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MINISTRY OF LABOUR

The mission of the Ministry of Labour is to promote fair, healthy, and safe labour and employment relationships in support of a strong, sustainable, and inclusive economy and to ensure provincial employment standards reflect the needs of British Columbians.

MINISTRY SUMMARY

(\$000)

	Estimates 2023/24 ¹	Estimates 2024/25
VOTED APPROPRIATION		
Vote 38 — Ministry Operations.....	21,489	25,407
OPERATING EXPENSES	<u>21,489</u>	<u>25,407</u>
CAPITAL EXPENDITURES ²	3	3
LOANS, INVESTMENTS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS ³	—	—
REVENUE COLLECTED FOR, AND TRANSFERRED TO, OTHER ENTITIES ⁴	—	—

NOTES

¹ For comparative purposes, figures shown for the 2023/24 operating expenses; capital expenditures; loans, investments and other requirements; and revenue collected for, and transferred to, other entities are restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2024/25 *Estimates*. A reconciliation of restated operating expenses and capital expenditures is presented in Schedule A.

² A listing of estimated capital expenditures by ministry is presented in Schedule C.

³ A summary of loans, investments and other requirements by ministry is presented in Schedule D.

⁴ A summary of revenue collected for, and transferred to, other entities by ministry is presented in Schedule E.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR

SUMMARY BY CORE BUSINESS

(\$000)

	2023/24	2024/25 ESTIMATES		
	Net	Gross	External Recoveries	Net
OPERATING EXPENSES				
Core Business				
Labour Programs.....	19,618	60,336	(37,014)	23,322
Executive and Support Services.....	1,871	2,440	(355)	2,085
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	21,489	62,776	(37,369)	25,407
CAPITAL EXPENDITURES				
	Capital Expenditures	Capital Expenditures	Receipts and P3 Liabilities	Net
Core Business				
Labour Programs.....	3	3	—	3
TOTAL	3	3	—	3

MINISTRY OF LABOUR

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(\$000)Estimates
2023/24Estimates
2024/25

VOTE 38 — MINISTRY OPERATIONS

This vote provides for the programs, operations, and other activities described in the voted appropriations under the following core businesses: Labour Programs and Executive and Support Services.

LABOUR PROGRAMS

Voted Appropriations

Employment Standards.....	17,702	21,263
WorkSafeBC Funded Services.....	1	1
Labour Policy and Legislation.....	1,915	2,058
	<u>19,618</u>	<u>23,322</u>

Voted Appropriations Description: This sub-vote provides for services promoting harmonious labour and employment relations through the administration of the *Workers Compensation Act*, the *Employment Standards Act*, the *Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act*, and the *Labour Relations Code*; the operations of the Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal, Compensation Advisory Services, and other employment and labour relations initiatives; and worker support programs. This sub-vote also provides for legislative and policy support for activities described within this sub-vote. Costs associated with the Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal and Compensation Advisory Services are fully recovered from the accident fund established pursuant to the *Workers Compensation Act*. Costs may also be recovered from ministries, Crown corporations and agencies, and parties external to government for other activities described within this sub-vote.

EXECUTIVE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Voted Appropriations

Minister's Office.....	718	732
Corporate Services.....	1,153	1,353
	<u>1,871</u>	<u>2,085</u>

Voted Appropriations Description: This sub-vote provides for the office for the Minister of Labour and for the Parliamentary Secretary for Labour. This sub-vote also provides for executive direction of the Ministry of Labour; and administrative services for the operating programs of the Ministry of Labour, including financial administration and budget coordination, strategic and business planning and reporting, human resources, office management, accommodation, and information systems, some of which are provided by the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. Costs may be recovered from ministries, Crown corporations and agencies, other levels of government, and parties external to government for activities described within this sub-vote.

VOTE 38 — MINISTRY OPERATIONS

21,489

25,407

MINISTRY GROUP ACCOUNT CLASSIFICATION SUMMARY

GROUP ACCOUNT CLASSIFICATION

Salaries and Benefits	42,945	49,572
Operating Costs	11,675	12,663
Government Transfers	59	90
Other Expenses	456	456
Internal Recoveries	(5)	(5)
External Recoveries	(33,641)	(37,369)
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES.....	<u>21,489</u>	<u>25,407</u>

Budget 2024/25 Questions and Answers

Contents

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5. Does *Budget 2024* provide any incremental funding to address the backlog of Workers’ Complaints under the Employment Standards Branch? 3

6. Has there been any budget increases to the WorkSafe BC Funded programs in Budget 2024?4

1. Why has the Ministry of Labour’s budget increased by \$3.918 million from 2023/24

The Ministry of Labour’s 2024/25 budget is \$25.407million, an increase of \$3.918 million from the 2023/24 Restated Estimates budget of \$21.489 million.

Labour’s overall budget increase of \$3.918 million is due to the following:

- A base budget increase of \$3.135 million to support the Employment Standards Branch with 40 additional FTEs and resources to manage incoming and historical complaints (backlog reduction). This includes the 33 that we announced last year, plus an additional 7.
- \$796,000 increase is attributed to a base budget lift for compensation increases under the Shared Recovery Mandate.
- \$13,000 decrease resulting from a decrease in budget for Supplementary Salary costs in the Minister’s Office (See Note #2).

