

Select Standing Committee on Finance and
Government Services

REPORT ON THE BUDGET 2023 CONSULTATION

August 2022



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

Second Report
Third Session, 42nd Parliament



August 11, 2022

To the Honourable
Legislative Assembly of the
Province of British Columbia

Honourable Members:

I have the honour to present herewith the Second Report of the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services for the Third Session of the 42nd Parliament. This report covers the Committee's work in regard to the Budget 2023 Consultation as approved by the Committee.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Committee,

Janet Routledge, MLA
Chair

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COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

MEMBERS

Janet Routledge, MLA, Chair
Burnaby North

Karin Kirkpatrick, MLA, Deputy Chair
West Vancouver-Capilano

Brenda Bailey, MLA
Vancouver-False Creek

Megan Dykeman, MLA
Langley East

Renee Merrifield, MLA
Kelowna-Mission

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Vernon-Monashee

Mike Starchuk, MLA
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Ben Stewart, MLA
Kelowna West

Henry Yao, MLA
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COMMITTEE STAFF

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Victor Lucy, Committee Research Assistant (Co-op)

Mary Newell, Administrative Coordinator

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Emma Curtis, Committee Assistant



TERMS OF REFERENCE

On February 17, 2022, the Legislative Assembly agreed that the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services be empowered to:

1. Examine, inquire into and make recommendations with respect to the budget consultation paper prepared by the Minister of Finance in accordance with section 2 of the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act* (S.B.C. 2000, c. 23) and, in particular, to:
 - a. conduct public consultations across British Columbia on proposals and recommendations regarding the provincial budget and fiscal policy for the coming fiscal year by any means the Committee considers appropriate; and
 - b. prepare a report no later than November 15, 2021, on the results of those consultations.
2. Consider and make recommendations on the annual reports, rolling three-year service plans and budgets of the statutory officers, namely, the:
 - i. Auditor General
 - ii. Chief Electoral Officer
 - iii. Conflict of Interest Commissioner
 - iv. Human Rights Commissioner
 - v. Information and Privacy Commissioner
 - vi. Merit Commissioner
 - vii. Ombudsperson
 - viii. Police Complaint Commissioner
 - ix. Representative for Children and Youth
3. Inquire into and make recommendations with respect to other matters brought to the Committee's attention by any of the aforementioned statutory officers.

That the Committee be designated as the Committee referred to in sections 19, 20, 21 and 23 of the *Auditor General Act* (S.B.C. 2003, c. 2) and that the report in section 22 of the *Auditor General Act* (S.B.C. 2003, c. 2) be referred to the Committee.

That the Committee be designated as the Committee referred to in sections 47.02 and 47.03 of the *Human Rights Code* (R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 210).

That, in addition to the powers previously conferred upon the Select Standing Committees of the House, the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services be empowered to:

- a. appoint of its number one or more subcommittees and to refer to such subcommittees any of the matters referred to the Committee and to delegate to the subcommittees all or any of its powers except the power to report directly to the House;
- b. sit during a period in which the House is adjourned, during the recess after prorogation until the next following Session and during any sitting of the House;
- c. adjourn from place to place as may be convenient; and
- d. retain personnel as required to assist the Committee.

That the Committee report to the House as soon as possible; and that during a period of adjournment, the Committee deposit its reports with the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, and upon resumption of the sittings of the House, or in the next following Session, as the case may be, the Chair present all reports to the House.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every year, the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services (the “Committee”) conducts a consultation on the upcoming provincial budget. Between May 30 and June 24, 2022, British Columbians were invited to share their priorities for Budget 2023. During the consultation period, the Committee heard 306 presentations, received 372 submissions, and 861 responses to an online survey.

This report provides a comprehensive summary of the priorities and ideas shared by British Columbians during the consultation and outlines the Committee’s 216 recommendations. The report begins with a discussion on diversity, equity, and inclusion in recognition of how this theme applies across many of the subsequent topics and policy areas. Thereafter, themes are presented in alphabetical order; the numbering of recommendations does not indicate priority.

In discussing the themes brought forward during the consultation, Members recognize concerns of unaffordability, the rising cost of living, access to health care, and the need to ensure that the budget supports British Columbians during this time. The Committee notes a number of key themes that are evident throughout this report including the impact of climate change and the need to increase mitigation and resiliency, the need for better data to inform policy and decision making, the need for solutions to reflect unique local circumstances rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all approach, and the importance of reconciliation.

With respect to equity and inclusion, Members recognize that accessibility is essential and recommends the creation of an independent disability protection office to safeguard the rights of people with disabilities in BC and advocate for those experiencing abuse, neglect, and discrimination. Other recommendations in this area aim to increase accessibility of public transit and expand employment grants for business owners with disabilities. Committee Members emphasize the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion in all sectors including the arts, education, and sports. They support

practices to ensure opportunities for equity-seeking groups in the workplace and prioritize equal pay. Reconciliation is another theme that runs throughout this report with Members highlighting the need to engage in government-to-government conversations, support Indigenous cultural infrastructure and Indigenous-led conservation efforts, and advance economic reconciliation through revenue-sharing and equity ownership. Recognizing that digital connectivity is required to access online services, engage in remote work opportunities, and to ensure public safety, Committee Members highlight work being done in this area and recommend ensuring that all rural and remote communities have sufficient access to high-speed internet and cell phone connectivity. Members acknowledge the importance of coupling stabilized internet access with digital literacy and recommend stable funding for programs that address digital and financial literacy.

Committee Members agree that climate change is a significant issue that impacts many areas and sectors including transportation, agriculture, forestry, health, and emergency preparedness and response. They note the need for better data in a range of areas including freshwater, environmental protection, and wildlife conservation. Members also point to the need to accelerate the adoption of zero emission vehicles and support the transition to clean energy for individuals and industry. The Committee emphasizes the need for investment into climate adaptation, mitigation, and prevention strategies with a view to reducing the worst impacts of climate change. Regarding environmental protection and wildlife conservation, Members support increased resources as well as integrating science-based approaches and local and Indigenous knowledge into conservation. They also recognize the need for a coordinated water conservation strategy and sustained funding for watershed security. Committee Members acknowledge the value of parks and recreation and support continued investment for maintenance and to build the capacity of volunteers who are vital to this sector. Other recommendations related to the environment aim to address invasive species and promote recycling to reduce waste.

