

Environment and Climate Change

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Carbon Pricing

Highlights:

- In January 2020, Jock Finlayson said BC has the highest carbon tax in North American and called on the province to give trade-exposed, energy intensive sectors a break on it.
- The Opposition could ask if government is considering any changes to the carbon tax and its application to certain sectors (ex. mining or forestry).
- The Opposition may also question whether carbon tax revenues are all going toward green initiatives.

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Solution:

- Our government knows that putting a price on pollution is the best way to fight climate change.
- We are providing predictability to BC businesses and helping companies compete while moving to the cleanest operations in the world.
- We are increasing climate action credits for families, to ensure a majority of British Columbians are better off financially than under the other side's plan.
- Under the old government's plan, the carbon tax would increase with the federal mandate but they had no plan to increase rebates for people.
- Under our plan we are putting people first.
- We are investing billions in climate change solutions like transit that create jobs and make life better for people living in our province.
- CleanBC will meet our targets while helping people cut their emissions and their bills.

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Background:

- The Federal carbon price mandate begins at \$10/tonne in 2018 and rises by \$10/year to \$50/tonne in 2022. The federal approach will be reviewed by early 2022 to ensure it is effective and confirm future price increases.
- BC's Carbon Tax was implemented on July 1, 2008 at \$10/tonne and was increased \$5 each year until it reached \$30/tonne in 2012.
- Budget 2018 confirmed BC's Carbon Tax will increase by \$5 per tonne each year starting April 1, 2018 in order to meet the federally mandated carbon price.
- It also confirmed an additional \$40 million per year will be provided to low and moderate income British Columbians through enhancements to the climate action tax credit.
- The enhancement raises the benefit for a family of four by \$50, which is equal to the additional cost they would incur from the \$5 increase to the Carbon Tax.
- BC's climate action tax credit now provides up to \$135 per adult and \$40 per child. A family of four receives up to \$350 annually. The maximum benefit goes to families with income up to \$39,658 and is phased out at higher incomes.
- The Federal Government's carbon tax rebate will provide a family of four in Ontario with \$307 next year, rising each year to \$718 by 2022.
- The CleanBC Program for Industry directs a portion of B.C.'s carbon tax paid by industry into incentives for cleaner operations.
- The program is designed for regulated large industrial operations, such as pulp and paper mills, natural gas operations, refineries, and large mines.
- The CleanBC Program for Industry includes:
 - An Industrial Incentive Program (Incentive) that reduces carbon-tax costs for operations based on performance against world leading emissions benchmarks
 - A CleanBC Industry Fund (Fund) that invests some industrial carbon tax revenue directly into emission reduction projects, helping to make our traditional industries cleaner and stronger.

Shipping Oil by Rail

Highlights:

- The Opposition has claimed delays to the construction of the TMX pipeline will increase oil by rail shipments through BC and increase risks to communities.
- While there have been increases in oil by rail volumes in Canada, the vast majority of shipments do not transit through BC and instead enter the US via Montana or North Dakota.
- Data from the Washington State Department of Ecology show shipments received via BC's lower mainland have declined dramatically compared to 2017.

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Solution:

- Our government is committed to protecting our lands and waters from the risk of diluted bitumen regardless of how it is shipped.
- We have already introduced new regulations governing oil by rail to increase spill preparedness and response.
- These include requirements for contingency plans, drills and exercises, and plans for recovery.
- And for the first time, requiring reporting of transportation of hazardous substances through BC. Something the previous government ignored.
- We have issued an order to rail companies under new regulations requiring them to report volumes.
- The spill regulations we are proposing in our reference case would also apply to shipments of diluted bitumen by rail.
- We want to ensure we fill the gaps in the science around effects of a diluted bitumen spill, and that we can be sure it can be cleaned up.
- We are taking action to make British Columbians safer in the face of risks of bitumen transport be it by rail or by pipeline.