2. Why has the Ministers’ Office budget increased by \$14,000 in 2024/25?

The Minister’s Office received an increase of \$27,000 for compensation increases under the Shared Recovery Mandate. This is offset by a decrease of \$13,000 in Supplementary Salary Costs.

- In 2023/24, the Minister’s Office budget was increased by \$80,000 to better align the Minister’s Office budget with current staffing complement and bring budgets in line with approved budgets set by the Office of the Premier. This

included a one-time \$13,000 increase in Supplementary Salary Costs to support parental and sick leaves within the Ministers' Office. The decrease is a result of the \$13,000 being removed from the Base Budget in 2024/25.

Any questions on the review of Minister's Office budgets should be directed to the Minister of Finance.

The Minister's Office budget includes funding for the Legislative salaries of the Minister and Parliamentary Secretary as well as budget for five support staff. There is no change to the actual staffing complement from the prior year.

3. How is the **Labour Relations Board** funded?

- B.C.'s Labour Relations Code provides important protections for workers such as the right to unionize and job security when a unionized business changes ownership.
- The Labour Relations Board (LRB) is an administrative tribunal whose job is to resolve issues that arise under the Labour Relations Code (the Code).
- The LRB transferred to AG in 2017/18 as part of the Tribunal Transformation Initiative. This initiative consolidated various tribunal budgets (excluding the Workers' Compensation Administrative Tribunal) to ensure tribunal processes are efficient, costs effective and meet users' needs.
- Any questions relating to the LRB budget should be directed to the Ministry of Attorney General (AG).

4. Is there continued funding for the **Bridging to Retirement Program** in 2024/25?

- *Budget 2022* provided more than \$185 million over three years to bring forth coordinated and comprehensive supports to help forestry workers and contractors, industry, communities, and First Nations to adapt and respond to impacts of old growth deferrals.
- \$30.7 million of this funding was allocated to 2024/25. Part of this funding is for the Bridging to Retirement program (Program).
- The Program supports eligible forestry workers and contractors 55 years or older to help them to transition to retirement and create jobs for younger or junior employees in working mills.
- The Program is open for impacted and voluntary workers of B.C. forestry mills, forestry-dependent contractors, and their employees who are impacted by the old growth deferral process.

- Previous Years Funding - Bridging to Retirement Program:

In \$ Millions	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23**	Total
ERBP Budget (Funded through FOR)	20.000	16.000	4.000	-	40.000
Bridging to Retirement Program	-	-	-	Government Financial	Government
StrongerBC Funding	-	18.000	-	-	18.000
Total Budget *	20.000	34.000	4.000	Government Financial	Government
Actual Spend 2019/20 to 2022/23	10.822	33.715	2.321	12.976	59.834
Variance	9.178	0.285	1.679	38.624	Government

Cabinet Confidences

** In Public Accounts, actuals show under contingencies funding as \$12.876M. The difference is due to Ministry base budget savings of \$100k.

Cabinet Confidences

- Current Years Funding – Bridging to Retirement Program:
Actual spending for 2023/24 will be released this Summer with the Public Accounts.

5. Does *Budget 2024* provide any incremental funding to address the backlog of workers' complaints under the Employment Standards Branch?

- As a demand-driven complaint process, the Employment Standards Branch's (Branch) workload is variable and reflects what is happening in BC's workplaces; the pandemic has increased demand by workers and employers for access to the Branch's services. In addition, legislative and regulatory improvements made since 2018 have made the Branch more accessible to people who need it.
- Supporting BC's workers and employers by investigating and resolving complaints and eliminating the historical complaints (backlog) is a priority for the Ministry.
- *Budget 2023* provided the Ministry with a base budget increase of \$3.135M in 2023/24, \$3.984M in 2024/25, and \$4.821M in 2025/26 and subsequent years for additional staff (33) and resources to manage incoming and historical complaints (backlog reduction).
- *Budget 2024* provides a further \$5.2 million over three years (see table below for breakdown) to hire an additional 7 staff for a combined total of 40

additional Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) and associated operating costs.

Budget and FTE Increases by Year								
	2023/24		2024/25		2025/26		2026/27	
	Budget	FTEs	Budget	FTEs	Budget	FTEs	Budget	FTEs
<i>Budget 2023</i>	3.135M	20	3.984M	27.5	4.821M	33	4.821M	33
<i>Budget 2024</i>			2.286M	12.5	1.449M	7	1.449M	7
Total Increase	3.135M	20	6.270M	40	6.270M	40	6.270M	40
Total Budget	17.702M	182	21.263M	182	21.263M	182	21.263M	182

6. Has there been any budget increases to the WorkSafe BC Funded programs in Budget 2024?

WorkSafeBC (WSBC) Funded Programs gross operating budget for 2024/25 is \$36.240 million, an increase of \$3.728 million from the 2023/24 Restated Estimates budget of \$32.512 million.

