

IN MEMORIUM

Fellow British Columbians, and members of the legislature, let us start by acknowledging the honour we share, gathering within the traditional Lekwungen territory of Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations.

Members, we begin by honouring the best among us, some of the British Columbians who shaped our identity, represented us at our best, and made us proud.

In their own way, s.13

s.13 each represented and reflected their communities – and the diversity that makes us the envy of the world.

We remember Christine Archibald who was brutally taken from her family in the attacks on London Bridge, by people fueled with hate and destined to fail in spreading their evil.

I also pay tribute to Clayton Cassidy, who tragically lost his life protecting his neighbours and the town he loved.

And recently we lost a true trailblazer in Grace McCarthy. Tough, compassionate, principled, and unflinching in the face of change – we will miss her experience and wisdom.

REFORMING OUR INSTITUTIONS

British Columbia is a place like no other. Everyone who was born here or has come here knows that this place is special and absolutely unique.

However, there are a few ways in which we s.13 be more like others in this country.

On the issue of political and democratic reform, your government acknowledges more should have been done sooner, and more needs to be done now.

Your government will pursue comprehensive reforms that will:

- Ban corporate, union, and third party donations, including donations in kind, to political parties;
- Impose a maximum donation limit for individuals to political parties, comparable to other Canadian jurisdictions;
- Ban donations to political parties from outside British Columbia, including foreign donations;
- Ban funding to a provincial political party from a federal political party;
- Restrict the role of money influencing elections through third parties;
- Ban loans to parties by any organization other than a Canadian chartered bank or credit union; and
- Apply these reforms to local government candidates and political parties.

The results that British Columbians delivered in the May election require cooperation. Your government is committed to working with all parties in the legislature.

After referenda in 2005 and 2009, there remains a desire by many members in this place to revisit electoral reform.

With the confidence of this house, your government will enable a third referendum on electoral reform s.13 It will

require extensive public consultations to develop a clear question, and will ensure rural representation in the legislature is protected.

It is vital that any referendum reflects the views of British Columbians, not just its political parties.

Additionally, your government will work with other parties to strengthen lobbyist legislation and regulations.

LEADERSHIP AND OPPORTUNITY

Members, we gather for the first time since British Columbians sent you here following an unprecedented outcome in the May election.

British Columbians want a stable government, and in sending us this result they expect us to listen and find a way to work together. They expect us to collaborate, while respecting the rules that govern our democracy.

British Columbians voted for parties that spoke to the importance of economic growth and jobs, strengthening our social programs, and protecting our environment. They have told us to find a better balance to move on all of these priorities.

The election result also exposed a growing gap in understanding between rural and urban B.C. We have an obligation to do everything we can do bridge that gap, because urban and rural communities cannot succeed without one another.

With that in mind, instead of focusing on areas of disagreement, we should reflect on who it is that we are, and what we share in common.

We are fortunate to reside in a part of the world that is unmatched in many ways. We have:

- Canada's most diverse population of First Nations and indigenous peoples whose cultures have shaped our province, and with whom we seek justice, reconciliation and partnerships in economic growth;
- An abundance of natural resources, the bedrock of British Columbia's economic success;
- A system of clean, transformational power that is the envy of the world, created by previous generations, with the opportunity to transform our economy into the cleanest in the world;

- A super, natural, and biodiverse environment, that we ^{s.1}₃ enjoy today and must protect for future generations;
- A diverse population that is open-minded, independent, and prepared to embrace change;
- A place where we have the freedom to be ourselves;
- Thriving urban communities, and strong rural communities that connect us to our land and wildlife;
- A province built on hard work, leading in jobs and economic growth, and with a financial foundation that is the envy of North America.

Your government worked diligently to create jobs and economic growth in the province. And thanks to that effort, your government s.13 a higher than expected surplus s.13 in Public Accounts in July.

This unanticipated surplus provides reason to consider moving our fixed election date to the Fall to ensure British Columbians are fully informed of our province's fiscal position before a General Election.

While other provinces have created structural deficits, B.C.'s unmatched record of five successive balanced budgets has created a structural surplus that puts us in an enviable position.

This moves up the anticipated elimination of our operating debt to 2020, one year ahead of schedule - an accomplishment not achieved since 1976.

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s.13 we reside on what was once considered the far edge of North America, and today we are quickly becoming a central focus for the world. With that comes vast opportunity, and pressure on our legislature to deliver a bright future for all, not just for those who already enjoy advantages.

The stresses from our growth are unprecedented. We must be unafraid to grasp change and harness growth through purposeful decisions. If we do not shape growth, it will shape us.