The Committee identifies health care as a priority area referencing shortages of practitioners and barriers to access for many British Columbians, particularly in rural and remote areas. As such, they recommend mechanisms to improve recruitment, training, credentialing, and retention of health care professionals, especially family doctors, as well as exploring the use of physician assistants, midwives, and mental health counsellors to improve access to health care. Further, they recommend a review of primary care to improve access and navigation for the public. Members also support a number of recommendations related to specific conditions and diseases including myalgic encephalomyelitis, brain injury, cancer, multiple sclerosis, and arthritis. Regarding long-term care, Committee Members call for an advisory forum to assist in the development of an evidence-based action plan to reform this sector, as well as improved accountability measures for operators. Members also recognize the value of supporting seniors to age-in-place and recommend more funding in this area. With respect to hospice and palliative care, the Committee recognizes the need for grief and bereavement supports across the province and also recommends that the palliative and end-of-life care policy be extended to include those aged 19 and under. Committee Members support increased funding for mental health and addictions, including increased access to counselling for children and youth who have experienced abuse-induced trauma, as well as funding for identity-based counselling and mental health supports that are intersectional, culturally safe, and LGBTQ2SAI+ focused. Regarding medical and dental coverage, the Committee recognizes the importance of prosthetics and orthotics in enhancing people's lives and allowing them to regain mobility following life altering incidents and recommends a strategy to cover the costs of these devices along with the cost of emergency repairs. Members also support improved dental coverage, especially for British Columbians with disabilities or diabetes, as well as coverage of the prostate-specific antigen test which is critical to early detection and treatment of prostate cancer. With respect to biomedical sciences, Members support more BC-based research and a comprehensive and coordinated life sciences and biomanufacturing strategy in light of supply chain challenges. The Committee also highlights the importance of vaccine supply and accelerating efforts to make antiviral therapies available to fight COVID-19.

Committee Members emphasize the role of advanced education in supporting critical thinking, contributing to

knowledge creation, and addressing labour shortages. Further, they note the need to ensure all students have adequate housing, classroom space, financial assistance, and supports to ensure equitable access to post-secondary education as well as successful completion of credits. Members also support a provincial strategy for international students, recognizing the contributions these students make to the post-secondary community and the labour force, and the barriers created by lack of predictability in tuition. With respect to operational funding, recommendations seek to recognize inflationary pressures for post-secondary institutions, address issues related to faculty retention, and fund additional seats in many programs to address labour shortages. Members also recognize that post-secondary institutions in rural and remote areas have unique circumstances that must be recognized in funding allocations. The Committee makes several recommendations with respect to technology, trades, and skills training, noting their role in the economy and highlighting opportunities to expand innovative programs, micro-credentials, and work-integrated learning.

The Committee's recommendations regarding arts and culture recognize the value of this sector and the difficulties that the sector has had and continues to face due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Members support increased funding for the arts and museums across the province, as well as supports for artists and infrastructure funding for new projects and repairs. In particular, Committee Members recognize Science World as an iconic institution which is in need of repairs to ensure continued operations. The Committee also makes recommendations to support diversity within digital media, music, and film while also supporting predictability in tax credits for these three sectors. With respect to public libraries, Committee Members recognize their role as community hubs and centres for information, literacy, and creativity and support increased funding with particular attention to libraries in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities. Members continue to support investments in sport to improve affordability and ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion in the sector.

Regarding economic development, Members emphasize the importance of agriculture, local production, and food security in light of supply chain challenges. Recommendations in this area aim to increase viability for farmers and ranchers, reduce food waste, and ensure resiliency. The Committee also highlights the need for sustainable practices with respect to fisheries and forestry as well as working with Indigenous leadership and local experts regarding forest management.

With respect to labour and jobs, recommendations relate to programs and supports to address shortages and promote diversity and inclusion. Members also recognize shortages and challenges in the Employment Standards Branch and support investments to address wait times in this area. Committee Members emphasize the role of mining and natural resource development in the economy and note the need for minerals to support electrification. They support a clear strategy coupled with transparent policies and make recommendations to promote economic reconciliation and address permitting backlogs. Members also recognize the economy is driven by technology, software, data, and patents, and recommend provincial strategies with respect to intellectual property and data as well as incentives for innovative technology procurement. Further, the Committee highlights BC as a leader in quantum technology and supports investment in this area. Acknowledging the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism and hospitality, Members recommend working with the sector to ensure BC is a destination for meetings, conferences, events, and leisure travel as well as collecting further data to identify areas of improvement. Regarding trade, Members recommend northern BC trade corridor planning to support export growth, address congestion, and expand employment opportunities for rural communities. They also recognize the need to support port infrastructure and ensure adequate transportation linkages.

The Committee's recommendations with respect to fiscal and regulatory policy aim to address challenges faced by small- and medium-sized businesses and to support productivity, innovation, and competitiveness. Members also make a number of recommendations to review specific taxation measures including the carbon tax, property tax, provincial sales tax, luxury tax, and employer health tax with the aim of reviewing tax thresholds, incentivizing clean energy, and addressing cost pressures for businesses, homebuyers, and consumers. Committee Members note the negative health impacts of tobacco and recommend exploring a fee to recover associated health costs from the industry. The Committee also recommends the enactment of prompt payment legislation and supports a renewed and modernized relationship between municipal and provincial governments with respect to funding and resources.

With respect to housing, Committee Members emphasize the need for increased supply and affordability. Recommendations include increased resources for the Residential Tenancy Branch, the development of an Indigenous housing strategy,

and support for BC Housing in building non-market housing. The Committee also supports incentives for the private sector to address low housing stock. Members also point to the need for complex care housing sites with full supports for individuals and adequate supports provided within surrounding neighbourhoods. Regarding homelessness, Committee Members recommend investments in programs that prevent evictions and stabilize housing for lower income individuals, increased support to overnight and daytime drop-in centres, and funding for young people leaving foster care to access affordable housing. Other recommendations included improving financial stability, risk management, and insurance pricing for strata councils.

The Committee's recommendations regarding K-12 education recognize the need for funding that is more proactive and responsive to anticipated growth and local needs. Members emphasize the need for increased capital funding as well as operational funding in recognition of increased costs and regional needs, new curriculum initiatives, and the unique needs of rural and remote schools. They also support a review of the policies regarding the use and funding of portables. To address recruitment and retention challenges for teachers, the Committee recommends measures such as providing incentives especially for teachers in rural and remote communities. With respect to student supports, recommendations include increased funding and supports for students with unique learning and development needs, all-encompassing pre-kindergarten wellness checks, and increased funding for mental health supports and to meet the needs of refugee and newcomer students. The Committee also recommends an audit of the education of K-12 students with support needs to find ways to better support students and optimize resources. Recognizing the important work being done by various school food programs, Committee Members support the expansion of these initiatives along with an audit of current programs to determine best practices and gaps. With respect to child care, Committee Members recommend funding to increase accessibility and improve recruitment and retention of early childhood educators.