All costs are fully recovered from the accident fund established pursuant to the Workers Compensation Act.

The gross budget increase of \$3.728 million is due to the following:

- \$962,000 increase for compensation increases under the Shared Recovery Mandate.
- \$762,000 is attributed to the Appointee Remuneration Committee’s support for the Workers’ Compensation Appeals Tribunal to re-classify Level 4 appointees to Level 5.
- \$1.566 million for 8 additional FTEs to support increased demand for services under the Workers’ Advisers’ Office.
- \$438,000 to align with operating requirements to support anticipated increases in contracts, information systems, building occupancy costs, etc.

MANDATE LETTER COMMITMENTS

Mandate Letter Commitments	Completed or Underway	Status
Minister Harry Bains Mandate Letter		
1. Work to improve the timeliness of employment standards dispute resolution.	Underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2019, government began modernizing the Employment Standards Branch to make it easier for people to access needed services. • As barriers were removed, the volume of complaints rose. • To address the increase in complaints, the Ministry has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ developed new, streamlined intake and triage processes to provide better outcomes for workers, ◦ improved the use of technology as part of its overall digital transformation strategy, and ◦ improved information gathering. • As of February 12, 2024, the backlog was reduced from Government Financial Information to 4,650. • The branch is actively recruiting and onboarding new permanent and temporary staff in all roles that support complaints processing, including Data Integrity Clerks, Employment Standards Officers, Industrial Relations Officers and Decision Makers. • Budget 2023 was tabled in the Legislature on February 28, 2023, and included an increase of nearly \$12 million over three years for the Employment Standards Branch (ESB). • This funding will increase the capacity of ESB, including the hiring of as many as 33 more full-time staff in response to the growing demand for its services, including resolving disputes between workers and employers, providing guidance on BC’s employment standards, and processing registrations for employers who wish to hire temporary foreign workers through the federal Temporary Foreign Worker Program. • The Employment Standards Branch budget for 2023/2024 is \$17.702 million, an increase of \$3.692 million from the 2022/23 budget of \$14.010 million. • Approximately \$3 million was received to support the branch’s sustainable complaints management strategy, and the remainder is attributed to compensation increases under the Shared Recovery Mandate.

Mandate Letter Commitments	Completed or Underway	Status
Minister Harry Bains Mandate Letter		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget 2023 provides an increase of almost \$12 million over three years to support the Employment Standards Branch’s sustainable complaints management strategy including to eliminate the historical complaints. Funding was received to support incremental hiring of 33 Full Time Equivalent (FTEs) and supporting operating costs: • Increase of approximately \$3.135* million in 2023/24 to support the hiring of 20 FTEs • Increases of \$3.984* million in 2024/25 to support hiring 8 FTEs for a total of 28 FTEs • Increase of \$4.821* million in 2025/26 to support hiring 5 FTEs for a total of 33 FTEs <i>(See Estimates Note #21 for details regarding Employment Standards Branch Backlog Reduction.)</i>
2. Continue engaging with affected parties on implementation of the recommendations of the Industrial Inquiry Commission regarding Forest Industry Successorship.	Underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Industrial Inquiry Commission’s (IIC) report and recommendations regarding successorship in the forestry sector was publicly released in July 2022. The IIC recommended expanding the Code’s successorship provisions so that they apply when Government initiates a transfer of harvesting rights, including to First Nations. • Following the public release of the report, the Ministry engaged with BC First Nations and forest sector employee organizations and employers by inviting them to make submissions regarding the IIC report and their recommendations. • In Fall 2022, the Ministry held five information sessions for interested First Nations, primarily attended by First Nations forestry staff. In addition, the Minister of Labour met directly with the First Nations Leadership Council, and Ministry staff engaged with the BC Alliance for Modern Treaty Nations. <p>Cabinet Confidences</p> <p><i>(See Estimates Note #29 for details of the IIC regarding Forestry Successorship.)</i></p>

Mandate Letter Commitments	Completed or Underway	Status
Minister Harry Bains Mandate Letter		
3. Work with WorkSafeBC to ensure meaningful programs are in place to support the return of injured workers to their workplaces.	Underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill 41, the <i>Workers Compensation Amendment Act (No. 2), 2022</i>, added new legal duties for employers to maintain employment for injured workers, and for the worker and employer to cooperate in an injured worker’s return to worker. • These provisions are now in force as of January 1, 2024. WorkSafeBC undertook policy and program development work to support the successful implementation of these duties. <i>(See Estimates Note #43 for details of Bill 41 implementation.)</i>
4. Support WorkSafeBC, with involvement of the Minister of Health and the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, to develop better options for chronic work-related pain, including improving pain management practices for injured workers and providing treatment on demand to those with chronic pain as a result of workplace injuries.	Underway	<p>Cabinet Confidences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WorkSafeBC has engaged stakeholders consistently in the review process to inform policy development. WorkSafeBC consulted on proposed policy amendments in 2023 and work is continuing in 2024. • In 2024, WorkSafeBC is working on assembling an expert panel to assist with the evaluation of the approach to rating permanent chronic pain. <i>(See Estimates Note #42 for further detail.)</i>
5. Ensure our labour law is keeping up with modern workplaces through the upcoming review of the Labour Code, providing stable labour relations and	Underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Labour Relations Code (the Code) was last reviewed in 2018 by the Labour Relations Code Review Panel (the Review Panel), as appointed by the Minister of Labour (the Minister). The Review Panel recommended a number of amendments to the Code, several of which were implemented in 2019. This includes amendments requiring the Minister to, every five years, appoint a committee of special advisors to review the Code and make recommendations. This is to ensure that there are regular and transparent reviews of the Code that include public consultation.

