

SPEAKING NOTES FOR  
THE HONOURABLE SUSAN BRICE  
MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCES

*Supplementary Estimates Debate*

10:00 a.m.  
February 23 - 24, 2005

Version - 25/02/05 8:08 AM

(Check against Delivery)

February 25, 2005

- Good morning / afternoon
- Before we begin, I'd like to take a moment to introduce some members of my ministry's executive who are joining me today:
  - Robin Ciceri, Deputy Minister,
  - Andrew Wharton, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Policy and Research Division and
  - Sharon Moysey, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Management Services Division and Executive Financial Officer
- These members of executive are just a few of the hundreds of staff at the Ministry of Human Resources that I'd like to thank for their ongoing commitment and professionalism.
- We're here today to request supplementary estimates in the amount of \$10 million.
- We request these funds for ministry program operating costs resulting from government's recent \$70 monthly rate increase for persons with disabilities that came into effect January 1, 2005.
- This is the largest rate increase in the history of B.C.

- With this \$70 rate increase, British Columbians with disabilities now receive \$856 per month – the second highest rate in Canada.
- The full cost of the PWD rate increase for fiscal 04/05 was \$18.5 million to cover additional costs for income assistance payments made in December, January, February and March.
- \$8.5 of that \$18.5 million is being funded from within the ministry's existing budget due to savings from a declining caseload of clients who are capable of working.
- We had originally planned for a more modest disability rate increase – however, because of the excellent strength in B.C.'s economy and sound fiscal management, we were able to provide a much larger increase – and provide it much sooner.
- Mr. Chair, let me provide some background on this rate increase as it ties into government's goal for the decade ahead of building the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities.

- Increasing disability rates by \$70 a month is just one of the many supports we have in place to ensure people with disabilities have every opportunity to achieve their potential and participate as fully as possible in their communities.
- The ministry's wide range of supports for persons with disabilities also includes nutritional supplements, low-cost bus passes and enhanced medical coverage – including MSP, Pharmacare, dental and optical coverage, medical supplies and transportation.
- Mr. Chair, in keeping with our goal to build the best system of support in Canada, British Columbia is also leading the country in our commitment to employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.
- We want British Columbians with disabilities to have the assurance of stable support they can depend on...
- ...while at the same time venturing out into the workforce as they are able to fulfill their dreams and become contributing members of their neighbourhoods and communities.
- During the course of our mandate, we have invested \$60 million in employment programs for persons with disabilities.

- We have established a \$20 million Disability Supports for Employment Fund.
- And we established the Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities to encourage BC businesses to hire employees with disabilities who are able to work.
- Organizations like the Royal Bank of Canada, Thrifty Foods and the Vancouver International Airport have joined into this initiative as they meet their skill requirements from the broadest range of British Columbians.
- Mr. Chair, to support the employment opportunities we are creating, we have doubled the monthly earnings exemption for clients with disabilities to \$400.
- And I'm pleased to announce those earnings exemptions will be further increased next year.
- Let me tell you about how this approach is paying off for a woman right here in Victoria who has spina bifida.
- She's in a wheelchair.
- And she's been on and off income assistance for 20 years.
- She has found work at a local company that sells scooters and wheelchairs.

- It's amazing how much she brings to the job.
- She handles customer service, reception, sales, billings, inventory, and bookkeeping.
- It works out well for her, and her employer.
- The job provides her with money, independence, and a great deal of satisfaction.
- She benefits from the earnings exemption, which helps to pay for some of the costs involved with holding a job.
- She's also able to maintain her medical services through the ministry.
- I am delighted that this client and others like her are able to participate in the workforce as their disabilities allow.
- As you can see Mr. Chair, our approach assists people with disabilities to achieve greater independence and a better quality of life through innovative programs, supports and employment opportunities.
- The persons with disabilities rate increase is an integral part of this approach – and will make a significant difference in the lives of British Columbians with disabilities.
- Thank you, and I welcome questions from the members.