The Committee makes several recommendations with respect to public safety and justice, including increasing investments in legal aid services, child and youth advocacy centres, and the modernization and digital transformation of court services. Committee Members also recommend specific investments in gender-based violence and sexual assault programs and services, including awareness and prevention programs,

transition housing, and supports for survivors of brain injury resulting from intimate partner violence. They emphasize the need for a system-wide audit of these supports and the creation of a provincial sexual assault policy to ensure consistency of programs and responses. The Committee also recommends investments to improve emergency preparedness and response to natural disasters, including investments in Emergency Management BC, funding for flood and wildlife risk mapping, land-use planning, and community resilience. Committee Members also recognize the rise of contraband tobacco and illicit cannabis in BC and support measures to address this issue. The Committee supports restorative justice programs and peer-led and person-centered programming for sex workers. Other areas of interest include emergency response and communications, including incorporating a new fourth 911 option for mental health.

Regarding social services, Committee Members recommend funding to reduce wait times and improve access to assessments, therapies, programs, and supports for children and youth with support needs, including improving recruitment and retention of service providers in this area. Children and youth in care are another point of focus, with the Committee recommending improved and increased supports to facilitate the jurisdictional transition of child welfare to Indigenous communities. The Committee also emphasizes the need to improve supports for kinship caregivers. Regarding income and disability assistance, Committee Members support a review of eligibility and administration to reduce barriers to work, provide flexibility, and ensure individuals have access to all necessary supports. Other recommendations relate to increased and predictable funding for the community social

services sectors, including administrative funding and supports to address compensation challenges, as well as funding for community-based seniors' centres and senior serving organizations. The Committee also recommends the expansion of social service delivery and the continuum of care to improve responses to mental health, addictions, and other complex social issues.

With respect to transportation and transit, Committee Members recommend increasing investments in active transportation to improve safety. They also recommend increasing investments in public transportation to address gaps in regional services, decarbonizing BC's bus fleet, increasing accessible transportation options such as handyDART, and addressing the lack of accessible transit in small, rural, remote, and Indigenous communities. The Committee also supports funding for BC Bus North to expand services and enhance safety. The Committee recommends investing in transportation infrastructure, roads, and highways, to build a sustainable and green transportation network that is climate resilient and that can ensure consistent movement and connection of people and goods in times of emergencies. Other recommendations include support for road maintenance, and funding for wildlife crossings and fencing to make the transportation system safer. Additionally, the Committee recommends the creation of a task force to maintain BC's sustainable aviation fuel leadership and supporting building aviation cargo capacity and reliability.

CONSULTATION OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND

The Minister of Finance is required by the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act* to issue a budget consultation paper, including a fiscal forecast, key issues to be addressed in the next budget, and information on how British Columbians may provide their views on those issues, no later than September 15 each year. The paper is referred to a select standing committee of the Legislative Assembly which must conduct a consultation and report on the results of that consultation no later than November 15. The Legislative Assembly assigns this responsibility to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services. This year, the Budget 2023 Consultation Paper was released on May 30, 2022. The consultation was held between May 30, 2022 and June 24, 2022.

BUDGET CONSULTATION PAPER

The Budget 2023 Consultation Paper described the provincial government's efforts to address the increasing cost of living and improving affordability. The paper also outlined initiatives including investments in child care and affordable housing, as well as investments in health and mental health, broadband connectivity and growing the labour force. Input was requested on the following questions:

1. The cost of living is rising nationally as a result of global challenges linked to Russia's attack on Ukraine and the continuing impacts of COVID-19. What further actions do you think the province should take to support people facing challenges from the rising cost of living?
2. What actions do you think the province should take to improve your and your family's quality of life?
3. Would you be interested in seeing more funding for actions that address climate change and help proactively prevent climate disasters?
4. Which areas do you think should receive more, the same or less funding?

- a. Affordable housing
 - b. Access to child care
 - c. K-12 education
 - d. More opportunities in skills training & post-secondary education
 - e. Support the transition to a cleaner economy & reduce pollution
 - f. Increase programs for Indigenous people, women, 2SLGBTQ+, and people facing systemic barriers
 - g. Anti-racism measures
 - h. Access to mental health services
 - i. Job-creating infrastructure projects
 - j. Economic development
 - k. Indigenous resources and reconciliation actions
 - l. Health care
 - m. Justice and public safety
 - n. Poverty reduction
 - o. Roads, highways and bridges
 - p. Public transportation
 - q. Debt reduction
 - r. Other
5. How important is it to you to have a balanced budget?
 - a. Very important. I value balancing the budget in the immediate term even if it requires reductions to spending and/or higher taxes.
 - b. Somewhat important. I would like it to be balanced over the years ahead even if it requires reduced growth in government spending, minor reductions in services, and/or minor increases to taxes.
 - c. Not important. I value more government services and projects even if it means the budget is not balanced in the near term.

British Columbians were invited to respond to these questions through an online survey. Survey results are referenced

throughout the report with a full summary in Appendix A. See *Consultation Process* for more information.

MINISTER OF FINANCE BRIEFING

The Minister of Finance, Hon. Selina Robinson, MLA, appeared before the Committee to present the *Budget 2023 Consultation Paper* on June 6, 2022. The Minister highlighted global economic shifts impacting the cost of living and noted that the province is continuing to look for ways to bring costs down for families, improve services, and build an inclusive and sustainable future.

Noting that during last year’s budget consultation many British Columbians emphasized the importance of addressing the climate crisis, the Minister explained that the province is investing in a climate preparedness and adaptation strategy and helping communities rebuild stronger so that they are better prepared for future climate disasters. The Minister shared that the province is continuing to invest in CleanBC, supporting cleaner transportation options, and investing in clean buildings. Similarly, the Minister noted that the province launched a new local government climate action program to help communities cut emissions and to support improvements in forestry and agriculture. Additionally, the Minister stated that the province is supporting Indigenous-led priorities to build a stronger environment, including Indigenous-led clean transportation initiatives and the expansion of the Indigenous forest bioeconomy program.

The Minister also discussed the province’s work to address affordability within the province. With respect to creating a high-quality, affordable, accessible child care system, the Minister shared that the province invested \$2.7 billion in the Childcare BC plan, funded over 30,000 new child care spaces, and will be further reducing fees by the end of the year. With respect to housing, the Minister provided an update on the ten-year housing plan sharing that more than 33,000 homes are complete or under way in communities. Other areas of investments highlighted by the Minister include reskilling and training to close BC’s skills and talent gap and bridging the digital divide for rural and remote communities.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

British Columbians were invited to share their input in three ways: presenting to the Committee; making a written submission; or completing the online survey with questions from the *Budget 2023 Consultation Paper*. To ensure that

all British Columbians continue to have the opportunity to participate effectively, the Committee looked at ways to simplify and standardize the consultation process as participation continues to increase. This year, participants were asked to use a submission form which focused input on three recommendations for the next provincial budget. Presenters were also asked to focus on three recommendations and use the submission form to provide any written information in support of their presentation.