Mandate Letter Commitments	Completed or Underway	Status
Minister Harry Bains Mandate Letter		
supporting the exercise of collective bargaining rights.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As such, in Feb 2024 the Minister appointed a committee of special advisors to review the Code and make recommendations for amendments. The committee is tasked with consulting interest groups and Indigenous parties across the province and reporting back to the Minister by June 30, 2024. <i>(See Estimates Note #30 for further detail)</i>

Mandate Letter Commitments	Completed or Underway	Status
Minister Janet Routledge Mandate Letter		
<p>1. Support development and maintenance of relationships with organized labour to ensure their feedback is considered in policy development.</p>	<p>Underway</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parliamentary Secretary Routledge is meeting with labour stakeholders for their feedback on specific labour policy issues (e.g., employment standards for app-based ride-hail and food delivery workers).
<p>2. Continue work to develop a precarious work strategy that reflects the diverse needs and unique situations of today’s workers and workplaces.</p>	<p>Underway</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ministry has prepared a work plan for Parliamentary Secretary Routledge. The ministry has implemented a number of initiatives over the past six years as part of the precarious work strategy, including increasing the minimum wage, improved workers’ compensation benefits and support for workers, workplace safety measures, enhanced employment standards and access to the Employment Standards Branch, and improved access to collective bargaining. <p>Advice/Recommendations; Cabinet Confidences</p>
<p>3. Propose employment standards and other protections relevant to app-based ride hail and food delivery drivers.</p>	<p>Underway</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Fall 2023, Bill 48, the <i>Labour Statutes Amendment Act, 2023</i>, was passed. Bill 48 amends the <i>Employment Standards Act</i> and the <i>Workers Compensation Act</i> to allow for the development of regulations that will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> entitle app-based ride-hail and food delivery workers to minimum employment standards specifically designed to address the working conditions found in this sector and respond to the priority concerns identified during consultations; and provide that these workers are subject to workers’ compensation and occupational health and safety coverage. The regulation development process is currently underway. Ministry staff are currently continuing engagement with app-based workers, platform companies, labour advocates, and business associations, as they develop proposed minimum employment standards for this sector. WorkSafeBC is leading the consultation on implementing workers’ compensation and occupational health and safety coverage.

Mandate Letter Commitments	Completed or Underway	Status
Minister Janet Routledge Mandate Letter		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>(See Estimates Note #51 for further detail)</i>
4. Investigate the feasibility of a government-backed collective benefit fund and access to a voluntary pooled-capital pension plan for workers who do not otherwise have coverage.	Underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ministry has prepared a work plan for Parliamentary Secretary Routledge. • Timing for the feasibility review is still to be determined.
5. Review labour policy innovations in other jurisdictions related to the emerging economy and precarious work to identify trends that may inform the development of labour policy in British Columbia.	Underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to inform the development of employment standards and other protections for app-based ride-hail and food delivery workers, the ministry has prepared a detailed scan of approaches taken in other jurisdictions with regard to these workers. • Trends and innovations in other jurisdictions will continue to be monitored in order to ensure that the information contained in the scan remains relevant and timely, and to alert BC to any other labour policy issues of interest that may arise. • The ministry proactively examines and considers innovations and trends in other jurisdictions to inform all active labour policy reviews.
6. With support from the Parliamentary Secretary for Labour, help more people to choose jobs in the trades, including by continuing the implementation of Skilled Trades Certification and building on its success through considering other	Underway.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ministry has prepared a work plan for Parliamentary Secretary Routledge. • Requires engagement with the Ministry of Post Secondary Education and Future Skills on timing and next steps.

Mandate Letter Commitments	Completed or Underway	Status
Minister Janet Routledge Mandate Letter		
trades that could be included.		

MANDATE LETTER COMMITMENTS PRIOR TO DECEMBER 2022 TRANSITION

Mandate Letter Commitments February 2022	Completed or Underway	Status
Minister Harry Bains Mandate Letter		
1. Continue a collaborative approach in working with representatives of workers and employers to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on people and businesses.	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the pandemic the Ministry worked with worker and employer representatives, other ministries and governments, WorkSafeBC and the Employments Standards Branch to develop legislation, regulations and programs to support workers and employers to address the impacts of COVID-19. • This included the development of workplace safety plans, job-protected leaves related to COVID-19 and vaccinations, and temporary lay-off extensions.
2. Continue working with the federal government on a paid sick leave program to protect workers and businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.	Underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BC supported Canada’s initiatives for federal leave programs related to COVID-19. • BC is leading the provinces and territories in establishing five days of employer-paid permanent sick leave per calendar year. • The Minister and ministry continue to engage with federal, provincial and territorial colleagues on paid sick leave from a national perspective.