Members. Your government presides in this chamber as the party with the most seats, but not a working majority. It has a duty to present an agenda for consideration and seek the confidence of this House.

Your government has listened and is presenting an agenda not exclusive to one party, but one that includes ideas from all British Columbians that members from all three parties carry into this place.

With the confidence of this House, your government will pursue an agenda that seeks the balance British Columbians have told us find between economic, social, and environmental priorities.

CHILDCARE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Your government has listened to the call of families and employers to move further on childcare and early childhood education.

The financial pressures and time crunch on families today are real and increasing. Parents want and need to work and childcare is fundamental to that goal.

New investments cannot wait - they need to be made now.

With the confidence of this House, your government will amend the 2017 Budget to make a billion-dollar investment in childcare and early childhood education over the next four years – the single largest boost in B.C. history.

Your government's plan is guided by three core principles - delivering the highest quality care, reducing waitlists by creating more spaces, and making childcare more affordable.

This investment will be sustained over the long-term, and will enable:

- building 60,000 new child care spaces - a 50% increase over the next four years;
- covering an additional 150,000 children with either full or partial childcare subsidies;
- funding up to 4,000 new early childhood educators with \$10 million in grants and bursaries;
- exploring partnerships with school districts to co-locate new child care spaces at elementary schools.

While your government applauds the federal government's efforts to expand spaces, it will seek further help to increase supports for parents to make childcare even more affordable.

Your government welcomes discussion with members of this legislature and families to ensure this billion-dollar investment meets the needs of British Columbians in all corners of the province.

However, your government recognizes these investments are urgently needed, and will move on this as fast as possible.

FAIRER, HEALTHIER SOCIETY

As our province grows, so does the need for more services. And as British Columbians create new jobs and economic growth, we must share that success by shaping a future that improves services for those in need.

Vulnerable Citizens

Child poverty has been reduced by 50% since 2001, but more needs to be done.

A new Poverty Reduction Strategy, with a particular focus on children, will be implemented province-wide.

Budget 2017 will be amended to increase social assistance rates by \$100 a month, with a process to recommend future annual increases.

We must also strengthen investments in people who want to transition from social assistance into the workforce.

Your government will expand the Single Parent Employment Initiative to broaden supports for single parents who can only find part-time work, or who are under-employed, and want to find full time employment.

Reducing poverty includes supporting children in care. Your government will introduce a basic income support for youth aged 18 to 24 who are transitioning out of care, and will provide free tuition for all children in care.

Your government will also fully implement the recommendations in the Report on Indigenous Child Welfare from Special Advisor Grand Chief Ed John. In particular, your government will focus on:

- increasing early intervention and prevention services to keep families together;
- creating a more equitable funding formula for child welfare; and
- reunification and permanency planning.

s.13 your government will increase legal aid funding by 25 per cent, ensuring British Columbia families can better access and navigate our legal system.

Mental Health and Addictions

The opioid crisis is devastating families. British Columbia is leading North America in our response. However, despite the heroic efforts of first responders and policy makers at all levels of government, this battle continues.

Your government will redouble its efforts s.13 by increasing investments and s.13 save lives.

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In addition, an Expert Panel on Mental Health will review how services are currently deployed and recommend ways to close gaps in service delivery that sometimes make it difficult to access care.

Your government will expand the successful province-wide Foundry program - a single point of entry for young people who are experiencing mental health issues.

We know that mental health issues are often identified at school when there are experts available to recognize them. Your government will ensure all schools across the province have one person trained to identify mental health issues and refer those in need to resources.

Finally, a new Centre for Mental Health and Addictions in Surrey will be fast-tracked to get it up and running as s.13 as possible.

Health Care

British Columbians are the healthiest people in Canada. In the last decade, new and expanded hospitals have been built or are under construction in every region of our province to serve growing communities.

Your government heard more needs to be done, and will accelerate efforts to keep up with growth and replace aging infrastructure.

Work is already underway to shift our health care system towards greater preventative care, but this work must be accelerated to keep our population the healthiest in Canada. More money will be specifically focused on reducing waitlists for patients and their families.

Your government will:

- accelerate access to hip and knee procedures;
- establish wait-time guarantees;
- speed up access to MRI services;
- train 112 more General Practitioners; and
- increase the scope of practice for professions such as nurse practitioners and pharmacists.

Seniors

Our health care system is particularly important for our senior citizens - those who cared for us, and are counting on us to care for them.

Your government is committed to increasing the number of residential care beds by 500, and ensuring clear, measureable daily care hour standards are in place, monitored, and enforced in every institution.