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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2005MHR0003-000187  
nulldate

Ministry of Human Resources

### **\$10 MILLION BOOST SUPPORTS PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

VICTORIA – A \$10 million increase for the Ministry of Human Resources 2004/05 budget will cover program operating costs resulting from government's recent \$70 monthly rate increase for people with disabilities that came into effect Jan. 1, 2005.

"This additional funding supports government's goal for the decade ahead of building the best system of support in Canada for people with disabilities," said Human Resources Minister Susan Brice. "The increase makes a significant difference in the lives of British Columbians with disabilities – ensuring they too share in the benefits and opportunities of a stronger B.C. economy."

The full cost of the Persons with Disabilities rate increase for fiscal 2004/05 was \$18.5 million to cover additional costs for disability assistance payments made from December through March. However, \$8.5 million of that \$18.5 million was funded from within the ministry's existing budget.

The \$70 rate increase means a single person with a disability in B.C. receives \$856.42 each month for support and shelter – the largest increase in the history of the province and the second-highest rate in Canada.

"Our government has a number of other supports in place to ensure people with disabilities have every opportunity to achieve their potential and participate as fully as possible in their communities," said Brice.

The provincial government supports people with disabilities with enhanced medical coverage including MSP, PharmaCare, dental coverage, medical transportation and low-cost bus passes. People with disabilities also have access to a range of specialized employment supports to assist them to work or volunteer as they are able. To encourage people with disabilities the Government of British Columbia has:

- Invested \$60 million in the Employment Program for Persons With Disabilities.
- Doubled the amount of additional monthly earnings people with disabilities are able to keep (\$200 to \$400).
- Established a \$20 million Disability Supports for Employment Fund.
- Created a Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities.

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Media      Richard Chambers  
contact:    Communications Director  
              Ministry of Human Resources  
              250 387-6489

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## **MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

### **Backgrounder – Supplementary Estimates**

#### **Why Supplementary Estimates are Required**

- As a result of additional spending to provide assistance to person with disabilities, the Ministry of Human Resources requires additional funds for ministry operations purposes.
- The ministry submitted to Treasury Board, a request to increase funding for person with disabilities by \$70 million starting in April 2005. On an annualized basis, the increase is estimated to cost \$55 million.
- Given government's strong fiscal position, a decision was made to implement the rate increase immediately, starting on the January 2005 cheque issued at the end of December 2004 at a cost of \$18.5 million in fiscal 2004/05. This decision is compatible with the government's goal of helping those people most in need.
- The disability caseload has grown more than expected. The ministry had budgeted for an average caseload of 52,500 in fiscal 2004/05. However, the disability assistance caseload has increased to 54,350 in December 2004.
- The ministry has been covering the cost of the additional disability caseload through savings in the temporary assistance caseload. The ministry had budgeted for an average caseload of 56,250 for fiscal 2004/05. However, the temporary assistance caseload has decreased to 51,540 in December 2004.
- The reduction in temporary assistance caseload has allowed the ministry to cover \$8.5 million of the disability assistance rate increase.

#### **Background on Person with Disabilities Rate Increase**

##### Existing Policy/Process

- One of the goals of the Provincial Government Strategic Plan is a supportive social fabric.
- The BC Employment and Assistance (BCEA) Program supports this goal by assisting people into sustainable employment, and providing income support to those in need.
- Income assistance rates, including those for PWD, have been increased only once since March 1994 – a general increase of 2 percent in August 2000.
- Since 1994, income assistance rates have consistently fallen behind inflation. The costs of living, as measured by a Price Index of food from stores, clothing, rental accommodation and electricity, has increased by 15.6 percent for the period June 1994 to June 2004. This means that for people living on employment and



## MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCES

### Background – Supplementary Estimates

assistance (EA), the ability to purchase the basic necessities of life has diminished by 13.6 percent over the past decade.

- Since the time of the last rate increase the cost of living has increased 7.4 percent.
- This creates additional hardship on clients with disabilities, who have costs associated with their requirement for assistance with activities of daily living over their basic needs for support and shelter.

