADE VOTE 16 POLICY](#)

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**H. CAPTAIN (ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY) ANITA  
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*On the Territory of the Coast Salish Peoples*







**The Corporation of the District of Saanich | Mayor's Office**

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VIA EMAIL: [MAH.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:MAH.Minister@gov.bc.ca)

December 13, 2021

The Honourable Josie Osborne, M.L.A.  
Minister of Municipal Affairs  
PO Box 9056 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Osborne,

**Re: VOTE 16 BC CAMPAIGN**

On December 6, 2021, Saanich Council considered a Report to Council and resolved as follows:

*"That Council:*

- *Formally endorse the Vote16BC campaign to lower the voting age to 16 in British Columbia; and*
- *Request the Mayor to write a letter to the Premier and the Minister of Municipal Affairs informing them of this endorsement, and request them to lower the voting age to 16 in British Columbia."*

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. A copy of the report and an excerpt of the draft meeting minutes are attached for further information. The endorsed minutes will soon be available on our website here: <https://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/local-government/mayor-council/schedule-agendas-minutes.html>.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Haynes'.

Fred Haynes  
Mayor

Enclosures

cc: Saanich Council

# Notice of Motion

Monday, November 22, 2021

**From: Councillor Taylor**

1. THAT Saanich Council formally endorse the Vote16BC campaign to lower the voting age to 16 in British Columbia.
2. THAT Council requests the Mayor to write a letter to the Premier and the Minister of Municipal Affairs informing them of this endorsement, and requesting them to lower the voting age to 16 in BC.

This motion will be considered at the December 6, 2021 Council Meeting.

1410-04  
Report -  
Council

### **VOTE16BC CAMPAIGN**

Notice of Motion from Councillor Taylor from the November 22, 2021 Council meeting recommending that Council:

- Formally endorse the Vote16BC campaign to lower the voting age to 16 in British Columbia; and
- Request the Mayor to write a letter to the Premier and the Minister of Municipal Affairs informing them of this endorsement and requesting them to lower the voting age to 16.

**MOVED by Councillor Taylor and Seconded by Councillor Mersereau: "That Council:**

- **Formally endorse the Vote16BC campaign to lower the voting age to 16 in British Columbia; and**
- **Request the Mayor to write a letter to the Premier and the Minister of Municipal Affairs informing them of this endorsement and requesting them to lower the voting age to 16."**

\*\*\*\*\*  
Councillor Brownoff exited the meeting at 9:26 p.m.  
\*\*\*\*\*

Council discussion ensued with the following comments:

- At 16 years of age, Canadians can drive a car, move out, get a job, pay taxes, join the military, get married or go to university but do not have the right to vote.
- Teenagers are leading the major social and political movements across the country.
- Age should not be the benchmark on whether or not you can cast a ballot.
- 18 years old is an arbitrary number; not the standard for maturity or logic.
- Lowering the voting age could increase voter turnout.
- Evidence shows that the earlier someone starts voting, the more likely that they are to vote as a habit throughout their life.
- Decisions made by Council are generally long term decisions, particularly those around climate change, local area planning and housing needs; these decisions disproportionately influence younger individuals who do not currently have a say in those outcomes.

**The Motion was then Put and CARRIED  
with Councillor Brownoff Absent for the VOTE**