Your government will also increase its efforts to help families who care for their aging loved ones at home by doubling the Home Renovation Tax Credit to help people make necessary home improvements. It will also create a new Respite Tax Credit, and ensure both benefits apply to families who care for loved ones with disabilities.

Medical Services Plan

With a stronger s.13 provincial balance sheet, the time has come to reduce the cost of MSP for B.C. families without shifting the burden into income taxes. This must be done while continuing to increase overall healthcare funding.

s.13 your government will cut MSP premiums by 50% for households making up to \$120,000 - saving families as much as \$900 per year.

All parties in this House share the view that MSP should be eliminated. Your government supports a review that considers how this can be done as soon as possible.

Education

Last year, the BC Teachers Federal won their court challenge at the Supreme Court of Canada. Together with teachers, your government is determined to ensure their win will be a win for every student.

Our students are already amongst the top in the world - first in reading, second in science, and sixth in math. The thousands of new teachers being hired across the province will ensure B.C. students will be even more successful.

We must also ensure student success is not limited to those who fit more easily into traditional classrooms. Your government will increase the number of educators providing instruction to students in need of extra support, whatever their unique needs.

Our students' results prove that we have an excellent educational system - a tribute to those who work within it. But with the breathtaking pace of change in the world, our education system must adapt.

s.13 your government will review the funding formula for school districts. The review will focus on supporting districts with declining enrollment, as well as ensuring fast-growing districts can keep up with growing demand sooner than current system allows.

Today, your government is announcing it will also convene a Royal Commission in Education - the first in 30 years.

The work of that Commission, struck in 1987, laid the foundation for the success of our students today.

It is the right time to convene a new Royal Commission - one that shapes the future for a new generation of learners and educators.

How do we train teachers? What do we teach? How do we fund schools? How do we engage the community? How do make sure testing and standards remain rigorous? How do we reduce conflict in the system and ensure student needs are always put first? On these points, your government welcomes advice from a future Royal Commission.

Your government will also ensure that all playgrounds requiring upgrades will be funded so parents no longer need to raise money for something that we all recognize is essential for learning.

Accessibility

British Columbia is a leader in barrier free living for our citizens. And your government will go further.

Your government will:

- increase accessibility requirements on new construction and in the design of public spaces;
- increase the minimum number of suites within a multi-unit residential building designed with basic accessibility features, ensuring these suites are distributed throughout the building and represent the types and sizes of suites otherwise available in the building.

COMMUNITIES AND TRANSIT

Transit

Transit is fundamental to shaping a sustainable, affordable future for communities. Your government heard more needs to be done, and more will.

With the confidence of this house, your government will:

- match federal funding to build rapid transit along the Broadway Corridor and in Surrey;
- match federal funding for the next phase of the mayors' transit plan; and
- repeal the requirement for new transit revenue sources to be affirmed by referendum in Metro Vancouver.

Metro Vancouver mayors will have the tools and accountability they have asked for to fund transit.

Beyond those immediate commitments, we must look further and farther.

Better transit must connect housing and employment, and must lead to more supply and density with purposeful decision-making.

Your government will immediately undertake feasibility studies to s.13 rapid transit:

- east from the Evergreen Line toward Maple Ridge and Mission;
- into South Surrey;
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- west to the University of British Columbia;
- across to the North Shore; and
- up to Squamish.

Your government will also work with Washington State to connect communities across the border to unleash the economic potential of high-speed rail to Seattle.

Your government will boost capital investment in partnership with other levels of government and the private sector to significantly expand a transit network that will transform the Lower Mainland.

Other areas of the province also experiencing growth need transit support too - like the South Island, Nanaimo, Kelowna, Kamloops, and Prince George. Your government will pursue light rail on the South Island and a passenger ferry connection Nanaimo and Vancouver.

This vision won't happen overnight, but we must be bolder in mapping out our future to shape growth.

BC Ferries is finally on a solid financial footing. They have acquired 11 new vessels since 2000, are transitioning vessels to LNG from diesel, and on-time performance has improved to 91%. Your government will carry through on its commitment to deliver fare relief for those in ferry dependent communities.

And for British Columbians looking for other modern options to get from A to B, your government will deliver on its commitments to support car and ride sharing.

While all parties in this Legislature publicly stated their support for ride sharing in the recent election, your government has heard the message that legitimate implementation concerns remain. Any proposed legislation will be referred to an all-party committee for extensive consultation with the public and stakeholders, in particular regarding boundaries and insurance.

Tolls

Your government has heard the concerns of people who are served by tolled provincial highway infrastructure. Since investments such as Trans

Canada Highway upgrades, the Sea to Sky Highway, the WR Bennett Bridge, and the Cariboo Connector are not tolled, all communities should be treated equitably.