Mandate Letter Commitments February 2022	Completed or Underway	Status
Minister Harry Bains Mandate Letter		
3. Create new consultative mechanisms to engage employer and worker representatives in consideration of any changes proposed to workplace legislation to ensure the widest possible support.	Underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ministry consults with worker and employer representatives in appropriate ways on a project-by-project basis, including group and individual meetings, roundtables, on-line surveys and opportunities to make written submissions.
4. Once the minimum wage reaches \$15.20 per hour in June 2021, provide predictability for employers and workers by tying the minimum wage to the rate of inflation.	Underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since reaching \$15.20 per hour in June, 2021, B.C.'s minimum wage has increased annually in accordance with the previous year's average increase in the Consumer Price Index. In 2022 the increase was 2.8%. In 2023 the increase was 6.9%. • Alternate regulated minimum wage rates (including minimum agricultural piece rates) received proportionate increases. • Government has committed to exploring options for establishing the annual increases, tied to inflation, in the Employment Standards Act. • <i>(See Estimates Note#19 for further detail)</i>
5. Ensure that every worker has the right to join a union and bargain for fair working conditions.	Underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2018, the Labour Relations Code Review Panel reviewed the <i>Labour Relations Code</i> (the Code) and recommended amendments. Based on these recommendations, Bill 30, the <i>Labour Relations Code Amendment Act, 2019</i>, amended the Code to improve workers' ability to exercise their right to join a union and bargain for fair working conditions by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improving the fairness of the certification process by shortening the time between certification applications and the secret ballot vote (from 10 calendar days to 5 business days), strengthening the restrictions on employer communication during an

Mandate Letter Commitments February 2022	Completed or Underway	Status
Minister Harry Bains Mandate Letter		
		<p>organizing campaign, and expanding the Labour Relations Board’s ability to impose certification in response to employer unfair practices; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Extending union successorship rights (i.e., the right of a union to maintain its certification when a business is sold or transferred) to situations where contracted services in specified sectors are retendered to another service provider. ● In 2022, Bill 10, the <i>Labour Relations Code Amendment Act, 2022</i>, built on these changes by implementing a single-step union certification system. This allows workers to join a union when a clear majority of 55% of all workers indicate they wish to do so, instead of requiring a secret ballot vote, and reduces opportunities for employer interference. <p>Advice/Recommendations</p>
6. Increase the number of WorkSafeBC caseworkers and increase workplace safety inspections.	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● By 2022, there were 383 prevention and investigations officers budgeted at WorkSafeBC. This is a 51% increase from a decade earlier (254 officers in 2013). ● WorkSafeBC employs various enforcement tools to ensure compliance with the <i>Workers Compensation Act</i> and the <i>Occupational Health and Safety Regulation</i>, including orders, warning letters, stop-work orders, compliance agreements, and citations and penalties, where necessary. ● Enforcement resources are focused on industries and employers at greatest risk for serious injuries, fatalities, or occupational disease. ● In 2022, WorkSafeBC conducted approx. 53,000 workplace inspections, issued almost 34,000 orders for health and safety violations, and imposed 377 administrative penalties on employers, totalling \$7.1 million. <p>Advice/Recommendations</p>

Mandate Letter Commitments February 2022	Completed or Underway	Status
Minister Harry Bains Mandate Letter		
7. In partnership with WorkSafeBC and with support from the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, work to develop better options for chronic work-related pain, including improving pain management practices for injured workers and providing treatment on demand to those with chronic pain as a result of workplace injuries.	Underway	<p>Cabinet Confidences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WorkSafeBC has engaged stakeholders consistently in the review process to inform policy development. WorkSafeBC consulted on proposed policy amendments in 2023 and work is continuing in 2024. • In 2024, WorkSafeBC is working on assembling an expert panel to assist with the evaluation of the approach to rating permanent chronic pain. <i>(See Estimates Note #42 for further detail.)</i>
8. Support the work of the Minister of Advanced Education to restore the compulsory trades system to improve safety and give more workers a path to apprenticeship completion.	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In March 2022, the new <i>Skilled Trades BC Act</i> was passed, which establishes a made-in-BC system to support and train apprentices and modernize the Crown agency responsible for trades training. • The Ministry of Post Secondary Education and Future Skills can address questions on the Act and compulsory trades.
9. Support the Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity's work to close the gender	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry of Labour supported the Ministry of Finance in developing pay transparency legislation. The <i>Pay Transparency Act</i> (the Act) was passed in the BC Legislative Assembly in Mayh 2023. • This legislation is aimed at closing the gender pay gap by requiring employers of a certain size to report on their employees' pay on the basis of gender. Starting in

