

ACKNOWLEDGE:

Jackie Tegart (MC)

Donna Barnett

When you look at Donna and Jackie, you see strength.

Strong women that could only have come from strong, rural communities.

They know firsthand that what is good for rural BC is good for the whole province. And that starts with the family-supporting jobs that come from major projects.

We're going to keep working to get to yes. But some of the communities that have been the strength of our province for decades have been under pressure.

They have been shouldering the pressure of low commodity prices and the global economic downturn.

That's why I asked Donna to develop a Rural Economic Development Strategy.

Building on Donna's work, we're moving ahead with immediate investments that will create jobs in the short term, and a strategy to build, strength and diversify our economy over the longer term.

That's why we are:

- Investing \$40 million to extend high-speed internet access to rural and remote B.C. communities, because it's fundamental to compete in the 21st century or lay the foundation for new investment and jobs in B.C.'s burgeoning tech industry.
- We're investing \$10 million to combat invasive species – which can help prevent \$50 million every year in crop losses.

- We are \$79.6 million over the next two years to expand and update post-secondary campuses throughout the province, including NVIT in Merritt.
- We are extending the \$25 million Rural Dividend Fund for a fourth year – and moving ahead with more than \$588,000 for seven different projects in Fraser Nicola.

Across the province, these investments are expected to support up to 26,600 direct and indirect jobs.

It builds on the over \$3.6 billion the Province has invested in rural British Columbia in the last year.

Over the coming weeks, working with rural champions like Donna and Jackie, you'll see more examples all across BC.

ACKNOWLEDGE:

Jill Earchy, Chief Growth Officer, FrontFundr
Lois Nahirney.

Jill and Lois are two of B.C.'s most important and dedicated advocates for women's equality.

Lois walks the walk. She's a key member of my Women's Economic Council, and was a driving force behind the We for She Conference in Vancouver last October.

And because of women like Jill and Lois, We for She was a success. And you can tell, not by the 1,500 people who attended, but the difference it has made.

Just look at Caitlin Kingsmill and Juliet Watts, two secondary school students from Kelowna who were there. They're here today because they were inspired to launch their own, mini version. And that inspired me.

That's important, because it's International Women's Day. And I believe that the best way to celebrate and honour today is lending a helping hand to the next generation.

That's why the Province is investing \$132,000 for a mentorship pilot program, so that members of PWEC and Minerva help young women across BC find the confidence and build the connections for success later in life.

And speaking of PWEC, Lois is going to have more company. PWEC is forming a committee of the next generation of women leaders.

Because in a changing world and economy – we can best help the next generation if we ask them how.

And finally, I am very proud to say We for She is coming back in the Fall.

Because by inspiring more promising young women like Caitlin and Juliet – we can build a better future for us all. Lois will say a few words about how we can do that.

ACKNOWLEDGE: Bill Bennett

Dee Conklin, MC and Moderator

Susan Clovechok, Executive Director

Thank you. As you know, last month our government delivered our fifth straight balanced budget.

And before Bill Bennett goes into more detail, let me first take you back to September 2011, when we introduced our first Jobs Plan.

Our plan focused on jobs, because a good job is how we look after the people we love.

When we started work on our plan, BC was 9th in the country in job growth. Today, BC is first. We've created over 202,000 jobs.

Jobs matter. Especially to those 202,000 more people building a better future for their kids.

That's why people come here...these days more than ever. I think half the cars on the road here have Alberta plates.

They come for the same reasons you or your parents or your grandparents came here.

To build a better life. And that means:

- A good job at good pay.
- A chance to own your own home.
- And keeping more of your hard-earned money.

That's why we work so hard for economic success.

And right now, because of your hard work, BC is Canada's bright spot.

Number#1 in economic growth.

Number#1 in job creation, small business ownership, home building, and employment.

But risk is all around us, with unstable economies around the world, and rising tide of protectionism in the US.

Nobody gets that better than you. Because it leads to things like low commodity prices that hurt people in rural BC, people who have carried this province on their shoulders.

That's why we announced the Rural Economic Development Strategy. It starts with an immediate \$3.6 billion investment to build vital infrastructure – which will create 26,300 jobs.

It's also a strategy for long term success, with \$40 million to expand and enhance high-speed Internet, and lay the groundwork to attract tech, and diversify our economy.

Just like BC Jobs Plan, it's a plan for interior and north communities to weather this storm.

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

It starts with jobs – that's why we've supported projects like Site C, and the 10,000 jobs that come with it.

