

**ACKNOWLEDGE:**

**Steve Thomson**

**John Martin**

**Dallas Smith**, President, Nanwakolas Tribal Council

**Chief Marilyn Slett**, Costal First Nations

**Rick Jeffery**, Coast Forest Conservation Initiative

**Richard Brooks**, Rainforest Solutions Project

**Chief Wayne Sparrow**, Musqueam First Nations

The Great Bear Rainforest is not only a jewel for British Columbians – it's a global treasure.

Covering 6.4 million hectares – about the same size as Ireland...

It's the largest intact temperate rainforest left in the world.

10 years ago, we began the process to protect the Great Bear Rainforest with the Coastal Land Use Decision.

Today, thanks to input from 26 First Nations, forest companies, environmental groups, and the public...

I'm proud to say we've reached a landmark agreement.

Under the new Great Bear Rainforest land use order, the needs of the people who live here will be balanced with the need to preserve this unique ecology.

It protects 85% of old and second forest growth forest... Preserving land with cultural, ecological, and spiritual ties to the people who have lived here since time immemorial.

That includes more protected areas for freshwater ecosystems, and species as diverse as the grizzly bear and the tailed frog.

The remaining 15% will help support coastal logging and economic opportunities for First Nations, continuing their ancient tradition of making a sustainable living off the land. We have also signed reconciliation protocols to address areas of special concern to each respective First Nation.

They include a greater stake in the forest sector...  
And the end of the commercial grizzly hunt in Coastal First Nations' traditional territories.

As stewards of the land, we have a great responsibility to preserve our diverse resources, freshwater ecosystems, and wildlife habitat...

And ensure we pass on our province to future generations as magnificent and pristine as we found it.

Today, we celebrate what hard work and strong partnership can achieve and build together.

Great Bear Rainforest  
February 1, 2016  
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—END—



Thank you.

My priority, and that of my entire staff, is to continue growing a strong, diverse economy.

Because it's the only way to create jobs.

Right now, British Columbia leads Canada in economic growth. But as our neighbours and trading partners continue to struggle...

We need to keep our focus.

I'm pleased to announce Carole Taylor has agreed to take on the role of Special Advisor to the Premier.

Carole's accomplishments and experience speak for themselves:

- A distinguished career in journalism, including serving as Chair of the CBC.

- Chair of the Vancouver Port Authority and Vancouver Board of Trade
- Chancellor of Simon Fraser University.
- And of course, Carole served as BC's Minister of Finance, and on the federal Ministry of Finance advisory panel.

Carole strengthens our team even further.

Engaging with stakeholders and British Columbians from across the province, she will provide advice on key priorities and strategies.

Carole has agreed to help realize our shared vision – and to do so for an annual salary of \$1.

**Acknowledge:**

**Hon. Hedy Fry**, Co-chair of Wonderful Wednesday

**[Invite Bond, Coleman, Polak & Rustad up to the front]**

Congratulations to new and returning BC MPs.

Together, we're fortunate to represent a province with many distinct regions, diverse economic sectors, and unique geography.

Our province is full of opportunity and promise

At a time when economies are struggling across the world, in Canada, right next door in Alberta...

BC's strong, diverse and growing economy is a bright spot, growing at nearly double the rate of the rest of the country.

That didn't happen by accident.

- Three consecutive balanced budgets, with a fourth coming in February.
- In just four years we're eliminating the operating debt for the first time in 40 years.
- The lowest combined federal-provincial income taxes in North America.
- A proven strategy to expand our export markets, through trade missions and offices abroad.

Our plan is succeeding, thanks to hardworking British Columbians.

And because of all of you.

There are representatives from a wide range of sectors here tonight – from LNG to film, and from tourism to tech.

Their work is key to BC's strong, diverse and growing economy.

We've given industry the confidence to invest and create more jobs in 2015 than any other province - more than 50,000.

- The tech sector contributes over \$23 billion in annual revenue – employing over 86,000 people.
- BC tourism contributes over \$7.3 billion to BC's economy, creating 132,000 jobs.
- And there now 20 proposed LNG projects in BC, with \$20 billion invested by the industry to date.

But we must continue to work together – with both industry and our federal counterparts - to position B.C. for success.

Open dialogue will ensure BC is poised to lead the country in 2016 and beyond...