A number of approaches were used to encourage participation in the consultation, including: a media release; advertisements in local and multicultural newspapers; online advertisements; social media; and direct outreach to Members of the Legislative Assembly, constituency offices, regional districts, community-based organizations, Indigenous organizations and public libraries. Those interested in presenting were asked to complete a request form outlining their preference for a virtual or in-person meeting as well as themes they would be discussing. The Committee received requests to present from over 450 organizations and individuals and was able to accommodate 306 presentations. Those who could not be accommodated were encouraged to provide written comments or fill out the survey. Presentations were held virtually using the Zoom videoconferencing platform and in-person in Vancouver, Victoria, Terrace, Williams Lake, and Vernon. Virtual presentations included individual presentations as well as panels organized thematically; in-person presentations were all individual. In addition to the presentations, the Committee received 372 written, audio, and video submissions and 861 survey responses. A list of organizations and individuals who made presentations and/or written submissions is available in Appendices B and C.

The Committee carefully considered all input received during their deliberations.

MEETING SCHEDULE

3rd Session, 42nd Parliament

April 6, 2022	Planning
May 16, 2022	Planning
June 6, 2022	Public Hearing (Victoria)
June 7, 2022	Public Hearing (Virtual)
June 8, 2022	Public Hearing (Virtual)
June 13, 2022	Public Hearing (Virtual)

June 14, 2022	Public Hearing (Virtual)
June 15, 2022	Public Hearing (Vancouver)
June 16, 2022	Public Hearing (Vancouver)
June 17, 2022	Public Hearing (Vancouver)
June 20, 2022	Public Hearing (Virtual)
June 21, 2022	Public Hearing (Terrace)
June 21, 2022	Public Hearing (Williams Lake)
June 22, 2022	Public Hearing (Vernon)
July 18, 2022	Deliberations
July 19, 2022	Deliberations
July 20, 2022	Deliberations
July 21, 2022	Deliberations
July 27, 2022	Deliberations
July 28, 2022	Deliberations
August 3, 2022	Deliberations
August 4, 2022	Deliberations; Adoption of Report



EQUITY AND INCLUSION

This section highlights some of the key issues with respect to equity and inclusion that were raised during the consultation; however, these themes are also woven throughout the various sections of this report. With respect to accessibility, individuals and organizations referenced increasing costs of mobility equipment and home accessibility equipment and pointed to a lack of elevators and escalators as barriers to accessibility. The Committee also heard about the need to adopt an intersectional lens with respect to policy and received recommendations to increase equity for women, non-binary, trans, Two-Spirit, racialized, and migrant individuals in the workplace. Reconciliation is a key theme that runs throughout the report with many calls to implement the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan* and increase economic reconciliation through partnerships and revenue sharing. Inequities between rural, remote, and urban areas were also highlighted, especially regarding digital connectivity.

ACCESSIBILITY

The Committee heard about the need to increase funding for mobility and home accessibility from multiple organizations. The organization Motion stated that the cost of mobility and home accessibility equipment has risen steadily over the last several years but funding for this equipment has not. As a result, many people are forced to either go without appropriate equipment or search for additional funds. They also explained that while mobility and home accessibility funding support exists for individuals on income and disability assistance, mobility equipment and accessibility devices are often not in reach for working British Columbians who are not on income assistance. Disability Alliance BC also commented on this issue and recommended establishing a comprehensive program for personal supports for people with disabilities including assistive devices and medical equipment. Similarly, 411 Seniors Centre proposed adopting a program like Alberta AIDS to Daily Living; they highlighted that the program helps cover the cost of hearing aids and some mobility devices on a cost sharing basis.

The National Elevator and Escalator Association emphasized that as buildings get taller to accommodate more housing, appropriate consideration must be given to ensure an adequate number of elevators are installed to serve the public. They stated that outdated transportation systems and an inadequate number of elevators are leading causes of barriers for accessibility and recommended implementing legislation to establish an elevator/escalator traffic analysis framework that would align BC with other global jurisdictions regarding the accessibility of new buildings.

With respect to neurodivergent individuals and other people with disabilities, Autistics United BC Chapter explained that in the United States, independent agencies are providing information, assistance and advocacy for people with disabilities experiencing abuse, neglect, and discrimination. They called for a similar independent office for people with disabilities in BC along with investments in community-based violence prevention and crisis response services and non-violent crisis response in schools.

SYSTEMIC BARRIERS – GENDER, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, AND RACE

A few organizations commented on the need to fill labour shortages in technology and the trades by attracting and retaining women and other underrepresented groups. BC Centre for Women in the Trades explained that current workforce development agreements that fund women in trades and provide other supports are very specific and do not leave space for other equity-seeking groups. They recommended modernizing these agreements to assist employers with recruitment and retention of underrepresented and equity-seeking people.

Worker Solidarity Network emphasized that pay equity continues to be a key issue in BC, with women being overrepresented in low-wage jobs, and noted that the gender pay gap is one of the widest in the country. They stated that many professions and occupations that predominantly consist

of women, including live-in support workers and residential care workers, are excluded from certain provisions of the *Employment Standards Act* such as entitlement to minimum wage and overtime pay, which contributes to the precarity of these sectors and adds to the gender pay gap. They noted that eliminating these exclusions is the first step toward reducing the pay gap and striving toward pay equity. Also on pay equity, YWCA Metro Vancouver stated that in 2021, 58 percent of employees earning minimum wage or less in BC were women. They recommended providing accessible employment opportunities with matching opportunities to acquire skills that attract, retain and support women workers in male-dominated and higher paying sectors by expanding access to paid internships, skills training, and multi-year education pathways, including funds for transportation and child care.