Mandate Letter Commitments February 2022	Completed or Underway	Status
Minister Harry Bains Mandate Letter		
pay gap by addressing systemic discrimination in the workplace and through new pay transparency legislation.		<p>November 2023, BC employers are gradually being required to publicly post reports on their gender pay gap. This requirement applies to employers as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nov. 1, 2023: BC Public Service Agency and Crown corporations with more than 1,000 employees (ICBC, BC Hydro, WorkSafeBC, BC Housing, BC Lottery Corporation and BC Transit). ○ Nov. 1, 2024: all employers with 1,000 employees or more ○ Nov. 1, 2025: all employers with 300 employees or more ○ Nov. 1, 2026: all employers with 50 employees or more <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Act also requires employers to include an expected pay range in job postings and prohibits employers from asking job applicants for pay history information and retaliating against employees who disclose their pay to co-workers or potential job applicants. ●
10. Support the work of the Minister of Agriculture and Food to continue improving working conditions for all workers including temporary foreign workers and temporary domestic workers working in farming communities.	Underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On January 1, 2023, minimum piece rates for agriculture workers were increased by 2.8%, which was the rate of inflation for 2021, as measured in the average change in the BC Consumer Price Index. ● Effective January 1, 2024, minimum piece rates for agriculture workers increased by 6.9%, which was the rate of inflation for 2022, as measured in the average change in the BC Consumer Price Index. The changes increase minimum wages paid to hand-harvesters of 15 crops specified in the Employment Standards Regulation. ● The Ministry continues to engage with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food as part of the review of the piece rate system, including options to change or repeal existing provisions. ● ● The Ministry is actively participating on a cross ministry committee led by AFF with membership from the ministries of Health, Housing and LBR to identify actions to support other improvements for farm workers e.g. housing and better access to MSP coverage.
11. Support the Parliamentary Secretary	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The 2022 mandate letter for the Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Development does not include this item nor require further progress to be made on previous mandate letter items. The mandate letter does, however, include direction to “Support the Minister of

Mandate Letter Commitments February 2022	Completed or Underway	Status
Minister Harry Bains Mandate Letter		
for Rural and Regional Development to establish a Worker Training and Job Opportunity Office to maximize the impact of our economic recovery plan for workers and communities during COVID-19 and beyond – with a focus on retraining workers, supporting resource communities facing job loss, developing higher value goods, and accessing new global markets and opportunities for BC products.		<p>Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills and engage with sector partners to continue to expand access to skills training for people in rural, remote, and First Nations communities.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Related questions should be referred to the Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills.

Mandate Letter Commitments November 2020	Completed or Underway	Status
Parliamentary Secretary Adam Walker Mandate Letter		
1. Work with labour and business organizations to develop a	Completed (PS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ministry implemented a number of initiatives over the past six years as part of the precarious work strategy, including increasing the minimum wage, improved workers’ compensation benefits and support for workers, workplace safety measures, enhanced

Mandate Letter Commitments November 2020	Completed or Underway	Status
<p>Parliamentary Secretary Adam Walker Mandate Letter</p>		
<p>precarious work strategy that reflects modern workplaces' diverse needs and unique situations.</p>	<p>Walker's work)</p>	<p>employment standards and access to the Employment Standards Branch, and improved access to collective bargaining.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Former Parliamentary Secretary Walker began the Ministry's work to propose employment standards and other protections for app-based ride-hail and food delivery workers (see next item). • Former Parliamentary Secretary Adam Walker's work on this priority is complete, as he is no longer Parliamentary Secretary with the Ministry of Labour.
<p>2. As part of the precarious work strategy, propose employment standards targeted to precarious and gig economy workers, and investigate the feasibility of a government-backed collective benefit fund and access to a voluntary pooled-capital pension plan for workers who do not otherwise have coverage.</p>	<p>Completed (PS Walker's work)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry began its review of employment standards for gig workers with an initial focus on app-based ride-hail and food delivery workers. • Former Parliamentary Secretary Walker led the initial consultations with app-based ride-hail and food delivery workers, platform companies, academics and labour organizations, as well as an online survey of ride-hail and food delivery workers and the public, to identify the benefits and challenges of app-based ride-hail and food delivery work. • Former Parliamentary Secretary Adam Walker's work on this priority is complete, as he is no longer Parliamentary Secretary with the Ministry of Labour. <p>Advice/Recommendations</p>



December 7, 2022

Honourable Harry Bains
Minister of Labour
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Bains:

Thank you for agreeing to continue to serve as Minister of Labour. I trust in your leadership at this critical time to deliver results for the people of British Columbia.

British Columbians continue to recover from and respond to the upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate related natural disasters, while global inflation is driving up costs for more households and the world's economic outlook is concerning. Now more than ever, we need to focus on building a secure, low emission, sustainable economy, and a province where everyone can find a good home – whether you live in a rural area, in a city, or in an Indigenous community. We will continue working toward true and meaningful reconciliation by supporting opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to be full partners in the inclusive and sustainable province we are building together.

Our government is committed to delivering on the mandate British Columbians gave us in 2020. Together we can make life better for people in B.C., improve the services we all rely on, and ensure a sustainable province for future generations.