Wonderful Wednesday Reception

February 3, 2016

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**And by working together we have a chance to build something truly remarkable.**

**- END -**

**[Invite all BC MP's to come on stage to receive a flag of BC]**

**[MSB will hand the flags to PCC to present to BC Caucus]**

**ACKNOWLEDGE:**

Graham Henderson, President of Music Canada

Michael Bublé

Sarah McLachlan

They say the only true international language is music.

It's more than that – it's a source of pride.

I know I take pride in BC musicians like Bryan Adams, Sarah McLachlan, Michael Buble, and Mother Mother representing BC and Canada on the world stage.

Music may be the highest form of human expression – but for the men and women who rely on it... it's also a business.

It's not just the artists. It's the recording studios, record labels, promoters, and concert venues.

It's the music festivals that bring people here from around the world.

Music Canada's report makes it clear that music is an important source of economic diversification.

That's key. Because right now, BC's diverse and growing economy is leading the country. Last year, we created the most jobs of any province, more than 50,000.

Next week we'll introduce our fourth consecutive balanced budget.

We're on track to eliminate our operating debt for the first time in 40 years.

None of this happened by accident, but because of hardworking British Columbians, and because we have a firm commitment to controlling the size of government, and a focus on building a strong, diverse economy.



That's why we have the ability to make investments in our future.

That includes bricks-and-mortar investments like schools, roads, and hospitals...

And it also includes our diverse, vibrant music scene – one that every British Columbian wants to keep thriving.

That's why today, we're providing a \$15 million grant to support the establishment of the BC Music Fund.

It will support aspects of the music industry as different as:

- music education;
- live performances across the province;
- tour strategy and development;
- and music tourism in BC.

Because there are talented musicians in every corner of this province – who, with a little more support, might unlock their potential to be the next Canadian superstar.

Because there are tours, new venues, and events that are just getting off the ground, or need a small boost to reach the next level.

Because when they succeed, not only do they create opportunity for others to follow their dreams...

They succeed in making an entire province proud.

Thank you.

—END—

**Acknowledgements:**

**Rich Coleman**

**Bob Nicklin**, Exec. Director for Affordable Housing  
Society

Everyone deserves a safe and affordable place to call home...but some British Columbians need a little help.

BC has one of the most comprehensive and successful social housing strategies in the country. But as other parts of the country continue to struggle – demand is increasing.

That's why we've invested \$4.4 billion in affordable housing – creating almost 25,000 new units since 2001.

And today, I am pleased to announce the largest single social and affordable housing investment in BC history:

\$355 million to construct and renovate 2,000 new housing units over the next five years.

We promised to use the proceeds from our Non-profit Asset Transfer program to increase the availability of affordable housing in BC. Promise made. Promise kept.

What this means is more people will have access to long-term, stable housing options across the province.

More people will be able to set more money aside for important priorities for their families.

More people who are going through a difficult time in their lives can feel safe and secure in their own home.

Our strong, growing economy gives us the ability to make investments in affordable housing and help those in need.

That didn't happen by accident.

It's because of hard working British Columbians – and because we've stuck to our plan to control government spending.

But we can't take our eye off the ball for even a minute.

At a time when economies are struggling across the world, in Canada, right next door in Alberta...  
There's too much at risk to relax now.

We're going to stick to our plan...  
And continue to make investments in vital services to help BC families.

Because when British Columbians succeed – so does BC.

- End -

**Acknowledge:**

**Ian Crosby**, Co-Founder & CEO

**Jordan Menashy**, Co-Founder & VP, Marketing

**Adam Saint**, Co-Founder & VP, Design

**Paval Rodionov**, Co-Founder & CTO

The team here at BENCH are trendsetters, with visionary and innovative developments in automated accounting technology.

In just three years, they have grown from a team of 4 co-founders to 200 employees – and they're poised to grow more.

They're trendsetters in other ways, too. In 2013 BENCH moved to Vancouver from New York not only because they're originally from here...

But because of the opportunity here.

Just like Ian and his team at BENCH – our government has followed a disciplined plan...

And because of that plan - and hardworking British Columbians, we have Canada's strongest economy....

And our fourth consecutive balanced budget.

## Budget Highlights →

### Budget Highlights:

#### MSP

- We're enhancing the premium for MSP assistance, helping more lower-income families, seniors, and individuals qualify for reduced rates.
  - No parent will be billed for their child.
  - 335,000 more people will see their premiums reduced.
- This means 2 million people – 40% of the province – will not be charged for MSP.