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Your government will also work with Translink to accelerate the timetable for the replacement of the Pattullo Bridge, and to remove tolls on the Golden Ears Bridge.

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s.13 these changes are affordable with the province's strong fiscal position, without compromising our commitment to balanced budgets.

Post-secondary, ABE and ESL

Post-secondary institutions are essential to powering up the economy of the future.

Your government will create 2,000 more graduates in science, technology, engineering and math from institutions across the province. This will include new engineering schools in Kamloops and Prince George, as well as 100 new graduates at the new engineering building at SFU Surrey.

These spaces will support our students to develop the skills our economy needs to continue to grow.

And as we welcome people from around the world to make B.C. their home, we need to ensure newcomers can put their ideas, energy, and skills to work. To that end, your government will fully fund adult basic education

and ESL programs, s.13
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Housing Affordability

And while B.C. continues to grow, the benefits also come with real challenges - especially for affordability.

Despite actions that have had a real impact, housing affordability remains a particular challenge for far too many people.

Your government's singular goal is to ensure housing is affordable for British Columbians.

We all want to live in communities that are culturally and economically diverse, so we must ensure the middle class is not pushed out of urban real estate markets. Our kids want to be able to live in the communities they grew up in, and we all want to live in communities where our kids can live too.

Last year, your government invested \$900 million into building new affordable supportive housing across the province. People will begin to move into these 5,000 new units over the coming months.

The single most important action governments can take to make housing more affordable is to work with local governments and the private sector to increase supply.

With the confidence of this House, your government will work with local governments and the private sector to increase the supply of family and starter housing for middle income earners, especially along new transit lines and corridors.

Your government will build 50,000 units of new housing across the province over 10 years that will go into a new Rent-to-Own home program available to middle class families. The program will help middle class renters grow

equity through their monthly rent payments until they are in a position to own the home.

With the confidence of this House, your government will work with and support municipalities to remove obstacles and eliminate backlogs to speed up the construction of new housing supply, especially for families.

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Addressing housing affordability rests with all levels of governments. Your government will bring together and welcome the ideas from all parties and
s.13 at a Housing Summit that will be convened this Fall.

Strong Communities

The wealth of our province has always depended on the understanding that the future of urban and rural communities is inextricably linked - one cannot succeed without the other.

And although most of our population lives in thriving urban centres, we must never forget that those who live in smaller communities make as big an impact on our province. Rural communities are uniquely connected to the land and our resources.

This connection between urban and rural is why B.C. has succeeded, and this election shows why we must redouble our efforts to bridge the divide.

With a strong economy and the strongest balance sheet in Canada, your government will double the Rural Economic Dividend, returning more resource revenue to the rural communities responsible for so much of our province's wealth.

Supporting rural communities also means making sure the industries they depend on remain strong.

British Columbia's forest industry built our province. Today, our forest products are building houses and towers around the world.

Your government will increase its efforts to promote the use of B.C. wood abroad, and will fight to defend B.C. workers in the forest industry from U.S. protectionism by every means at its disposal.

In the interim, B.C. will pre-purchase wood for construction of public housing at home.

Your government will work to open eight new mines by 2022, and will ensure it bolsters B.C.'s world leading responsible mining standards with \$18 million to improve mine permitting, oversight, compliance, and enforcement.

Food security also matters in British Columbia - it is an issue that bridges the urban-rural divide. As we continue to grow, we need to protect and preserve agricultural land. s.13

Your government will:

- double the Grow Local program and make it permanent;
- bring an additional 91,000 hectares of agricultural land into production by 2020;
- activate an all-party select standing committee to study how B.C.'s agricultural land can be used and stewarded; and
- ensure all high-quality farmland lost as a result of the Site C project is replaced with comparable land in other parts of the province.

Finally, British Columbia boasts some of the world's richest and largest natural gas reserves. This gives us a unique opportunity to displace coal power and other dirtier forms of fossil fuels around the world.

A new LNG industry has included First Nations from the ground floor, through a bottom-up process of consultation. LNG will be an unprecedented opportunity for First Nation communities across British Columbia, helping lift families out of poverty and strengthening their ability to shape the future of their choosing.

The first indigenous Cabinet minister elected to this place who carries a government portfolio is responsible for shepherding the future of this industry. After 146 years since this legislature's founding, this is long overdue. He will carry the voice of Indigenous peoples who demand to be a full partner in economic opportunity into this place.