As we renew our work, my priority as Premier is to deliver results that people can see and feel in four key areas:

- **Attainable and affordable housing:** In the wake of soaring prices and record migration to B.C., we will take on the important work of building new homes that are actually attainable for the middle class, while continuing our work to address the housing crisis for those in distress on our streets.

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- **Safer communities:** To address concerns about public safety, both for the people struggling with mental health and addiction on our streets, as well as the feeling that downtown centres are not as safe as they were before the pandemic, we will work with our partners at all levels of government, the justice and health care systems, the non-profit sector, and community leaders to find solutions for this complex challenge facing our province, and work overtime to seize the assets of high-level criminals.
- **Improved health care:** Amid unprecedented pressures we will continue to work to strengthen our public health care system, from family doctors to new hospitals, so care is there for each of us when we need it.
- **A sustainable, clean, secure, and fair economy:** We will continue our work investing in British Columbians, fighting racism and promoting equity, and building a clean economy that addresses our obligations to combat climate change by driving down emissions, while creating good, family supporting jobs.

A strong, sustainable, and inclusive economy in British Columbia is impossible without a strong and resilient workforce where people are the core focus. Part of ensuring a resilient workforce is guaranteeing the rights of workers to organize to ensure safe and fair workplaces, and setting baseline rights guarantees for workers, including a fair minimum wage, a right to stay home if you're sick, and decent benefits if you're injured on the job.

Our province is growing at historic rates as people move here for new opportunities. Our government must continue to support skills training for new arrivals as we respond to rural and urban community growth across the province with improved infrastructure and amenities like schools, roads, transit, and hospitals.

We will need more trained and efficient workers to deliver public services of the high quality British Columbians rightly expect. Private sector employers are prioritizing skills training, too, as they look for workers to respond to the increasing demand for British Columbia's services and products.

All these challenges demand strongly balanced partnerships and relationships between labour, government, and business to ensure our province remains a great place to live.

Since 2020, our government has made considerable progress on important initiatives including:

- Implementing paid sick leave for all workers in British Columbia, allowing people to stay home when sick in order to protect their co-workers and the public and prevent spread of illness in workplaces.

- Raising the minimum wage to help lift more people out of poverty, make life more affordable, and build a strong economy for British Columbia.
- Introducing the single-step certification to protect a worker's right to join a union and bargain collectively for workplace safety, compensation, and benefits.
- Strengthening employment standards to better protect young people in the workplace and preventing hazardous work.
- Improving the workers' compensation system by protecting benefits from inflation, protecting injured workers' right to return to work, and creating a new Fair Practices Office, while maintaining stable premiums for employers.

As you continue to make progress on items in your previous mandate letter, over the remaining period of this mandate I expect you to prioritize making progress on the following:

- Work to improve the timeliness of employment standards dispute resolution.
- Continue engaging with affected parties on implementation of the recommendations of the Industrial Inquiry Commission regarding Forest Industry Successorship.
- Work with WorkSafeBC to ensure meaningful programs are in place to support the return of injured workers to their workplaces.
- Support WorkSafeBC, with involvement of the Minister of Health and the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, to develop better options for chronic work-related pain, including improving pain management practices for injured workers and providing treatment on demand to those with chronic pain as a result of workplace injuries.
- Ensure our labour law is keeping up with modern workplaces through the upcoming review of the Labour Code, providing stable labour relations and supporting the exercise of collective bargaining rights.

To assist you in meeting the commitments we have made to British Columbians, you are assigned a Parliamentary Secretary for Labour. You will work closely together and ensure your Parliamentary Secretary receives appropriate support to deliver on the priorities outlined in the mandate letter issued to them.

Our work together must continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of people in this province. Issues not contemplated by this letter will come forward for government action

and I ask you to bring such matters forward for consideration by the Planning and Priorities Committee of Cabinet, with the expectation that any proposed initiatives will be subject to the usual Cabinet and Treasury Board oversight and include measurable outcomes for British Columbians. Your ministry's priorities must reflect our government's overall strategic plan as determined by Cabinet.

British Columbians expect their elected representatives to work together to advance the public good. That means seeking out, fostering, and championing good ideas regardless of their origin. I expect you to reach out to elected members from all parties as you deliver on your mandate. Further, you will build thoughtful and sustained relationships both with title holders and through public and stakeholder engagement plans that incorporate diverse perspectives early in the policy development process. Federal partnerships and resources will be particularly important and, on behalf of our government, you will engage with the federal government on advancing priorities to improve the lives of British Columbians.

As a Cabinet, we will uphold the highest standards of ethics, collaboration, and good conduct in service of the public, and as a Minister of the Crown, you are expected to review, understand, and act according to the *Members' Conflict of Interest Act*. You will establish a collaborative working relationship with your Deputy Minister, and the public servants under their direction, who provide the professional, non-partisan advice that is fundamental to delivering on our government's priorities. Your Minister's Office must meet the highest standards for integrity and provide a respectful, rewarding environment for all staff.