Background:

- Crude oil exports by rail from Canada have increased significantly in 2018 to 6.4 million barrels in July according to the NEB.
- While it is difficult to obtain reliable statistics as companies do not publicly report figures, most Canadian oil by rail shipments do not involve BC.
- The only oil by rail terminal in British Columbia is the Burnaby Rail Terminal which has a capacity to handle just 8,000 barrels per day.
- There are no facilities in BC to offload oil by rail onto tankers so all oil by rail for export that transits BC must go to Washington State.
- Data from the Washington State Department of Ecology show that while there was an increase in oil by rail shipments through BC from late 2016 to mid-2017, these shipments have declined since October 2017.
- In 2017 there were 3.17 million barrels shipped through BC to WA. In 2018 there were just 1.2 million.
- In the first half of 2017, under the old government, there were 1.64 million barrels shipped through BC to WA. In the first half of 2018 there were just 385 thousand.
- The reports show a major shift in routing of Canadian oil by rail shipments to Washington away from passing through BC and instead entering the state from the eastern border with Idaho.
- For the first three quarters of 2018, there were no shipments of oil by rail entering WA state via BC in 31 out of 40 weeks.
- Inter-provincial rail transportation regulation is the jurisdiction of the federal government and the transport of oil by rail is regulated by federal government under the Railway Safety Act and the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act .
- The federal government has initiated a review of the Railway Safety Act and the BC government is fully participating in the review, including bringing forward concerns heard from municipalities on dangerous goods traveling through their communities.
- While the Province does not have jurisdiction over rail transport, it does have ability to regulate environmental impacts that could be caused by spills.

- The Environment Minister implemented a first phase of new spill regulations on October 13, 2017. The regulations apply to transport of liquid petroleum products by pipeline, rail and trucking.
- This first set of new regulations passed by the current government activates legislation passed in 2016, and contains provisions that:
 - define “regulated persons” as pipeline, rail and trucking transporters of liquid petroleum products over 10,000 litres;
 - require the development and implementation of spill contingency plans;
 - define requirements for drills and exercises;
 - mandate record-keeping for spill preparedness and response;
 - require enhanced reporting and set additional cost recovery mechanisms;
 - enable government to require plans for recovery.
- The Ministry of the Environment has conducted public consultations on proposals for a second phase of spill regulations, including:
 - Response times, to ensure timely responses following a spill;
 - Geographic response plans, to ensure resources are available to support an immediate response, that take into account unique characteristics of a given sensitive area;
 - Compensation for loss of public and cultural use of land, resources or public amenities in the case of spills; and
 - Maximizing application of regulations to marine spills.
- BC sent a reference to the BC Court of Appeal which consists of a proposed amendment to the Environmental Management Act and three questions to confirm the province’s authority to make such a law.
- On May 24, the BC Court of Appeal ruled unanimously against BC in the reference case. The Attorney General responded by saying BC will now take the case to the Supreme Court of Canada.
- Section 36 of the Supreme Court of Canada Act gives the province the right of appeal on a reference case.

Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion

Highlights:

- On January 16, 2020, the Supreme Court of Canada dismissed BC's appeal of the reference case on the province's ability to regulate hazardous substances like diluted bitumen - travelling through the province.
- In response, the Opposition called on government to "finally get behind the Trans Mountain pipeline project"
- The Opposition speculated government has spent \$1 million on legal fees related to the project. They called on BC to be transparent about these costs.
- In September 2019, the BC Court of Appeal found that the Province must reconsider the conditions attached to the 2017 provincial environmental assessment certificate for TMX. This work remains ongoing.

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Solution:

- Our government remains concerned by the risk that an oil spill poses to our environment, our coast and the tens of thousands of jobs that depend on it.
- We have a responsibility to defend the interests of British Columbians and that is exactly what we have been consistent in doing.
- We will continue to do everything we can within our jurisdiction to defend our environment, our coast and our jobs.
- British Columbians are concerned about a seven-fold increase in tankers off our coast.
- That's why we will continue to urge the federal government to ensure that the strongest protections possible are put in place.

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Background:

- On February 7, Trans Mountain confirmed the cost of completing the expansion project has increased from \$7.4 billion to \$12.6 billion, driven by delays and the additional regulatory and legal processes.
- Media has reported that almost \$150 million of Canada's Ocean Protection Plan funding was not spent over the past two years.
- In response, Canada said they will spend the full \$1.5 billion over 5 years for marine protection, including the \$2 million remaining in the federal Ocean Protections Plan.
- On February 4, the Federal Court of Appeal ruled unanimously that Canada had upheld its obligations for consultation with Indigenous Nations prior to their re-approving the TMX expansion project in June 2019.
- In the ruling, the court stated reconciliation doesn't mean Indigenous nations have a veto over projects where there is disagreement among communities.
- The court challenge had been brought forward by Coldwater Indian Band, Squamish Nation, Tsleil-Waututh Nation and the Ts'elxwéyeqw Tribe (a number of Stó:lō nations).
- In response to the ruling, the First Nations said they would review the decision before determining next steps. They have 60 days to decide whether to appeal.
- On January 16, 2020, the Supreme Court of Canada dismissed BC's appeal of the reference case on the province's ability to regulate hazardous substances like diluted bitumen - travelling through the province.
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- In May 2019, the BC Court of Appeal unanimously ruled against the province in the reference case, saying BC doesn't have the jurisdiction to bring in the proposed amendments to the Environmental Management Act.
- In September 2019, the BC Court of Appeal found that the Province must reconsider the conditions attached to the 2017 provincial environmental assessment certificate for TMX. This work remains ongoing.

BC Parks – Discover Camping Reservation System

Highlights:

- On May 25, BC Parks re-launched the online Discover Camping reservation system, allowing British Columbians to book campsites.
- By 7am, more than 50,000 people were trying to access the reservation system, which caused it to crash.
- In response, the Leader of the Opposition said government could have avoided this by opening reservations on a region-by-region basis, or alphabetically, campsite by campsite.

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Main Message:

- Our government wants to make sure British Columbians can enjoy our beautiful parks for overnight camping or day-use activities this summer.
- We worked closely with the Office of the Provincial Health Officer to re-open our parks in a way that keeps people and communities safe.
- We also changed our reservation system so only British Columbians can make reservations.
- The day we opened our reservation system, over 50,000 camping reservations were made by people in communities all across the province.
- This was by far the busiest day our reservation system has ever had.
- In fact, it was double Parks' Canada's biggest day in history.
- And it shows us British Columbians are excited to explore our beautiful parks this summer.
- Our camping reservation system has a two-month rolling reservation window, so new sites will continue to be available for British Columbians to book every day.
- I encourage British Columbians to book in advance and enjoy their summer visiting BC Parks.

Background:

- After being shut down for new bookings in March due to COVID-19, the BC Parks Discover Camping website re-opened on May 25.
- By 7am, more than 50,000 people trying to simultaneously access the system from multiple devices.
- Due to the high volume of visitors, many people were experiencing delays or having problems booking a site, but reservations were still getting through.
- In the first half hour alone, 800 reservations were processed. As of 11am, more than 27,500 reservations were made and 10 reservations were being processed every second.
- By the end of the day, 50,749 bookings were made – an unprecedented number that far exceeds any other previous demand in BC Parks, as well as that experienced in other jurisdictions.
- For comparison, at the same time last year, the system was very busy, processing 1,100 in one day.
- In preparation for the influx in visitors, the site was scaled up to expect five times the amount of traffic from January, when B.C.'s summer bookings first became available.
- Staffing at the Discover Camping call centre was also tripled to handle increase call volumes, with 25 agents on at peak times compared to six agents on a typical day.
- The actual web traffic volume exceeded 30 times the amount of traffic seen during the period in January, causing slowness and error messages for many users during the initial opening hours.
- For the reopening of Discover Camping, BC Parks shortened the reservation window to two months instead of four, to avoid releasing all inventory for the summer.

Peace Arch Provincial Park

Highlights:

- On June 18, BC Parks announced Peace Arch Provincial Park will be temporarily closed, until further notice.
- The closure addresses the public safety and traffic concerns in neighbouring communities due to a significant increase in the number of park visitors.
- Media has reported Peace Arch Park was a loophole along the closed American-Canadian border and that people from both sides were meeting up and not following the 14 day quarantine rules after their visit.
- The Opposition could ask why government didn't close the park earlier.

Main Message:

- The COVID-19 pandemic has created challenges that none of us could have imagined a few months ago.
- For British Columbians who have friends, family or a partner across the border, we know this has been a particularly difficult time.
- We understand the importance for people to reunite during these uncertain times.
- That said, there has been a significant increase in visitors at the Peace Arch Provincial Park.
- This created an unmanageable situation and it has raised public safety and traffic concerns for the surrounding communities.
- Our government worked with local communities, the RCMP and our counterparts in Washington State to address this situation.