Regarding an intersectional lens to policy, Rainbow Refugee recommended developing policies and practices with respect to workplaces, health, and mental health through a lens that considers status, racialization, homophobia, and transphobia. Worker Solidarity Network added that an intersectional lens should be adopted to achieve pay equity but explained that there is a gap in knowledge of the experience of non-binary, trans, Two-Spirit and racialized and migrant workers. In addition to adopting an intersectional or Gender Based Analysis Plus lens to policy, the Committee also received two recommendations to establish an 2SLGBTQ+ advisory committee to lend policy advice across ministries and government bodies. As background, QMUNITY referenced an underrepresentation of queer and gender diverse perspectives and people in policy-shaping roles at the provincial level. BC Women's Health Foundation and the BC Federation of Labour both commented on long-standing gender inequities that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. They recommended implementing gender-conscious economic recovery policies and investments in equity and inclusion initiatives to reduce these inequities.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND RECONCILIATION

Many organizations and individuals emphasized the importance of reconciliation and outlined actions to implement the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* and the Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. BC Assembly of First Nations stated that the work of reconciliation is fundamentally about justice, healing and new relationships defined by partnership and respect as well

as fiscal relationships that encompass taxation and revenue-sharing. They noted that funds for First Nations must be managed by First Nations decision-makers and be consistent, long-term, meaningful, and fulsome. Enbridge noted that as government pursues the transition to a lower-carbon economy and Indigenous reconciliation it should enable greater Indigenous participation in large projects by providing Indigenous communities with funding and capacity to participate in large projects as true equity partners. Similarly, North Island-Coast Development Initiative Trust (Island Coastal Economic Trust) noted that reconciliation calls for greater engagement by Indigenous governments in regional economic decision-making and in charting a sustainable economic future for their communities as well as influencing economic development throughout their traditional territories. In response to question four of the survey, asking what areas should receive more funding, the majority of respondents indicated that there should be more funding for Indigenous resources and reconciliation actions.

Regarding health care for Indigenous peoples, the Hospital Employees Union explained that BC needs to work with multicultural and Indigenous training and employment organizations, First Nations bands, and post-secondary institutions to bring more Indigenous peoples on staff to enhance cultural safety and assist with implementing the recommendations from the *In Plain Sight* report and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

The Committee also heard from Métis Nation BC who represent almost 90,000 self-identified Métis people in the province. They shared that Métis people have fallen through the cracks for quite some time and described the Nation's efforts to ensure sustainability of the Nation and revitalize their culture including the Michif language. They requested funding for governance to advance their strategic plan and highlighted key priorities to build a healthy and vibrant Métis Nation BC.

DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

Both CUPE Kootenay District Council and CUPE Northern Area District Council noted the importance of internet and cell phone service for remote work, attending school, and public safety. Both groups recommended ensuring reliable cellular and internet service throughout the province. They described a growing connectivity gap between rural and remote communities and urban centres due to poor regional access to

high-speed internet and reliable cell phone service and noted that this gap has been widened by the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated the transition of many required public services online.

DEMOCRACY

North Shore Community Services stated that there has been a decline in citizen participation in democratic life, citing the example of the last election in the city of North Vancouver in which only 33.84 percent of eligible voters showed up to vote. They noted that this correlates with a lack of belief in the ability for citizens to impact government decision-making and a decline in trust. The organization highlighted the need to invest in democratic engagement to continue to have vibrant participation and confidence in democratic systems and processes, not just at election time but also between elections. They recommended the creation of a strengthening democracy fund with funding streams associated with community capacity building; equity, diversity, and inclusion in democracy; and innovations in democratic systems and institutions.

CONCLUSIONS

While discussing the role of accessibility in facilitating the full participation of all British Columbians in the province, Members remarked on the importance of elevators in residential and public buildings, especially for emergency response, and agreed that this should be appropriately reflected in building and fire codes. Committee Members reflected on the presentation regarding the importance of non-police, community-based violence prevention in de-escalating a mental health crisis for neurodivergent individuals and recognized that the need for appropriate crisis response services is linked to their recommendations about mental health and emergency communications. With respect to the deaf and hard-of-hearing community, Members discussed how reader boards are a way of ensuring all transit riders are aware of relevant announcements; however, they recognized that several means of transportation lack these accessibility tools.

The Committee also discussed systemic barriers to equity in the workplace and noted that some workforce development agreements are exclusively for women and should be modernized to include other equity-seeking groups. Members noted that there are existing measures underway to reduce

barriers and ensure equity in the workplace and expressed support for these initiatives to continue and expand. Pay equity was also an area of interest for Members who recognized that this is a key issue for women, non-binary, trans, Two-Spirit, and racialized and migrant workers, and should be addressed. Committee Members also reflected on presentations which highlighted the lack of supports for neurodivergent individuals in the workplace, including entrepreneurs, and agreed that more should be done to ensure that neurodivergent small business owners are better supported to create jobs and contribute to the economy.

Members noted that work toward reconciliation has begun but there is much more work to do regarding the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Calls for Justice from the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and the recommendations of the *In Plain Sight* report on Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination in BC health care. They discussed the need to implement the Declaration Act Action Plan and highlighted the need to engage in government-to-government conversations and to work with Indigenous peoples as partners and leaders in reconciliation. Members heard that requests for engagement require significant time and resources on the part of Indigenous communities and that additional resources may be needed in some cases to ensure Indigenous voices are heard in the planning of more services and projects. Reflecting on the presentation from Métis Nation BC, the Committee also emphasized the need for a distinction-based approach to policy that recognizes the specific rights, interests, priorities and concerns of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people while respecting and acknowledging these distinct Peoples with unique cultures, histories, rights, laws, and governments. Committee Members also discussed supports for Indigenous projects and cultural infrastructure, including the request from the City of Vancouver regarding construction of a new Indigenous Centre. They agreed that funding and supports should be available to ensure Indigenous culture is celebrated and protected. Finally, Members expressed concern that several reserves across the province still lack access to clean drinking water and agreed that investments at the federal level in this area need to be continued.

With respect to digital connectivity, Members agreed that lack of access to high-speed internet and cell phone connectivity is a barrier to full participation in the social and economic experiences that British Columbia can offer, and that it poses

significant safety risks. Members acknowledged that this is an ongoing issue in rural and remote communities and noted that work is being done by the province in partnership with the federal government to ensure access to high-speed internet and cell phone connectivity throughout BC.

Regarding democratic life, Members discussed declines in citizen participation in democratic processes, particularly stemming from language and cultural barriers, as well as increased polarization and radicalization. They agreed that investments should be available for programs to encourage democratic engagement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

Accessibility

1. Create an independent disability protection advocacy office to safeguard the rights of people with disabilities in BC.
2. Broaden the terms and conditions of Workplace Accessibility Grants so that programs and supports can be put into place for small business owners with disabilities including neurodivergent people.
3. Install reader boards for public transportation, including BC Ferries, to improve accessibility for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community.

Systemic Barriers – Gender, Sexual Orientation, and Race

4. Build on existing practices regarding workforce development agreements to make sure that opportunities are provided for equity-seeking groups in skilled trades.
5. Take immediate action to address pay equity for women.
6. Invest in collecting disaggregated data on workers who experience gender-based oppression including non-binary, trans, Two-Spirit, as well as racialized and migrant workers.

Democracy

7. Create a strengthening democracy fund to increase community capacity building; equity, diversity, and inclusion in democracy; and innovations in democratic systems and institutions.