#### RESP

##### BC Training and Education Savings Grant

- Moving the eligibility from 2007 or later - to 2006 or later.
- Helping 40,000 more children access post-secondary education.

#### Home Affordability

Making home ownership more accessible and affordable for more British Columbians:

- \$355 million over 5 years for 2,000 new units of social and affordable housing.

Helping young families and people who want to enter the market:

- New housing up to \$750,000 is exempt from the Property Transfer Tax.
- Working with municipalities to reduce the hidden costs in buying a home – and also to make them transparent.

#### Helping Hand Up

##### Ministry of Children and Family Development

- Additional \$217 million over three years...to support the most vulnerable children among us.

##### The Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation

- Additional \$456 million over three years.

#### Prosperity Fund

- Budget 2016 includes the first deposit in BC's Prosperity Fund - \$100 million:
  - 50% is set aside for debt.
  - 25% for an endowment.
  - 25% for flexibility for priority investments.

## SLIDE 1 – COVER SLIDE

Thank you for having me here – before I begin, I just want to acknowledge one of your guests.

For 30 years, Lynn Whitehouse has been a champion of free enterprise at the Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce. I want to thank you for everything you've done to create opportunity in Langley and across B.C.

I'm here to talk to you today about Budget 2016, some of the \$1.6 billion in new investments, and some of the new initiatives that will make a real difference in people's lives.

And some of the things we're doing to improve affordability – because as demand increases, so do costs.

## SLIDE 2 – OUR STORY



I'm not just here to talk about the numbers – I'm here to talk about our story as British Columbia – because this is our story.

The story of BC leading the country – of what we can contribute to Confederation. When have we been able to say that before?

Let me tell you about the ways we're leading.

- We created 50,000 jobs last year, first in the country.
- Our economic growth leads the country.
- Since 2011, our economy has increased by 8 per cent

### SLIDE 3 – STRONG ECONOMY

One of the best indicators of performance is credit ratings – which we discovered to our shame in the '90s.

We're the one and only province in the country rated AAA stable – the highest possible rating – by both Moody's and Standard and Poors, who referenced our "very strong financial management, exceptional liquidity, and very strong and wealthy economy."

We're on track to being able to eliminate the operating debt in 2020 – for the first time since 1975.

#### SLIDE 4 – TOWARDS A DEBT-FREE BC

It's the first big step towards a debt-free BC. But there's too much risk to take our eyes off the ball.

Right now, we're spending \$1.6 billion on debt repayments.

If we had Ontario's credit rating and debt-to-GDP ratio... We'd be paying \$4 billion – almost 10 per cent of our total budget – on debt.

Because we've stayed disciplined – and because we have weathered the global economic slowdown better than most...

We have \$2.4 billion more to invest.

## SLIDE 5 – ONLY BORROW TO BUILD

We do borrow. And we have. But we only borrow to build – not to pay the grocery bill.

And what does that mean we can do? Economic stimulus...

Without going into deficit.

- Over the next three years, the Province and BC Hydro are investing \$20 billion in capital spending, including:

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- \$2.9 billion in health infrastructure, including the Children and Women's Hospital Redevelopment project
- \$1.7 billion in K-12 education infrastructure
- \$2.5 billion in post-secondary infrastructure, including the Life Sciences labs at UBC
- \$3.4 billion in transportation projects. And we're at the table with our third.

## SLIDE 6 – JOBS

Along with BC Hydro's investments, these projects will create about 71,000 jobs over the next three years.

In fact, over 10 years, BC Hydro alone will create 110,000 jobs.

And we've done that while keeping taxes low.

## **SLIDE 7 – LOW TAXES**

We have the lowest provincial personal income taxes for anyone earning up to \$122,000.

We keep taxes as low as we can, because we believe you can do more with that money than government can. You prove that every day.

That's why we have a dividend to return to British Columbians.

## **SAVING DOLLARS FOR WHAT MATTERS**

I'd like to touch on five priorities in Budget 2016.

## **SLIDE 8 – SAVING DOLLARS FOR WHAT MATTERS**

## **MSP**

First, we're investing an additional \$3.2 billion in the Ministry of Health compared to last year.

– so that British Columbians can continue to rely on world-leading care with the best outcomes in the country, like the longest life expectancy, and the best cancer survival rate.

MSP Premiums fund a fraction of that. But MSP should be distributed fairly, equitably, and in a way that makes sense.

### **SLIDE 9 – MSP**

So starting next year, we're making some changes to help BC families with the cost of living. To make things more fair.