Main Message Continued:

- We took a series of measures to manage the number of people coming to the park.
- For example, we increased enforcement patrols in the park, and we installed a permanent gate at the park entrance.
- Unfortunately, these measures did not address the risk associated with the significant increase in visitors from both sides of the border.
- That's why we took action and temporarily closed Peace Arch Provincial Park.
- We look forward to when we can safely re-open this unique park.

Background:

- On June 18, BC announced Peace Arch Provincial Park will be temporarily closed. It will re-open when it is safe to do so.
- This closure addresses the public safety and traffic concerns in neighbouring communities due to a significant increase in the number of park visitors.
- On April 8, 2020, BC Parks closed all provincial parks in response to widespread calls for increased action to address the spread of COVID-19.
- The park reopened on May 14. Since then, parking lots and local access roads have been overwhelmed with nearly twice the number of vehicles compared to peak days in the summer season, resulting in illegal parking.
- Attendance has doubled over the same period compared to last year, leading to an increase in pedestrians along roadways.
- BC Parks has consulted with RCMP, border officials and numerous local communities.
- Several measures have been taken to manage the growth in the numbers of visitors (ex. posting signage, increasing enforcement patrols, installing a permanent gate at the park entrance and reducing park hours from 8am-8pm).
- The measures did not address the risk associated with the significant increases in visitors from both sides of the border.
- On June 16, Prime Minister Trudeau announced that the current U.S. border measures have been extended to July 21.
- Through exemptions to the Federal Quarantine Act, the federal government is now allowing immediate family members of Canadian citizens and permanent residents to enter Canada to be with an immediate family member for a period of at least 15 days, as long as they are asymptomatic of COVID-19 and self-isolate for 14 days on arrival.
- Peace Arch Provincial Park is unique in BC's system of provincial parks as its location goes across the 49th parallel. As such, its planning and development is done in collaboration with Washington State Parks.
- This park was established in November 1939 and on the BC side, is 9 hectares.

Pacific Booker Minerals

Highlights:

- MLA Weaver will ask Minister Heyman if he is considering amending the 2015 Section 17 Order issued to Pacific Booker Minerals, in light of the modernization of the Environmental Assessment Act.
- In March 2020, MLA Weaver asked similar questions to Minister Ralston.
- In October 2012, then Environment Minister Terry Lake and Energy, Mines, and Natural Gas Minister Rich Coleman refused to issue an Environmental Assessment Certificate. In explaining this decision, they said the potential long-term risks (ex. impact to Skeena River salmon and water quality in Morrison Lake) of the mine outweighed the potential benefits.

Main Message for Q1:

- As my colleague, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources noted in March, I can't speak to why the old government made the decision they did related to the proposed Morrison Mine.
- What I can say is I am very proud of the work our government did to revitalize the Environmental Assessment process.
- The approach we've taken will ensure good projects that respect BC's environment, Indigenous peoples and the public are approved more quickly.
- Regarding Pacific Booker, the member will recall that this proposed project received a decision of further assessment under the old act.
- As such, the Further Assessment Order issued to the company remains valid.

Main Message for Q2:

- The company is currently working through the required regulatory process for further assessment.
- The further assessment for the proposed project includes the requirement for a Supplemental Application Information Requirement.
- This means the company must provide additional information and analysis to BC's Environmental Assessment Office.
- Some examples of the additional information and analysis required are:
 - Sockeye salmon use of Morrison Lake, Upper and Lower Tahlo Creek and the Morrison River
 - Hydrogeological and groundwater data for areas between the mine and Morrison Lake
 - Further engagement with Lake Babine Nation and other impacted First Nations
- I'm advised that the company's latest submission to EAO was in December 2019.
- EAO staff met with the company in February 2020, as additional information is required from the company.
- I've also been advised that the company plans to provide an update to the EAO soon regarding their next steps.