And when you work hard, and save your money, you should have the ability to own your own home.

That's why we're partnering with qualified first-time home buyers by helping them with their down payment.

Would you rather your kids aspire to own their own homes – or live in government housing?

Of course, you can't save up for a home if government takes all your money.

That's why we are delivering \$1 billion of tax relief for middle class British Columbians, cutting MSP by 50%.

That's why we work so hard for economic success – for the same reason each one of you works so hard.

To help the people you care about build the lives they want for themselves.

People like the record 112,209 people who last year bought a home in BC.

Or the 4,400 people who started their path from welfare to work under the Single Parent Employment Initiative – 192 in the Kootenays.

Or the 23,780 people who got married last year and started their family – 145 in Invermere.

Or the 208 people who graduated from high school last year in SD#6.

Or, most importantly, the 44,405 babies born last year in BC. 21 of them are off the best possible start, lucky enough to be born in Invermere.

That's why what we're doing here matters.

But we have to stick to the plan.

Because you don't have to look very far south or east to see that we're surrounded by risk.

British Columbians are proof that the hard work and tough decisions that go into controlling government spending, and growing a diverse economy is worth it...

Every one of those new home owners, budding entrepreneurs, every one of those brand new citizens is counting on us

We owe them nothing less.

Thank you. I'm looking forward to your questions.

Sticking to our plan, making consistent and principled decisions, plus the hard work of British Columbians means BC's economy is number one – Canada's bright spot, with over 2.4 million people working, more than ever before.

Leading Canada:

- 5th consecutive balanced budget
- First in creating jobs, first in economic growth, and lowest in unemployment.
- 6,000 new businesses – 98% of them small business
- BC's Small business sector grew 1,400% above national average in 2015

Supports for Small Business

- Eliminating PST on electricity will save small and medium businesses \$50 million.
- Cutting the Small Business tax rate from 2.5% to 2%
- Reducing MSP by 50% will help small businesses that pay for their employees.
- Extending and enhancing tax credits for the tech sector, scientific research, economic development, and venture capital.
- \$87 million for an enhanced technology strategy, with more details announced next week.
- \$40 million in additional funding to extend high speed internet access to rural and remote areas.
- Extended the net-zero commitment through 2019 – when one requirement is added, another is removed across the system.
- Last year we launched 'Export Navigator' – a new pilot program that will invest \$500,000 in providing small businesses direct support to help them access new markets.

Rural Economic Development Strategy:

- Economic uncertainty and protectionism are hurting over 140 rural communities that directly depend on natural resource development.
- Our RED Strategy starts with an immediate \$3.6 billion investment to build vital infrastructure – which will create 26,300 jobs.
- For long term success, we're investing \$40 million to expand and enhance high-speed Internet, to attract tech, and diversify our economy.
- Our rural economic development strategy aligns with the recent Jobs Plan update and outlines our commitment to build our rural communities and diversify their local economies – improving competitiveness, creating sustainable growth and new jobs in rural B.C.

ACKNOWLEDGE:

Teresa Wat (introduction)

Suzanne Anton

Andrew Wilkinson

Linda Reid

Sam Sullivan

Richard Lee

Jody Wilson-Raybould

Queenie Choo

Leaving the place you were born and starting a new life in a new country is one of the most difficult, courageous decisions a person can make.

For over 40 years, SUCCESS has been helping the brave people who take that leap.

Canada was built by immigrants.

People who came here to build a better life for their children.

And because of groups like SUCCESS – as they build their own lives, they're building our province's future.

Because it's one thing to move to a new home. It's another to thrive.

And because SUCCESS has helped so many to thrive, I am pleased SUCCESS was chosen to develop an affordable housing project in River District.

The details will still need to be worked out, but I can tell you that BC Housing will step up to the plate as your partners.

I know Suzanne Anton has been working hard with Queenie to make this happen – and they're not done.

Through settlement services and other supports for new immigrants, SUCCESS has helped make BC a more diverse, vibrant, and prosperous place.

Look what's happening around the world. It's more important than ever that we stay true to our values – and keep welcoming those who come to our shores.

I want to thank you for being here tonight, and giving your support to a great cause.

Georgie Awards
March 11th 2017
CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY
Canadian Home Builders Association of BC
CEO, Neil Moody
President, Gordon Bliss

The Canadian Home Builders' Association in BC represents more than 1,600 members. CHBA members represent every area of Canada's housing industry - new home builders and renovators, land developers, trade contractors, product and material manufacturers, building product suppliers, lending institutions, insurance providers, service professionals and others.