Indigenous Peoples and Reconciliation

8. Implement the Declaration Act Action Plan, and provide required resources to ensure that First Nations and Indigenous peoples are true partners and leaders in this work.
9. Implement the Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.
10. Celebrate and protect Indigenous cultures through increased funding and supports for Indigenous cultural infrastructure and projects.
11. Build on progress to ensure clean water for Indigenous peoples across the province.

12. Provide funding to the Métis Nation BC for governance and to ensure that the Métis culture is recognized, respected, and protected in the distinction-based approach.

Digital Connectivity

13. Ensure that rural and remote communities have sufficient access to high-speed internet and cell phone connectivity.



ADVANCED EDUCATION

Key themes relating to advanced education included the need for increased operational funding and affordability with recognition of the unique circumstances of rural and remote institutions. Specific issues related to tuition fees for international students, mental health supports, and accessibility were also raised throughout the consultation. The Committee further heard that there is a need for additional investments in capital infrastructure, trades, research, and literacy. Many noted that investments in advanced education can help address labour market challenges.

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY

The Committee heard about the importance of literacy as a tool to reduce poverty and how increased literacy rates improve a community's ability to recover from COVID-19. Chilliwack Learning Society noted that strong literacy skills are connected to being employed, earning higher wages, and safer work environments. Several literacy organizations advocated for increased funding for adult literacy programs, describing the current funding model for adult literacy as inadequate. Further, Greater Victoria Alliance for Literacy stated that adult literacy is currently funded through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the Ministry of Advanced Education. Instead, they recommended the creation of a five-ministry funding model. They also advocated for innovation hubs which would support literacy and the economy through a continuum of services by using existing infrastructure and leveraging the expertise of community organizations working in collaboration with school and college programs.

In relation to digital literacy, Chilliwack Learning Society and Lift Community Services shared that the need for digital literacy has never been greater. They explained that as more programs and services move online, these skills are needed to meet employment expectations, buy and sell goods, access services, and be involved in the community.

CAPITAL FUNDING

Regarding capital funding, CUPE Vancouver Island District Council shared that chronic underfunding of post-secondary institutions has put pressure on all parts of the post-secondary system and that budgetary cuts have disproportionately been applied to campus services and facilities. This has resulted in maintenance issues, a growing number of precarious workers, increased class sizes, lack of funding to support research and innovation, services that cannot meet demand, and waning enrolment among the most vulnerable students. Additionally, the University of British Columbia stated that modern facilities are critical to BC's universities achieving their mission of cultivating research excellence and providing exceptional learning and research opportunities for students. Further, they noted that investments in BC's classroom infrastructure and research infrastructure also help universities address seismic, environmental, and quality issues related to aging infrastructure. The Committee also heard the need to invest in research space.

With respect to student housing, Committee Members heard about the need for increased funding. The University of Victoria noted that stable and affordable housing is a critical component to success, health, and happiness. UBC's Okanagan campus shared that the cost of housing is rapidly rising in the Okanagan, as the area has some of the highest rental rates in Canada and the lowest rental vacancy rate in the country, making it challenging for students to find housing. Similarly, The University of Victoria Students' Society stated that many students have been forced into unsafe or illegal living environments due to the cost of living in Victoria. Several universities and student societies advocated for more funding for affordable, publicly owned residences for students in order to address the housing crisis.

Other universities requested funding for specific capital projects, including the Interdisciplinary Life Sciences Building at Simon Fraser University's Burnaby campus, the interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation building at

UBC's Okanagan campus and a West Shore Campus at Royal Roads University.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Post-secondary institutions and student organizations described the need to invest in inclusive and accessible education. UBC's Okanagan campus stated that targeted programming is needed to ensure that historically underrepresented groups in post-secondary education, including Indigenous peoples, have access to opportunities and pathways into the economy that post-secondary education can provide. Similarly, the Kwantlen Student Association shared that facing ever-increasing student tuition, coupled with a higher cost of living, has led to a difficult time for students throughout the pandemic. They explained that this is especially the case for students with disabilities, as they are made to pay extra for services and tools they may need to function as every other student does. Further, the University of Victoria Student Society noted that the solely in-person delivery of classes is inequitable and inaccessible not only to students with disabilities, but also to mature students, students who need to work alongside studying, students with dependents and care responsibilities, and those who cannot afford the high cost of living in cities. These organizations supported increased investments to support inclusive and accessible post-secondary learning.

With respect to student accommodations, the Vancouver Island University Faculty Association shared that faculty members do not have sufficient time and resources to support the needs of students requiring disability accommodations. They explained that students and faculty could be more effectively supported by disability and accommodation staff who could be repositories of best practices. They recommended that funding associated with each student with a disability be provided.

The Committee also heard about supports for Indigenous students. Kwantlen Polytechnic University shared that there is no equitable, targeted funding to support Indigenous activities. They further explained that the Aboriginal Service Plan funding, which has supported a few BC post-secondary institutions for many years, needs to be increased, adapted, and extended to all institutions in order to guide the transformation of BC's post-secondary institutions to align with the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, UNDRIP recommendations, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

College of the Rockies Faculty Association stated that flexible, accessible learning needs to be supported with the appropriate technology. To address the increased use of online learning, faculty need to work closely with hardware and software specialists, curriculum developers and educational technologists. They recommended more coordination and communication about which learning technologies are adopted and maintained in advanced education.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Many organizations, institutions and individuals highlighted the overreliance on international students for post-secondary revenue. Vancouver Island University Students' Union noted that due to underfunding of colleges and universities, institutions have become reliant on international students to make up funding shortfalls. They explained that COVID-19 showed how risky it is to depend so much on international enrolment. British Columbia Institute of Technology Student Association stated that it is necessary to correct this dependence so that the revenue streams for post-secondary institutions are not as volatile and to give all students the ability to plan by making tuition increases predictable.

The Committee heard that the lack of predictability of tuition fees increases poses a significant barrier for international students in completing their education. BC Federation of Students cited that in 2017 international students made up 20 percent of enrolment, but their fees made up 49 percent of all tuition revenue. Further, BC Federation of Students noted that international students cannot work more than 20 hours per week off campus, the limited work hours coupled with the increased cost of living is making education more difficult for international students to pursue. Many organizations and individuals expressed the need for a more equitable system that regulates the limits for international student tuition fee increases. Capilano Students' Union stated that no laws exist that regulate tuition or campus services for international students while domestic tuition and other required fees are limited to an increase of two percent per year, creating predictability and stability for these students. Some individuals shared that adding stability and predictability to the current system by regulating international tuition fee increases to ensure they are in line with fee increases for domestic students will create a more fair and just system.

Committee Members also heard about the impact of additional fees for MSP paid by international students. One

individual stated that the additional \$74 fee for MSP is unequal and unfair, is prohibitive, and places an undue burden on international students.