Background:

- Pacific Booker Minerals Inc. (PMB) is proposing to develop an open-pit copper-gold-molybdenum mine located 65 km northeast of Smithers, BC.
- The Environmental Assessment (EA) Application was first accepted for review by the EAO in 2010.
- In October 2012, the Minister of Energy and Mines and the Minister of Environment refused to issue an EA certificate.
- In 2013, PBM filed a petition for judicial review in the BC Supreme Court based on the Ministers' decision – the BC Supreme Court subsequently ordered that the matter be remitted to the Ministers for reconsideration.
- In 2015, the Ministers reconsidered the decision and issued a Section 17 Order outlining the requirements for Further Assessment of the project.
- This included the requirement for a Supplemental Application Information Requirements (SAIR).
- The scope of the further assessment, includes:
 - additional baseline information and analysis;
 - additional analysis of the feasibility and effectiveness of alternatives to the current mine design and mitigation measures to reduce the levels of risk and uncertainty of potential impacts from the mine;
 - additional analysis of whether the mine is likely to have significant adverse effects on the environment;
 - a description and assessment of alternative means of undertaking the project with respect to tailings management; and
 - further engagement with Lake Babine Nation and other First Nations with respect to their perspectives and opinions about the mine and the potential effects.
- Once the formal SAIRs have been finalized/issued by the EAO, the proponent then has three years to submit the required information, in the form of a supplemental application.
- Upon completion of the review of the supplemental application, the project would be re-referred to the ministers for decision whether to issue an EA certificate.
- Since the Section 17 Order was issued in 2015, PBM has submitted several draft SAIRS. However, these drafts have not contained the required information and as such, remain incomplete.
- The last draft was submitted by PBM to EAO in December 2019.

BC Parks Investments

Main Message:

- Our government knows how important it is for people to have the opportunity to get outside and connect with nature.
- We are committed to investing in our beautiful provincial parks.
- For the 2020 season, our government added 180 new campsites for people to enjoy.
- Over the last three years, our government has added 1,205 campsites to our provincial parks and recreation sites.
- Earlier this year, BC Parks provided \$240,000 through the Park Enhancement Fund for volunteer and other community-led projects that support conservation and recreation.
- For example, Pamela Wright, who works with the Ecosystem Science and Management Program at the University of Northern British Columbia is using this funding to restore private land that was returned to the Eskers Provincial Park.
- And last summer, we added land to Gladstone and Garibaldi Provincial Parks to protect ecologically sensitive areas, promote biodiversity and enhance recreation opportunities.

Water Sustainability

Highlights:

- MLA Furstenau will ask Minister Heyman questions about the Water Sustainability Act, the current status of groundwater licensing and what the province's plan is going forward.
- In 2019, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) passed a resolution calling on BC to stop issuing water licences to commercial water bottle operations within the province.
- Media has reported that under BC's Water Sustainability Act, companies like Nestlé can obtain a groundwater licence and pay a fee of \$2.25 per million litres of water to bottle and then sell at a profit.

Main Message:

- We strongly believe in responsibility managing our resources in a way that ensures people today, and in the future, have access to clean drinking water.
- We fully appreciate how precious and limited a resource water is.
- That's why we must manage our groundwater in a way that protects our aquifers, streams, watersheds and the environment.
- One example of our approach is a government-to-government partnership between our government and the Cowichan Tribes to support the long-term sustainability of the Koksilah Watershed
- Through this partnership, we are looking at the feasibility of using new tools in the Water Sustainability Act to better manage the Koksilah Watershed – now and for future generations.

Main Message Continued:

- Another way our government is ensuring the sustainable management of our water is by requiring all those with groundwater licences to pay the same fees as those who have access to surface water.
- More specifically, those who use groundwater for non-domestic purposes, like irrigation, will require a licence and must pay for the water they use.
- This also helps to ensure our government understands how much water is being used in BC.
- When it comes to adjusting the application fees and annual rental rates for ground water licenses, we want to get it right.
- That's why we have been doing extensive consultation with local governments, First Nations and industry on the transition period for groundwater license.
- Staff in my ministry are working hard to ensure all ground water users apply for a water licence as soon as possible.
- The importance of people having access to clean drinking water cannot be overstated.
- Our government will continue to look for ways we can responsibly and sustainably manage this vital resource.