The Georgie Awards, produced by the Canadian Home Builders' Association of British Columbia (CHBA BC), is recognized both provincially and nationally as a premier housing awards program that highlights and celebrates excellence in home building in British Columbia.

Key Messages

- In BC home construction and design, there's a high bar.
- In a demanding market, people expect excellence – and you never fall short.
- Congratulations to all tonight's finalists and winners.
- I look forward to continuing to build B.C. together.

Note:

One of the finalists in the "Best Multi-Family Mid/High Rise" category is Vanmar Construction who are nominated for a project in Kelowna called Pleasantvale. This project was done in conjunction with BC Housing.

Thank you, and welcome to the second annual BC Tech Summit. We have 5,000 people here, which is double the number that we had for our first summit last year, and I think it shows that British Columbia's reputation as a place where tech companies can grow and thrive is really gaining momentum. And thank you to the Coast Salish First Nations for welcoming us onto your traditional territory so warmly. Thanks to them and thanks to all of you for coming.

Welcome to what we think is the most beautiful place anywhere in the world. We love living here. We love that it's diverse in its population, that our communities are clean and they're safe. We love it that we are blessed with the most magnificent natural environment you'll find anywhere in the world.

This is a very beautiful place, and it offers a great lifestyle, but you know what the thing is? There are a lot of beautiful places in the world, and there are a lot of places that have an interesting lifestyle, great culture, great outdoor

opportunities, and so in British Columbia we can't just be a great place to live. We need to be a great place to do business. We need to differentiate ourselves from other places around the world. And what I want to talk about today is how in British Columbia we intend to differentiate ourselves, how we intend to take what I think is an absolutely unique moment in history to make the tech industry the centre of our economy.

Around the world we all see it every day. Countries are looking inward. That is a terrible, tragic trend, but it is also for us as Canadians and us in British Columbia an opportunity. It's an opportunity for us to do the opposite. While other countries are looking in, let's be a country and a province that is looking out, that is reaching out to the world, that is building bridges to the world, that is welcoming people in, the best and the brightest from every corner around the globe. That's how we will be different.

So at this moment in history, how will we seize it for our communities, for jobs here, for businesses here, for

people who imagine and create? Well, what you have told me is you need four things, four fundamentals. You need money, you need markets, you need ideas, and you need talent most of all.

Let's start with money. Start-ups need better access to capital. We heard you. So last year we announced a \$100m venture capital fund that's entirely government-backed. We have made our first two investments already, and we are going to continue to grow that investment in start-ups that are going to create BC jobs, companies that might not otherwise be able to find that capital, but we want to be there because we know that access to money matters.

Second, you need globally competitive taxes. We already have some of the lowest tax rates in the North America here, and this year we did more in our budget in February to lighten the burden for tech. One of things that we did was grant an augmented reality and virtual reality tax credit for entertainment purposes. That was a big change.

But wait for it. Today we're announcing that we're going to expand the augmented reality and virtual reality tax credit so that it's for more than just entertainment, so that it is for all applications in technology. And we know that this can become the world centre for AR and VR. We know that it can, so we intend to invest early with a tax regime that will invite that investment and help you grow right now, as this industry really begins to take off.

Last on this point, I am a firm believer that lightening your tax load is always a good idea, because there's one thing that I know for sure: it's that government cannot spend your money than you can. If we let you keep more of your money, I know what you'll do with it. You'll invest it in capital. You'll invest it in jobs. If we leave that money in your business and in your pockets, you'll spend that growing jobs right here in BC. And you need ideas. You need world-class universities that are going to produce the thinking and the creativity that you need to grow, because every innovative enterprise starts with the seed of a great idea.

Yesterday I hope many of you heard from Dr Santa Ono, the president of UBC. He was talking about how we can coordinate our post-secondary education and planning and seats better with what the private sector needs. You want well-trained people. I want citizens that can go into jobs that they will find fulfilling and that they will love going to every single day. That's how Santa Ono is going to help us make it happen. Jobs for people, workers for businesses -- Santa Ono is going to be BC's number one matchmaker.

We're creating a centre for data-driven innovation, a single, safe platform for government data. It's going to be protected by our very strict privacy laws here in Canada, as it should be. But it's going to allow you to get on that platform and help us spend our \$51b budget better. It'll also allow you to help us make sure that our services that we provide to citizens are always getting better and more efficient. Our progress on the data platform will be going live within the year.