#### Price Indices

	% change since June 1994 (past decade)	% change since Aug 2000 (since last IA rate increase)	Weights for Low Income Index
<b>All Items</b>	<b>17.4%</b>	<b>8.3%</b>	
Food from Stores	18.8%	11.3%	38%
Clothing and Footwear	6.4%	-0.1%	5%
Rental Accommodation	10.9%	4.5%	51%
Water, Fuel, Electricity	42.6%	12.6%	6%
<b>Weighted "Low Income Index"</b>	<b>15.6%</b>	<b>7.4%</b>	

- As can be seen in the Inter-Jurisdictional Comparison Table below, British Columbia's Employment and Assistance for Person with Disabilities (EAPWD) rates are the fourth highest among Canadian Provinces. However, the cost of living in British Columbia is amongst the highest in the country and continues to rise. With the change, BC is ranked #2 in Canada.
- Rates for other client types have not increased because most of these clients are employable, do not have added costs for activities of daily living and will be receiving BCEA for a shorter period of time.

#### Policy Change

- Increase the support rate for PWD clients by \$70. Rates will increase by \$70 for each PWD in the family unit.

Client	Percentage	Former Rate	New Rate
Singles	8.9 percent	\$786.42	\$856.42
Couples (1 PWD)	6.1 percent	\$1,150.56	\$1,220.56
Couples (2 PWD) – \$70 per PWD	10.5 percent	\$1,329.06	\$1,469.06
Two-parent families (1 PWD, two children)	5.5 percent	\$1,280.56	\$1,350.56
Two-parent families (2 PWD, two children) - \$70 per PWD	9.6 percent	\$1,459.06	\$1,599.06
One-parent families (two children)	6.0 percent	\$1,165.08	\$1,235.08

**MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCES**  
**Backgrounder – Supplementary Estimates**

Inter-Jurisdictional Comparisons

Province	Disabled, Single	Rank	\$70 increase	Rank
<b>British Columbia</b>	<b>\$786</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>\$856</b>	<b>2</b>
Alberta	\$855	2	\$855	3
Saskatchewan	\$690	6	\$690	6
Manitoba	\$676	7	\$676	7
Ontario	\$958	1	\$958	1
Quebec	\$804	3	\$804	4
New Brunswick	\$558	10	\$558	10
Prince Edward Island	\$654	8	\$654	8
Nova Scotia	\$715	5	\$715	5
Newfoundland	\$595	9	\$595	9
<b>Average of Other Provinces</b>	<b>\$723</b>		<b>\$723</b>	

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**Ministry of Human Resources**  
**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

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**BACKGROUND:**

This OIC will increase the monthly support allowance for family units that include persons with disabilities and/or persons aged 65 years or older. The increase will apply to family units receiving income assistance, disability assistance and hardship assistance.

**DISCUSSION/IMPLICATIONS:**

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Page 14 to/à Page 21

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s.12

**From:** [Moccia, Margaret SDSI:EX](#)  
**To:** [Moccia, Margaret SDSI:EX](#)  
**Subject:** FW: rate increase tables for pwd's and seniors  
**Date:** Monday, October 5, 2015 2:09:41 PM  
**Attachments:** [EAPWD Regulations Schedule D Table.doc](#)  
[EAPWD Regulations Schedule A Table.doc](#)  
[EA Regulations Schedule D Table.doc](#)  
[EA Regulations Schedule A Table.doc](#)

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-----Original Message-----

**From:** Dunn, Stephen MHR:EX  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 26, 2004 1:41 PM  
**To:** Blewett, Tyann MHR:EX  
**Subject:** rate increase tables for pwd's and seniors

Hi Tyann.

Attached to this note are the revised tables for Schedules A and D in both regulations. I have added a fourth summary column describing the change for a given family unit composition/age or status of applicant/recipient combination.

Can you please review to confirm that I have (1) captured all combinations and (2) that I have correctly adjusted the support allowance in each?

Once you confirm this, I will condense column 1 as much as possible.

Thanks,

S.