OPERATIONAL FUNDING

Several organizations and universities advocated for increased operational funding for post-secondary institutions. Research Universities' Council of British Columbia advised that the province lags in the development of advanced talent, produces fewer university graduates per capita than nearly all other provinces, and trails other major provinces in investments of graduate student support, research, development, and innovation. They further explained that communities are faced with tackling complex issues such as climate resilience and adaptation, housing affordability, and social and cultural needs — all issues that benefit from focused, high-capacity approaches and investments. Also, with respect to funding, Thompson Rivers University stated that stable, transparent, and predictable public funding enables post-secondary institutions to plan to meet regional and provincial needs as BC and the Interior face critical talent shortages, particularly for graduates with specialized and professional training at the graduate level. Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC advocated for a stabilization fund which would focus on reduction of institutional budgetary risk caused by an overreliance on international student tuition.

Several universities, faculty, and student organizations advocated for a new funding model that fairly and equitably distributes government funding across all public post-secondary institutions. Douglas Students' Union stated that there has been divestment in public education compared to the support provided to colleges and universities in past decades. They added that the rising cost of tuition combined with new ancillary fees, housing cost inflation, and other living expenses are barriers to people's ability to get re-skilled and re-join the workforce. Also, with respect to the funding formula, Students' Union Okanagan of UBC stated that the province only funds the university for the number of students enrolled with a full-time course schedule; however, thousands of students enroll part-time and funding to support services for these students is not accounted for.

British Columbia Association of Institutes and Universities, and the College of the Rockies noted the need for greater financial flexibility and support for post-secondary institutions. British Columbia Association of Institutes and Universities stated

that the restrictions and inconsistencies within the existing accounting policy hamper the ability for post-secondary institutions to utilize existing resources; therefore, they are unable to access retained earnings for capital projects or to support economic initiatives. College of the Rockies also explained that greater flexibility in budgeting to address strategic goals would enhance the ability of colleges to be ahead of the curve and to partner more effectively with regional stakeholders. They also noted that BC universities are given the latitude to draw on accumulated savings and reserves to make long-term investments within the scope of their annual budgets whereas colleges are not able to do so.

The Committee also heard concerns about post-secondary faculty and staff wages. Camosun College Faculty Association shared that college and university instructors in BC earn the lowest wages nationally. Additionally, Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC stated that there is an over-reliance on contract faculty who are often paid at a much lower rate and are not able to contribute to the full functioning of the university, which dampens and lessens the experience within the post-secondary sector for all involved. The CUPE Vancouver Island District Council also advocated for increased funding for campus services including support for bringing campus services back in house.

Many individuals and organizations advocated for increased funding for the Emily Carr University of Art and Design. They noted that Emily Carr students have inadequate access to mental health and accessibility supports. Additionally, they highlighted that the institution does not have enough space, staff, or faculty, which is directly affecting the quality of education and the future of the University, its students, and the emerging creative industry of BC. The Emily Carr Students' Union stated that the university also experiences an annual cycle of contentious, community-dividing tuition fee increases that disproportionately affect international students.

Vancouver Community College Faculty Association presented funding requests to the Committee. They noted 25 percent of Vancouver Community College's students are studying in free English as an Additional Language and Adult Basic Education programs. They explained that doing this work means they are not generating the same revenue that many other institutions do. Vancouver Community College explained that to continue to do this work they need government support so it can avoid increasing tuition for other programs.

PROGRAM FUNDING

Several institutions and organizations advocated for funding for new programs. Thompson Rivers University explained that institutes are at the forefront of societal growth and change; therefore, they need new programs, support and services related to areas such as regional economic development, a clean economy, climate adaptation, mental health, sustainability, accessibility, and Indigenous reconciliation. They stated that the costs related to the implementation of such programs and services have grown dramatically, as they often require more staff, faculty advisors, counsellors, and other support professionals but there has been no change to base grants to account for these expenditures. Additionally, it is anticipated that resources needed to support Indigenous learning will increase as institutions work to meet the objectives of truth and reconciliation. Furthermore, College of the Rockies stated that to realize the full potential of the rural college system, further investments in curriculum development, information and support to prospective students, and development of innovations like micro-credentials and hybrid delivery options will be required.

BC Stone Sand and Gravel Association discussed the need for continued funding the Centre of Training Excellence in Mining, which focuses on job preparedness and innovation, through the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training, WorkBC and the Industry Training Authority.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Committee Members heard about the value of investments in research. The Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC stated that research supports are one of the best ways to help students, because they are often hired under grants to manage projects where they further develop the skills that feed into innovative developments and public-private start-ups. They also noted that universities require a targeted infusion of resources to support research. Similarly, the Graduate Student Societies of British Columbia explained that the quick mobilization of research programs in response to COVID-19 is a clear example of how early investments in research can result in significant contributions. Therefore, the province needs to ensure that it can retain a talent pool of current graduate students in BC. With respect to funding, the University of British Columbia shared that the BC Knowledge and Development Fund helps leverage federal funding through the Canada Foundation for Innovation, and encouraged the

provincial government to enhance investments in this fund to maximize federal research infrastructure funding to BC.

Further, BC Association of Institutes and Universities explained that research intensive universities and primarily undergraduate universities across Canada have a mandate to engage in all types of research, but there are limitations placed on institutions under the *University Act* and the *College and Institute Act*. Additionally, research is not currently being recognized by faculty collective agreements, and concerns have been raised that by recognizing faculty research activity as work to be compensated, the cost of teaching will increase.

RURAL AND REMOTE INSTITUTIONS

Several post-secondary institutions described the value of such institutions in rural communities and how the current funding formula does not reflect the circumstances of rural universities and colleges. BC Colleges stated that rural colleges are important centres of the communities that they serve and are closely connected and integrated into the community contributing to workforce development. They further explained that underfunding of rural institutions leaves them with inadequate resources for student support and management, which affects quality and sustainability. The College of the Rockies Faculty Association shared that there are unique funding challenges for rural and remote institutions including small class sizes which bring in less revenue and having multiple small campuses which requires them to replicate many services and programs. Furthermore, North Island College Faculty Association shared that rural areas have a smaller population base than areas in the lower mainland and minimum student requirements for program fundings should reflect this. The College of the Rockies noted that several other provinces provide special funding to ensure that rural institutions can provide education at the same standard as urban institutions.