Third, students need places to learn, so this year we're investing \$400m in STEM-related physical infrastructure at our universities and colleges all across BC.

Fourth, this year we are funding ten new STEM research chairs at universities and colleges in our province. These ten new chairs will attract the best and the brightest thinkers from around the world, where they will bring their ideas and their determination and their grad students to a place where they know they will be welcomed.

You need markets, and in BC we have a big market. It's called government, and we spend \$51b a year. So we need to radically change the way we do procurement in BC. That means starting up a start-up in residence program that will give BC companies a chance to co-develop inside government ideas that are going to make government more efficient, ideas for problems that government has identified but hasn't yet figured out how to fix.

We're also going to start an innovation ideas fund, which is going to do a similar thing, but it's going to invite small BC companies to come into government and help us fix problems that we don't know exist yet, a chance for small companies to get a first crack at a big market in selling their product for the very first time.

We're going to open trade offices in Seattle and in Silicon Valley, and in both of those offices we are going to work hard to attract new businesses to come to BC. We are going to sell the assets of this province down south like we never have before. But we're also going to sell BC products to the Americans, to help our companies get connected in the bigger world of technology down south. And we're going to make that easier by supporting the Cascadia Corridor, an agreement that we've made with Washington State that will allow businesses and labour to flow more seamlessly across the border between us.

Money, ideas, markets and, most important of all, the thing that every tech business needs, talent. And talent comes

from two places. It comes from at home, and it comes from abroad. So let's start with abroad. Martha Sulcadean is here.

Martha, do you want to stand up for a second?

Martha is the first female dean of mechanical engineering at a university anywhere in Canada. She's a ^{s.22}

^{s.22} from Romania. She's ^{s.22} years old. She's still talking on grad students. In her career she revolutionized the pulp and paper industry. She also designed the cooling system that keeps the turbines on airplanes that we take from melting. Thanks, Martha, for that. We all really appreciate that. That was a good thing to do. Thank goodness Martha came here from Romania, chose BC and Canada all those years ago.

And on the other end of spectrum, Meghna Lohia [sp] is here. Is Meghna nearby too? Meghna is ^{s.22} years old. There she is. She's ^{s.22} years old. ^{s.22} She's a coder, and she owns her own tech business. She started it

when she was^{s.22}. She designed, by the way, the Snapchat filter for the summit here. That's what she's doing this year. Next year when Meghna's going to come back, she won't be designing the filter for Snapchat. She's going to be designing the next Snapchat; I'm pretty sure about that.

Abroad and at home. So what are we going to do to support people at home? What are we going to do to grow more homegrown talent for you? Well, as we said in the introduction, and as I told you last year, we have begun the program to make sure that every child in BC, when they graduate from a high school here, speaks the world's universal language. That is not English, it is not French, and it is not Mandarin. The world's universal language is coding. Let's make sure that every BC child speaks that when they graduate from a high school here. And I should finish this by saying not just every child, but every boy will be a coder and every girl will be a coder. We want to make it a lot easier for tech companies in the world and in this

country to be able to hire and make sure your companies are entirely gender equal.

We need more STEM grads from post-secondary institutions, so we're announcing today that we're increasing the number of STEM grads in BC by 1,000 seats in our province per year. Those grads will be spread out at institutions all across the province. They will be in diverse fields. And you know from the work that Dr Ono and his group are doing, we will be striving to make sure that the grads we produce are ones that meet the changing needs of the industry as you evolve in BC.

Third, there are 7,000 co-op student placements today in BC. We are going to double that. There will be 14,000 co-op students in BC, and we will be providing money to companies to help you hire more grads. We'll be requiring all tech programs at universities to allow and support co-op programs in their offerings. The thing about co-ops is it's a great way for you to be able to recruit new talent, but

it's also a great way for all that emerging new talent to find their way into a great first job.

Fourth, we're increasing our investment in Mitacs by two-thirds. If you haven't heard of Mitacs, they're an organization that works all across western Canada, based at UBC, focused on finding grad students locally and from around the world and placing them in industries here in Canada, where they will solve real world problems at real world businesses. The great thing about Mitacs is it helps you, but it helps Canada, because when those kids come from overseas and they get settled here, so many of them -- most of them, in fact -- find their way to becoming citizens. They become Canadians, and they contribute to this country, just like Martha has, for the rest of their working lives.

And last, we're investing in a First Nations technology council. We need to help First Nations people find the skills that they need to get into technology as business owners and as employees. The First Nations population is

the fastest-growing demographic in Canada today. It is a vast and underutilized talent pool. We want to support that, because those communities deserve a fair shake at economic opportunity and you need more people to make sure that your businesses can grow.