## EAPWD Regulations

**Schedule D Table 1**  
*(sections 1 to 6 of Schedule D)*

<b>Column 1</b>	<b>Column 2</b>	<b>Column 3</b>	<b>Net change</b>
Family unit composition	Age of applicant or recipient	Amount of support	
Sole applicant/recipient and no dependent children	Applicant/recipient is a person with disabilities	\$491.42	+ \$30
Sole applicant/recipient with one or more dependent children	Applicant/recipient is a person with disabilities	\$585.08	+ \$30
Two applicants/recipients with or without dependent children	One applicant/recipient is a person with disabilities, the other is not a person with disabilities and is under 65 years of age	\$660.56	+ \$30
Two applicants/recipients with or without dependent children	Both applicants/recipients are persons with disabilities	\$869.06	+ \$60
Two applicants/recipients with or without dependent children	One applicant/recipient is a person with disabilities, the other is not a person with disabilities but is 65 or more years of age	\$869.06	+ \$60

## EAPWD Regulations

### Schedule A Table

<b>Column 1</b> Family unit composition	<b>Column 2</b> Age or status of applicant or recipient	<b>Column 3</b> Amount of support	<b>Net change</b>
Sole applicant/recipient without dependent children	Applicant/recipient is a person with disabilities	\$491.42	+ \$30
Sole applicant/recipient with one or more dependent children	Applicant/recipient is a person with disabilities	\$585.08	+ \$30
Two applicants/recipients with or without dependent children	One applicant/recipient is a person with disabilities, the other is not a person with disabilities and is under 65 years of age	\$660.56	+ \$30
Two applicants/recipients with or without dependent children	Both applicants/recipients are persons with disabilities	\$869.06	+ \$60
Two applicants/recipients with or without dependent children	One applicant/recipient is a person with disabilities, the other is not a person with disabilities but is 65 or more years of age	\$869.06	+ \$60



## Employment and Assistance Regulation

### Schedule D Table 1

*(sections 1 to 6 of Schedule D)*

<b>Column 1</b> Family unit composition	<b>Column 2</b> Age of applicant or recipient	<b>Column 3</b> Amount of support	<b>Net change</b>
Sole applicant/recipient and no dependent children	Applicant/recipient is under 65 years of age	\$185.00	None
Sole applicant/recipient and no dependent children	Applicant/recipient is 65 or more years of age	\$261.92	+ \$30
Sole applicant/recipient and one or more dependent children	Applicant/recipient is under 65 years of age	\$296.00	None
Sole applicant/recipient and one or more dependent children	Applicant/recipient is 65 or more years of age	\$326.00	+ \$30
Two applicants/recipients and no dependent children	Both applicants/recipients are under 65 years of age	\$307.22	None
Two applicants/recipients and no dependent children	Both applicants/recipients are under 65 years of age and are persons who have persistent multiple barriers to employment	\$401.06	None
Two applicants/recipients and no dependent children	One applicant/recipient is 65 or more years of age	\$431.06	+ \$30
Two applicants/recipients and no dependent children	Both applicants/recipients are 65 or more years of age	\$461.06	+ \$60
Two applicants/recipients and one or more dependent children	Both applicants/recipients are under 65 years of age	\$401.06	None
Two applicants/recipients and one or more dependent children	One applicant/recipient is 65 or more years of age	\$431.06	+ \$30
Two applicants/recipients and one or more dependent children	Both applicants/recipients are 65 or more years of age	\$461.06	+ \$60