With the changes we've made, 2 million people – 40 per cent of the province – will not be charged for MSP at all.

**335,000 British Columbians will receive a reduction, as more lower-income families, seniors, and individuals qualify for premium assistance.**

And no parent will have to pay for their children. The rate households pay will only be based on the number of adults.

What does that mean?

## SLIDE 10 – MSP CHANGES

- A single parent with two kids could save up to \$1,296 per year.
- A couple with two kids could save up to \$720 per year.
- A single senior could save up to \$360 per year.

Some people say we should just roll it into income tax.

Here's why that's not fair. There are 4.6 million British Columbians. About a million have their employers pay for their MSP.

If we folded MSP into income taxes...we'd be taking that benefit away.

## **RESP**

That's one. Second, if you have kids, you may be aware – I hope you're aware – of the B.C. Training and Education Savings Grant.

It's a \$1,200 RESP contribution for BC kids, to help their parents start to save for post-secondary education.

To be eligible, you had to live here, and your child had to be born in 2007, or later.



## SLIDE 11 – RESP

This year, we're expanding that to children born 2006 or later.

Even if you add just \$50 per month after your child's 6<sup>th</sup> birthday – that's almost \$9,000 saved when they turn 18.

With an investment of \$39 million, we can plant the seeds of a post-secondary education for 40,000 more BC kids.

## **HOME AFFORDABILITY**

Third, we're taking steps towards making home ownership more accessible and affordable for more British Columbians.

## SLIDE 12 – HOUSING UNITS

Last week, I announced \$355 million over five years to build more than 2,000 new affordable housing units across the province – the largest affordable housing investment in BC history.

It's in addition to the almost 25,000 new units of affordable housing we've created since 2001.

But we're also taking measures to help young families and people who want to enter the market.

## SLIDE 13 – PROPERTY TRANSFER TAX

As of today – February 17 – new housing up to \$750,000 is exempt from the Property Transfer Tax. Last year, at least 60 per cent of new homes sold in Metro Vancouver were under this threshold. With these changes, a family could save up to \$13,000.

Here's how we're paying for that: the existing Property Transfer Tax is 2 per cent.

We're introducing a new threshold: for every dollar above \$2 million, the Property Transfer Tax will increase to 3 per cent.

## SLIDE 14 – HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

We're also:

- Expanding the Seniors' Home Renovation Tax Credit is expanded to persons with disabilities;
- Increasing the homeowner grant threshold from \$1.1 million to \$1.2 million;
- And we're going to work with municipalities not only to reduce the hidden costs in buying a home – but also to make them transparent.

A lot is being said about the housing market here in Vancouver – and a lot of speculation about what's driving that.

To better understand this changing market, we need more data. So as of this summer, all new property buyers – individuals, corporations, and trusts – will be required to disclose citizenship.

And I want to quickly touch on some of the recent stories on realtors.

The vast, vast majority are honest, conscientious, and professional.

A few rulebreakers shouldn't be allowed to wreck it for everyone. But I'm running out of patience.

The BC Real Estate Council has until April 15<sup>th</sup> to report back on their plan to investigate.

I'll make you this promise: if they don't figure it out, we will.

That might entail:

- Banning double-ended property sales;
- Ensuring the Real Estate Council board includes only non-practicing realtors;
- Possibly even examining whether Realtors should continue to be self-regulating.

Because we don't have time for shady operators taking advantage of people in a hot market.

It's not fair, it's not honest, and it's not right.

## **HELPING HAND UP**

That's three. Fourth, we're making significant investments to help those who need it most.

That's what government is for.

So the Ministry of Children and Family Development is receiving another \$217 million over three years...to support the most vulnerable children among us.

### **SLIDE 15 – MCFD**

This money will go towards supporting families and those in need, addressing rising cost and demand, and implementing the recommendations of the Plecas Report. It includes \$65.5 in new funding this year alone, exceeding Mr. Plecas' recommendation by \$15.5 million.

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- Children in care - \$152 million
- Childcare centres - \$11 million
- Supporting children and youth in care with special needs - \$51 million
- Facilitating adoption of kids in care - \$3 million

Ultimately, we are judged by how we take care of those among us who look to us for help.

No matter what party you support, we can all agree government has a responsibility to provide a strong, secure social safety net.

That's why the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation is receiving an additional \$456 million over three years.