So last on talent, you know we can't grow it all here. We can't produce enough Meghnas on our own, so we need to go and find some more Marthas around the world. That means that Canada must open its doors wider to highly skilled immigrants in the tech field so that we can bring more Marthas into this country to help us build this country together. I know there's lots of talk in the US about how Canada's immigration system is way better than America's, and that is absolutely true, but it's a low bar, and it's getting lower. We don't need to be better. We need to be way better than the Americans are at immigration. We need to be faster at processing and approving applications for highly skilled workers. We need to be better at listening to your needs to make sure that we are bringing the right workers in when you need them. So

Ottawa needs to expand our PNP program. Let us invite as many people as we need in technology who are highly skilled, as many as we need in this province who can come in and help us create Canadian jobs.

And why not throw out the process of application altogether? If somebody's earning a PhD at a Canadian university, let's staple their citizenship onto their PhD certificate on the day they cross the stage, so when Santa Ono gives them that certificate, they can become a Canadian citizen the exact same day. But we're working on these changes, working hard. The federal government needs to make them, and they are listening. We are hopeful.

But in the meantime, we know that we need to make some changes ourselves. We need to double the number of tech specialists that we allow under our current PNP program today, whether or not the program overall is expanded. We need to create a concierge service to help businesses large and small find your way through this arcane and

sometimes very frustratingly complex immigration system that we have in this country, and we're going to do that.

The reason we're going to do all of the things that I've talked about with money and ideas and markets and talent is because I really do believe that we are at a unique moment in BC and Canada's history. When others are turning inward, we are going to turn outward. When others are withdrawing from free trade, we are going to reach out around the world and find new connections for business and for people. When others are isolating themselves and closing their doors to immigrants, we are going to invite people into our country and welcome them here to a place that is not tolerant but a place that is embracing them, a place that says no matter where you are from, your faith, your creed, your origin, your language, you are welcome in BC. You are welcome to come and help us build not just a thriving tech industry, but to work shoulder to shoulder with Canadians who came here before you to build what we think will become the greatest country in the world. And that will be the difference for BC. We will invest in

educating all of the Meghnas and all of the Marthas, and we will say to people from around the world and people here at home: let's get to work, and let's build BC together. Thank you. [tciz, pcjc, sss, fin]

Nowruz
March 14, 2017
CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY
ACKNOWLEDGE:
Araz Rismani (emcee)
Linda Reimer
Joan Isaacs
Steve Kim

Ada Shoma (Mobarak. *aid-DAY SHOW-mah moh-BAR-ohck*)

For over 3,000 years, people have gathered together around the Haft Seen, and the fire to celebrate Nowruz – the new year, and the beginning of spring.

It is quite possibly the oldest tradition in the world. And it still has much to teach us.

This tradition has lasted so long because it reflects what is most important:
Friends.
Family.
Community.

Those values are timeless. And they are the reason we in Canada and B.C. are the envy of the world.

I wish you and your families a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year.

Nowruz Mobarak.

ACKNOWLEDGE:

Norm Letnick
Steve Thomson

Zebra and quagga mussels have never been detected in BC – and that's a good thing.

Because if these invasive species were to become established in our waters, the results could be dire.

They pose a risk to nearly every aspect of BC's freshwater ecosystems, potentially causing an economic impact of \$43 million per year.

Today, I'm announcing a \$3 million boost to our invasive mussels defence program. It includes:

- Two new inspections stations, at Yahk and Midway.
- Expanded hours – nine stations will be dawn to dusk, and the Golden station will be 24/7.
- More than doubling the number of conservation officers, from 33 to 68.
- We're providing the Habitat Conservations Trust Foundation with \$150,000 per year to boost lake monitoring for invasive mussels.
- And finally, Kilo – Canada's only multi-purpose mussel sniffing dog. You'll see him at work at inspection points and traffic stops, and he'll start work right away – because he just finished his training.

And before I have the honour of presenting Kilo with his badge, let me finish by saying these aren't the first steps we've taken to protect our waterways.

In 2015, we introduced an Early Detection and Rapid Response plan. Last year, we got to 8 inspection stations, and 33 inspections officers.

This happened because of the relentless focus on invasive species from leaders like Norm Letnick and Steve Thomson.

So far, Zebra and quagga mussels haven't been found here. We're going to do everything we can to keep it that way – and so is Kilo.

present Kilo with badge