Whether it is LNG, mining, forestry, aquaculture, renewable power, tourism or other industries where partnerships are being formed, s.13

s.13 Over 400 economic and reconciliation agreements have been signed since 2013, and we all still have so much potential to realize together.

s.13 yesterday was National Aboriginal Day – a day that Canadians recognize and celebrate the outstanding contributions of Indigenous peoples.

It is a reminder of the hard and essential work of reconciliation that your government is committed to, nation-to-nation.

There is still much work ahead, and we must travel this journey together.

ENVIRONMENT AND INNOVATION

Clean Energy

British Columbians are gifted with vast clean energy opportunities including hydro, wind, and solar.

We have an enviable system of hydro power built by generations before us who had the vision to plan not just for their needs, but for our future. Without them, we would be burning fossil fuels to generate our electricity today.

And now, we are called on as a generation to tackle climate change by shaping a low-carbon future.

We must build on a previous generation's vision by electrifying our economy with clean hydro power to realize this goal.

61% of B.C.'s greenhouse gas emissions come from Metro Vancouver, a third of which comes from transportation.

Your government is committed to an ambitious emissions-free target for all new non-commercial vehicles registered in Metro Vancouver by 2035, advancing the previous goal of 2050 by 15 years.

This is an ambitious target, and BC Hydro's supply of clean power cannot meet this capacity today.

That's why this historic transition requires plentiful, reliable and affordable clean electricity – born in British Columbia.

More sources of renewable energy like wind, solar, and geothermal will help. But they will not be enough.

Site C gives us the opportunity for an abundance of clean energy, allowing us to meet our obligation to transition our economy from carbon to fight climate change.

Further, your government will also direct BC Hydro to immediately begin consultations with private sector clean energy producers, First Nations, and communities to support community power opportunities including wind, solar, and geothermal.

Your government will also work with the governments of Alberta and Canada for a strengthened clean electricity intertie between British Columbia and Alberta to displace thermal coal with clean hydro power across the Rocky Mountains.

Climate Change, Carbon Tax and PST Reduction

British Columbia is a leader in the fight against climate change. Despite opposition at the time, we were the first jurisdiction in North America to put a price on carbon. Our carbon tax framework has been recognized by global institutions as one of the best in the world.

Canada has been clear in its desire to see all provinces implement a \$50/tonne carbon tax by 2022, outlined in the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change. Your government will meet this goal by raising the carbon tax by \$5/tonne per year starting in 2019, up to a total of \$50/tonne by 2022.

A made-in-B.C. approach will stand firm on the principle of revenue neutrality - s.13

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For all future carbon tax increases, the provincial sales tax will be reduced by a corresponding amount.

Your government will take the advice of the climate leadership team to protect workers and businesses in energy intensive trade exposed industries by ensuring new costs from the carbon tax are offset by other taxes, so companies with strong ties to B.C. have good reasons to innovate and reduce their emissions.

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Your government will also increase forest salvage and move toward the goal of banning slash burning, ensuring this creates new economic opportunities in our forest towns without hurting workers.

Enhancing BC Parks

Visiting our provincial parks is the quintessential, affordable B.C. family vacation.

British Columbia has assembled the third-largest parks system in North America. These are places for us to celebrate, places for families to reconnect, and places for the world to discover.

Your government created and funded a bold BC Parks Future vision. With the confidence of this House, your government will add \$50 million over five years to B.C.'s parks budget. This will create more campsites, raise the standard of our park facilities, and create a youth rangers program that will add s.13 staff in our parks between May and September.

Strengthened Environmental Protection and Wildlife Management

Your government has heard the call for more frontline resources to protect our environment and wildlife, and will:

- increase funding to hire more conservation officers across B.C.; and
- implement a wildlife management plan that ensures sustainable populations and protects our biodiversity.

In addition, your government will move to protect the health and safety of B.C.'s unique environment by reviewing our system of professional reliance to ensure public confidence is maintained.

CLOSING

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Your government's core principles remain. s.13

- created more jobs than anywhere in Canada since the start of the BC Jobs Plan;
- a record of five consecutive balanced budgets thanks to careful management;
- a growing economy that is the envy of Canada;

These are foundations built by the hard work of British Columbians that allow us to care for each other and bridge the urban-rural divide.

With the means to do more thanks to B.C.'s success, we must.

British Columbians s.13 a better balance between economic, social, and environmental priorities. This agenda is a sincere effort to meet that s.13

While we do not always agree on the best path forward, we all recognize that British Columbia is a unique place with qualities unmatched around the world.

We are experiencing a time of stress from growth and change. s.13
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Together, we must ensure we harness the opportunity before us to s.13 the future we all want for British Columbia.