## Employment and Assistance Regulations

### Schedule A Table

<b>Column 1</b> Family unit composition	<b>Column 2</b> Age or status of applicant or recipient	<b>Column 3</b> Amount of support	<b>Net change</b>
Sole applicant/recipient and no dependent children	Applicant/recipient is under 65 years of age	\$185.00	None
Sole applicant/recipient and no dependent children	Applicant/recipient is under 65 years of age and a person who has persistent multiple barriers to employment	\$282.92	None
Sole applicant/recipient and no dependent children	Applicant/recipient is 65 or more years of age	\$491.42	+ \$30
Sole applicant/recipient and one or more dependent children	Applicant/recipient is under 65 years of age	\$325.58	None
Sole applicant/recipient and one or more dependent children	Applicant/recipient is under 65 years of age and a person who has persistent multiple barriers to employment	\$376.58	None
Sole applicant/recipient and one or more dependent children	Applicant/recipient is 65 or more years of age	\$585.08	+ \$30
Two applicants/recipients and no dependent children	Both applicants/recipients are under 65 years of age	\$307.22	None
Two applicants/recipients and no dependent children	Both applicants/recipients are under 65 years of age and both persons have persistent multiple barriers to employment	\$452.06	None
Two applicants/recipients and no dependent children	One applicant/recipient is under 65 years of age and the other person is 65 or more years of age	\$660.56	+ \$30
Two applicants/recipients and no dependent children	Both applicants/recipients are 65 or more years of age	\$869.06	+ \$60
Two applicants/recipients and one or more dependent children	Both applicants/recipients are under 65 years of age	\$401.06	None
Two applicants/recipients and one or more dependent children	Both applicants/recipients are under 65 years of age and both persons have persistent multiple barriers to employment	\$452.06	None
Two applicants/recipients and one or more dependent children	One applicant/recipient is under 65 years of age and the other person is 65 or more years of age	\$660.56	+ \$30
Two applicants/recipients and one or more dependent children	Both applicants/recipients are 65 or more years of age	\$869.06	+ \$60

**From:** [Moccia, Margaret SDSI:EX](#)  
**To:** [Moccia, Margaret SDSI:EX](#)  
**Subject:** FW: PWD increase - timing  
**Date:** Monday, October 5, 2015 1:51:20 PM

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**From:** Dunn, Stephen MHR:EX  
**Sent:** Monday, October 18, 2004 2:00 PM  
**To:** Jones, Greg MHR:EX  
**Cc:** DeBenedictis, Linda SDSI:EX; Mazzei, Linda MHR:EX  
**Subject:** RE: PWD increase - timing

Your timeline means that we need to get the OIC approved at the December 1 cabinet meeting.

Is there a decision note in the pipe? If so, I would like to get a copy. If not, could you please provide me with specifics of the plan?

S.

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**From:** Jones, Greg MHR:EX  
**Sent:** Monday, October 18, 2004 1:41 PM  
**To:** Dunn, Stephen MHR:EX  
**Cc:** DeBenedictis, Linda MHR:EX; Mazzei, Linda MHR:EX  
**Subject:** FW: PWD increase - timing

Stephen, can you put things in motion for a January 1 effective date. We would want the change to be applied to the Dec cheque (for Jan) but not to any imprest cheques issued for Dec.

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Wharton, Andrew MHR:EX  
**Sent:** Monday, October 18, 2004 12:43 PM  
**To:** Jones, Greg MHR:EX  
**Subject:** RE: PWD increase - timing

We need to plan on a January 1st implementation. I expect to get approval to proceed this week.

AW

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Jones, Greg MHR:EX

**Sent:** Monday, October 18, 2004 12:06 PM

**To:** Wharton, Andrew MHR:EX

**Subject:** PWD increase - timing

With the announcement on the weekend, do you have a feeling re timing. We still haven't been given the official go ahead on this one, and it's not on the list of OIC changes before Christmas...

Greg Jones

Manager,

Temporary Assistance and Employment Services Team

Social Policy and Research Branch

(250) 387-9185

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**From:** [Moccia, Margaret SDSI:EX](#)  
**To:** [Moccia, Margaret SDSI:EX](#)  
**Subject:** FW: PWD increase - timing  
**Date:** Monday, October 5, 2015 2:09:25 PM  
**Attachments:** BI 5 - PWD Rate Increase-v8.doc

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**From:** Jones, Greg MHR:EX  
**Sent:** Monday, October 18, 2004 2:07 PM  
**To:** Dunn, Stephen MHR:EX  
**Cc:** DeBenedictis, Linda SDSI:EX; Mazzei, Linda MHR:EX  
**Subject:** RE: PWD increase - timing

There is a budget paper -- attached. Once we have the approval Andrew refers to (this week), that should mean that this budget paper is approved.

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