Background:

- In February 2020, BC introduced the *Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act* (Bill 13), which included amendments to the *Water Sustainability Act*. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the bill hasn't gone through third reading.
- The proposed amendments provided more authority for government to collect, use and disclose the personal information of water users to ensure authorization holders, applicants, emergency responders and the public have continued access to the information needed to manage water use in B.C.
- In February 2020, BC and the Cowichan Tribes signed an interim letter of agreement, committing to a government-to-government partnership to ensure long-term water sustainability in the Koksilah Watershed south of Duncan and explore the benefits of a water sustainability plan for the area.
- In August 2019, a ministerial order under the *Water Sustainability Act* was issued to specific water users (including surface and groundwater licensees, and unlicensed groundwater users) to stop using water, in an effort to help protect fish populations in the Koksilah Watershed. It was the first time that such an order was issued in the West Coast region.
- Under the 2016 *Water Sustainability Act* (WSA), for the first time, those who use groundwater for non-domestic purposes (e.g., irrigation, industrial, municipal waterworks etc.) require a licence and must pay for that water, the same as surface water users have for decades.
- Existing non-domestic groundwater users (i.e. groundwater use commenced on or before February 29, 2016) must now apply on or before March 1, 2022, to continue to use the water lawfully.
- New non-domestic groundwater users (use commencing after February 29, 2016) must apply for an authorization and pay fees and rentals before the water can be lawfully diverted, used or stored.
- Since the WSA came into force in 2016, outreach has been ongoing, including emails to stakeholder groups, presentations at conferences, informational articles in trade publications and open houses.
- An estimated 20,000 existing non-domestic groundwater wells are required to be licensed. To date, the rate of groundwater application submissions is lower than expected; As of April 23, 2020, about 20% (approximately 3,969) of anticipated applications have been received.

Carbon Pricing and Sectoral Targets

Highlights:

- MLA Olsen will ask Minister Heyman if government plans to extend the tax filing and payment deadline for the carbon tax past September 30.
- MLA Olsen may also ask about the status and timing of BC's sectoral targets.
- As set out in the Climate Change Accountability Act, BC is required to make the sectoral targets public no later than March 31, 2021.

Main Message – Carbon Pricing:

- Our government has a strong record when it comes to putting a price on pollution.
- We got BC's carbon pricing back on track.
- Our approach has increased the climate action credit for families and has provided predictability to BC businesses and helped companies to compete, while moving to the cleanest operations in the world.
- And we are investing billions in climate change solutions like transit that create jobs and make life better for people living in BC.
- The COVID-19 pandemic impacted all people and all sectors in our province.
- We needed to provide immediate support to people and businesses – our initial Action Plan included an extension for tax filing and payment deadlines for a range of provincial taxes until September 30.
- CleanBC is a key focus of our economic recovery.
- We will continue to consider all our supports for people and businesses as part of our recovery.

Main Message – Sector Targets:

- I am very proud of the work our government, the Green Caucus and the MLA for Oak Bay-Gordon Head have done when it comes to CleanBC and the Climate Change Accountability Act.
- Our government is dedicated to meeting our climate targets and we will do this in an honest and transparent way.
- As part of this work, we will establish emissions targets for different sectors of the economy, as well as an interim emissions target on the road to 2030.
- My ministry is working hard to engage with different sectors, Indigenous governments and the environmental sector to help inform how we will establish these targets.
- We know how important these sectoral targets are – they will help us provide more clarity on the path forward to meeting our emissions reductions targets.
- And they will help us set a more detailed roadmap to meet our CleanBC commitments and further integrate responsibility for climate action across different sectors of the economy and the responsible ministries.
- As is set out in our act, we will make these sectoral targets public before March 31, 2021.

Background:

- The Federal carbon price mandate begins at \$10/tonne in 2018 and will rise by \$10/year to \$50/tonne in 2022.
- The federal government did not delay its April 1 carbon pricing increase due to the pandemic – Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said the fight against climate change must continue.
- BC's Carbon Tax was implemented on July 1, 2008 at \$10/tonne and prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, was scheduled to increase \$5 each year until it reaches \$30/tonne in 2021.
- On March 23, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, BC extended the tax filing and payment deadline until September 30 for the following:
 - Provincial sales tax (PST)
 - Municipal and regional district tax on short-term accommodation
 - Tobacco tax
 - Motor fuel tax
 - Carbon Tax
- At that time, BC also delayed the scheduled April 1 increase to the provincial carbon tax, the new PST registration requirements on e-commerce and the implementation of PST on sweetened carbonated drinks. The province committed to reviewing the timing of these increases by September 30.
- In October 2019, BC introduced the Climate Change Accountability Act, legislating government's commitment to introduce a new climate accountability framework under CleanBC.
- This legislation sets interim emissions targets, which will be established by ministerial order by no later than Dec. 31, 2020. Sectoral targets will be established no later than March 31, 2021.
- The Ministry of Environment is currently is engaging with different sectors, Indigenous leaders, the environmental sector and others to help inform these targets as we do the necessary policy work.
- Every fifth year, the climate change accountability report will include an updated provincial climate risk assessment, which will build on B.C.'s Preliminary Strategic Risk Assessment and work done in the interim to assess risks from climate change.