The rural and urban challenges that we face are urgent and complex. In response, we must be forward-thinking, strategic, and ready to work across disciplines and old divisions in new ways. Labour shortages are a major issue globally, and British Columbia is no exception, including in the public service. Maintaining the BC Public Service as an employer of excellence will be key to retaining and recruiting the diverse professionals we rely on to deliver essential services, advice, and analysis.

At the core of this work is listening and responding to the priorities of people in B.C. Together, we can deliver results in very real ways – ways that people can see, feel, and touch, and that change their lives for the better. Thank you for doing this important work with me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Eby", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

David Eby, KC
Premier



February 25, 2022

Honourable Harry Bains
Minister of Labour
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, British Columbia V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Bains:

Thank you for agreeing to serve British Columbians as Minister of Labour.

In this past year, as a member of Cabinet, your work has contributed to this government's efforts to support British Columbians as they face the impacts of COVID-19. People throughout the province continue to work together to stay safe and rebuild their lives and communities from the effects of the pandemic. Our government remains committed to getting through the pandemic and its aftereffects by building on this resilience and focusing on what matters most to people.

British Columbians voted for a government focused on their priorities: providing better health care for people and families, delivering affordability and security in our communities, and investing in good jobs and livelihoods in a clean-energy future.

I expect you –with support of your ministry – to focus on the commitments detailed in our platform, *Working for You*, along with the following foundational principles:

- **Putting people first:** Since 2017, our government has focused on making decisions to meet people's needs. That focus drove our work in our first term and will continue to be our priority. British Columbians are counting on the government to keep them safe and to build an economic recovery that works for everyone, not just those at the top. Keeping people at the centre of everything we do means protecting and enhancing the public services people rely on and working to make life more affordable for everyone.

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- **Lasting and meaningful reconciliation:** Reconciliation is an ongoing process and a shared responsibility for us all. The unanimous passage of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* was a significant step forward in this journey. True reconciliation will take time and ongoing commitment to work with Indigenous peoples as they move toward self-determination. Our government – and every ministry – must remain focused on creating opportunities for Indigenous peoples to be full partners in our economy and providing a clear and sustainable path for everyone to work toward lasting reconciliation.
- **Equity and anti-racism:** Our province's history, identity and strength are rooted in its diverse population. Yet racialized and marginalized people face historic and present-day barriers that limit their full participation in their communities, workplaces, government, and their lives. Our government has a moral and ethical responsibility to tackle systemic discrimination in all its forms – and every ministry has a role in this work. While our caucus elected a record number of women, more work remains to address gender equity. Delivering on our commitments to address racial discrimination will require a commitment by all of government to ensure increased IBPOC (Indigenous, Black and People of Colour) representation within the public service, including in government appointments. Our efforts to address systemic discrimination must also inform policy and budget decisions by reviewing all decisions through a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens.
- **A better future through fighting climate change:** In 2018, our government launched our CleanBC climate action plan. CleanBC puts British Columbia on the path to a cleaner, better future by building a low-carbon economy with new clean-energy jobs and opportunities, protecting our air, land and water and supporting communities to prepare for climate impacts. It is every Minister's responsibility to ensure your ministry's work continues to achieve CleanBC's goals.
- **A strong, sustainable economy that works for everyone:** We will continue our work to support British Columbians through the pandemic and the economic recovery by investing in health care, getting people back to work, helping businesses and communities, and building the clean, innovative economy of the future. Our plan will train the workforce of tomorrow, help businesses hire and grow and invest in the infrastructure needed to build our province.

The pandemic has reminded us that we're strongest when we work together. Delivering on our commitments to people will require a coordinated effort with your cabinet and caucus colleagues, supported by the skilled professionals in the public service. You will also support your cabinet colleagues to do their work, particularly where commitments cross ministry lines.

British Columbians expect their elected representatives to work together to advance the broader public good despite their partisan perspectives. That means seeking out, fostering, and championing good ideas, regardless of their origin. I expect you to reach out to elected members from all parties as you deliver on your mandate. Further, you will build thoughtful and sustained relationships through public and stakeholder engagement plans that connect with people to incorporate their perspectives early in the policy development process. These plans must include measurable outcomes and ensure active dialogue and ongoing outreach in your ministry's actions and priorities.

Over the course of our mandate, I expect you will make progress on the following items:

- Continue a collaborative approach in working with representatives of workers and employers to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on people and businesses.
- Continue working with the federal government on a paid sick leave program to protect workers and businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.
- Create new consultative mechanisms to engage employer and worker representatives in consideration of any changes proposed to workplace legislation to ensure the widest possible support.
- Once the minimum wage reaches \$15.20 per hour in June 2021, provide predictability for employers and workers by tying the minimum wage to the rate of inflation.
- Ensure that every worker has the right to join a union and bargain for fair working conditions.
- Increase the number of WorkSafeBC caseworkers and increase workplace safety inspections.
- In partnership with WorkSafeBC and with support from the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, work to develop better options for chronic work-related pain, including improving pain management practices for injured workers and providing treatment on demand to those with chronic pain as a result of workplace injuries.
- Support the work of the Minister of Advanced Education to restore the compulsory trades system to improve safety and give more workers a path to apprenticeship completion.