SLIDE 16 – SDSI

- \$250 million for increased caseloads and income assistance
- \$36 million for CLBC
- \$170 million to increase income assistance rates for people with disabilities – an increase of up to \$77 per month, which will affect over 100,000 people.

## **PROSPERITY FUND**

Finally, it's true that global conditions are slowing down progress on LNG. But success is not for quitters. We've done everything we can do to bring this opportunity home.

But as we get there, we're making sure future generations share in today's prosperity.

## **SLIDE 17 – PROSPERITY FUND**



I'm proud to say that Budget 2016 includes the first deposit in British Columbia's Prosperity Fund... \$100 million.

It's primarily for two things: eliminating debt, and leaving an endowment for future generations.

When times are better, government has a responsibility to do just that.

So 50 per cent is set aside for debt, and 25 for an endowment.

It also leaves us with some flexibility – 25 per cent – for priority investments.

\$100 million is a relatively modest investment. But as future surpluses grow...the Prosperity Fund will grow with it.

## **RESPONSIBLE SPENDING**

And if you want to know why we're able to make that kind of investment before our first final investment decision...

If you want to know why school enrollment is up for the first time in decades...

Because we've gotten the fundamentals right.  
It starts with a diverse economy.

### **SLIDE 18 – DIVERSE MARKETS**

We only depend on the United States for just over half of our exports. More than any other province, we are the gateway to Asia.

In just the last five years...

We've seen an increase of our commodity exports by 42 per cent – up to a total of \$35.8 billion.

36 per cent of our exports go to Asia – and that number is going up.

And now we're doing the same in BC's founding industry – the forestry sector.

That's why we're investing an additional \$5 million over three years to grow exports to India – an increasingly important market.

That's how you increase revenue – by growing the economy, not government spending. And that's what we've done.

## SLIDE 19 – MIGRATION TO B.C.

That's why we are seeing more and more people from across the country head where the grass is literally greener here in BC.

In the first nine months of last year, more than 13,000 Canadians chose to make BC their home.

That's in addition to the 37,000 immigrants who arrive here from around the world each year.

50,000 people voting with their feet – every year.

There's a reason people are pulling up stakes to come here. They see hope and opportunity in BC.

## **STRONG ECONOMY**

They're not wrong. B.C. will have nearly one million job openings in the next decade.

Almost 80 per cent of those jobs will require post-secondary or trades training. That's why we invest over \$7.5 billion every year in education and training.

That's why we set 19 targets for the eight key sectors of the BC Jobs Plan, and have met 15 of them.

That's why we established the \$100 Tech Fund, to further boost our fastest-growing sector.

That's why we set up a \$15 million grant to revitalize BC's music industry, and become Nashville North.

That's why we're investing in increasing exports to India.

Because a strong economy needs people to grow – and we have a unique opportunity to make investments in our future without going into debt for our kids.

## **RISK**

But we can't take our eyes off the ball for a minute.

- In China, stock markets are closing without notice.
- The United States is only now emerging from recession.
- Here in Canada, the dollar is still on a downward trend.

Ontario, widely seen as Canada's economic engine, is emerging from the recession with the world's largest sub-sovereign debt – larger than California.

Alberta is being hammered by the price oil – and we're feeling that in the Northeast.

In a global economy, contagion can spread quickly. And it can spread even more easily across Canada.

## SLIDE 20 – CROSS CANADA DEFICITS

Having balanced budgets puts us in an exclusive club.  
Besides us, Quebec is forecasted to balance their budget.  
And that's it.

There are 100 decisions every day that go into controlling  
spending – even with a total budget of \$47.5 million.

That's why we put so much effort into negotiating public  
sector agreements under the Economic Stability Mandate.

## SLIDE 21 – BC PUBLIC SECTOR STABILITY

More than 250,000 people – 80 per cent of BC's public  
sector – have reached agreements.

## **CONCLUSION**

## SLIDE 22 – OUR STORY (COVER SLIDE)

We're going to continue on the path we've set out.

Because we believe in it.

We believe in lifting people out of poverty, not making it a little easier.

We believe in making health and education services better, not more expensive.

We believe in reaching out and growing trade, not closing our doors.

We believe the best way to ensure a better life for British Columbians is a bigger economy, not a bigger government.

The results are good so far. But we can't lose our focus.

Because we have a unique opportunity here. To write a new Canadian story.



Canada's Strongest Economy – More Opportunity for British Columbians

Vancouver Board of Trade, February 17, 2016

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**A Canada led from the shores of the Pacific.**

**Thank you.**