Biodiversity

Highlights:

- Green Caucus will ask Minister Heyman about what government is doing to protect biodiversity in BC.
- They have indicated they will also ask about biodiversity, old growth and the Old Growth Strategic Review that is currently being reviewed by FLNRORD.
- In early 2020, the federal government said they would engage with provinces, territories, Indigenous communities, scientists, industry and other stakeholders to evaluate the effectiveness of the existing Species at Risk Act and assess the need for modernization.
- Since then, BC has been working with Canada to discuss new approaches for protecting species at risk and ecosystems.

Contrast:

- The old government failed to bring in a harmonized endangered species law.
- Their failure meant it became harder to protect BC's plants, animals and ecosystems.
- This created instability for Indigenous communities and industry.

Main Message for Q1 – Protection for Biodiversity:

- Our government is proud that BC is the most biologically diverse province in Canada.
- We know how important it is to conserve BC's plants, animals and ecosystems.
- Our government is dedicated to protecting and recovering endangered species.
- Through our engagement on this file, we have heard a diverse range of perspectives around the protection and management of biodiversity and endangered species.
- We heard it's important to coordinate recovery activities to enhance the health of the ecosystem as a whole.
- We also heard that we need to work with all partners as we enhance biodiversity in BC.
- We were pleased to hear that Canada is evaluating the federal *Species at Risk* legislation.
- We are working collaboratively with our federal colleagues to inform their review and ensure it aligns with our efforts of protecting and recovering species at risk and biodiversity in our beautiful province.

Main Message for Q2 – Biodiversity in Forests:

- Our government is dedicated to protecting biodiversity in BC.
- We have taken a number of strong actions to this.
- For instance, we protected rare inland temperate rainforest in the Darkwoods Conservation Area with the federal government, and the Nature Conservancy of Canada.
- Also, our government and the Tahltan Nation have signed a joint land-use plan.
- This plan includes roughly 287,000 hectares of protected area in the Sacred Headwaters where industrial activity is deferred for a minimum of 20 years.
- As the member referenced, our government is currently reviewing the Strategic Old Growth Review, prepared for the Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations.
- Our government understands there's more to protect biodiversity – that's why my colleague asked an independent panel to do this work and make recommendations in the first place.
- We look forward to releasing the report in due time.

Background:

- In early 2020, the federal government said they would engage with provinces, territories, Indigenous communities, scientists, industry and other stakeholders to evaluate the effectiveness of the existing Species at Risk Act and assess the need for modernization.
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- B.C. is Canada's most biologically diverse province and has the greatest number of species at risk, with over 260 species assessed as being endangered, threatened, or special concern under the federal Species at Risk Act.
- The Ministries of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (ENV) and Forests, Lands and Natural Resources Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD) have joint accountability for conservation of species at risk and biodiversity in the province with ENV leading on policy, and science, and FLNRORD leading on implementation of conservation actions.
- Although ENV is the lead agency tasked with policy and legislation development, FLNRORD and other sector ministries play a critical role in policy development, engagement, and implementation of policy changes.
- The Province has led multiple engagement efforts throughout 2018 and 2019, including Indigenous area-based meetings (23 sessions over 9 weeks, with 123 nations represented in 2018).
- The Province has also led discussions with the federal government, local governments, professional associations, environmental non-governmental organizations, researchers and academic experts, industry groups, and citizens.
- In July 2019, BC announced a two-person panel had been appointed to lead an Old Growth Strategic Review and provide a report to the Minister Donaldson.
- The panel conducted a 4-month engagement process to hear from First Nations, local communities, industry, stakeholders, and the public on their views on the ecological, economic and cultural importance of old growth trees and forests in BC.
- Recommendations from their report are expected to inform policy and a new old-growth strategy for British Columbia.
- Government received the report in April 2020 and has committed to releasing the report within six months of receiving it.