STUDENT SUPPORTS

The Committee heard from student unions and faculty associations regarding the need for increased student supports. Simon Fraser Student Society conducted a COVID-19 mental health survey and results showed that students are not provided adequate mental health services even after facing financial burdens, loss of employment, greater mental health issues involving substance use, and experiencing a general trend of mental health decline. They also noted that

although the government allocates money for mental health support initiatives, there have been no structural or permanent changes made at the advanced education level. Similarly, College of the Rockies Faculty Association cited that staff and students are facing more mental health challenges than ever before especially as current workloads are not manageable or sustainable. Capilano Students' Union also highlighted that Black students, in particular, often experience negative mental health at Canadian post-secondary institutions. To address this issue, they advocated for \$4 million in annual funding to all post-secondary institutions for counsellors and to ensure the hiring of Black student counsellors.

TECHNOLOGY, TRADES, AND SKILLS TRAINING

Several organizations discussed skill training programs. BC Tech shared that in the *BC Labour Market Outlook: 2021*, the BC government projects that technology jobs will be one of the top sources of private sector job growth in BC in the coming decade with 140,700 job openings projected. They noted that every industry needs tech-savvy workers that will enable industries to remain globally competitive. DigiBC shared that the workforce demand for digital media and technology skills has continually outpaced supply. Similarly, Council of Canadian Innovators called for continued funding for apprenticeship and jobs training programs in the tech sector.

Additionally, BC Building Trades stated that the province is facing a massive skilled trades shortage in construction, with the need for over 27,000 workers within the next six years. These organizations advocated for an investment in trades training that aligns with workforce needs. Similarly, Manufacturing Safety Alliance of BC emphasized that there are not enough qualified health and safety professionals in the manufacturing sector. They advocated for continued investment in Sector Labour Market Partnership funding initiatives as this funding has been instrumental to collaboratively solve industry challenges.

Additionally, Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Institute of Canada discussed the Skilled Trades Certification system that will bring BC's skilled trades into alignment with other provinces. They stated that the province must create the necessary conditions for successful transition to a Skilled Trades Certification regime by establishing a robust and clearly understandable program of compliance and ensuring a clear

pathway for the addition of new trades, based on market and industry needs.

TUITION AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Several student organizations advocated for an increase to financial assistance, specifically the BC Access Grant. Simon Fraser Student Society noted that tuition increases prove to be a barrier to accessing education for marginalized and low-income students, especially those who face obstacles from a young age due to systemic oppression and inequities. Thompson Rivers University Students' Union emphasized that needs-based grants are one of the most effective ways to make education more accessible. Additionally, the British Columbia Institute of Technology Student Association noted that in the last couple of years, federal spending on British Columbia students through student aid has increased by over \$150 million, whereas provincial spending is only up about \$15 million.

Also with respect to financial assistance, Camosun College Faculty Association highlighted the need to expand the successful tuition waiver program for former youth in care to include Indigenous persons and those of other marginalized equity-seeking groups.

Additionally, University of Victoria Students' Society noted that students in essential fields, like nursing, education, or social work, are expected to do an unpaid practicum as part of their degree. They further explained that this places a burden on students who are dealing with a high cost of living in addition to heavy workloads. They stated that these students are critical to the future of care in BC and should be compensated through financial support.

Alma Mater Society informed the Committee that the 2022 Student Aid BC policy manual allocates \$934 to shelter. However, the average Metro Vancouver rent for a one bedroom is \$2,200 or \$1,400 in the Fraser Valley. They explained that this demonstrates a need for the student living allowance to be more nuanced to each individual region. They also advocated for an increase to the maximum amount of the BC Access grant and for an expansion to the income eligibility threshold. They cited that for a full-time student in a program of two or more years the grant cutoff is \$42,606 which is inherently inequitable, as the BC annual salary average is around \$55,000 in 2021.

Graduate Student Societies of British Columbia noted that the BC Graduate Scholarship Fund's funding period extension ends in 2023. They emphasized that graduate students face increased financial pressures due to the greater burden of student debt as a result of their continuing education, since there are currently no needs-based grants for graduate education. By providing more needs-based grants, they explained that the province can help alleviate financial stress on graduate students.

Many organizations and individuals, including Vancouver Island University Students' Union, and BC Federation of Students advocated for a freeze on tuition fees as well as a plan to progressively reduce tuition fees at public institutions to lessen the financial burden on students. Emily Carr Students' Union explained that the removal of tuition fees translates to economic opportunity through a more skilled and educated population, supports public health and reduces the need to continue such excessive spending on healthcare.

WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING

Committee Members heard support for funding of programs that provide work-integrated learning experiences for students. Burnaby Board of Trade stated that one of the biggest challenges facing businesses right now is access to staff and workforce development. Similarly, New Car Dealers of BC noted that the automobile sector faces a critical labour shortage, with industry predicting the need for up to 20,000 workers over the next decade. To address this concern, these organizations, advocated for continued funding for apprenticeship and jobs training programs. Alma Mater Society explained that by increasing and permanently funding co-op and work-integrated learning programs, more work experience will better position students to get jobs directly after graduation, support long-term economic recovery and create a more sustainable workforce.

Further, MOSAIC noted that recent immigrants face higher unemployment rates than those born in Canada, and are more likely to work in jobs that under-utilize their education, skills and experience. The most significant barrier lies in the difficulty in gaining Canadian on-the-job experience, networks, and references. They shared their support for targeted funding and support in this area to allow employers and service organizations to work together to provide newcomers with occupation-specific training for in-demand job sectors, hands-

on workplace experience through internships, orientation to Canadian workplaces and mentoring.

CONCLUSIONS

Committee Members acknowledged the value of literacy and its importance for adapting to new economies. The Committee agreed that investments in this area are important for poverty reduction and recognized the need to properly resource literacy programs. It also noted that the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for digital literacy to navigate and access many online services and programs.

With respect to capital funding, the Committee heard the need for affordable and accessible housing options for students. It noted that as seats in post-secondary institutions are increased to address the labour shortage, institutions must have housing and support available for the influx of students. Committee Members also noted that it is important to ensure there is access to housing when recruiting international students to BC. They discussed several options to address this need, including by working with communities and the private sector to address the housing needs of students. The Committee also acknowledged requests from student unions and post-secondary institutions on the need to address aging campus facilities and increase classroom and lab space.

Committee Members acknowledged that post-secondary institutions rely on international student tuition and COVID-19 highlighted the vulnerability of this funding approach. Members discussed how international students enrich communities and affirmed that it is imperative that international students are treated fairly. They also discussed the need for more predictability for tuition. Additionally, the Committee noted that international students could be vital in addressing the current labour market challenges and that students should have the option to work more than 20 hours a week if they so choose.

Reflecting on input from post-secondary institutions, faculty, and students, the Committee noted the need to re-examine the funding formula. Members highlighted that a new funding formula must be reflective of inflationary pressures and local circumstances, particularly for institutions located in rural and remote areas of the province. As post-secondary institutions play a critical role in enhancing critical thinking and addressing labour market challenges, the Committee agreed that these institutions need to be adequately funded to continue to meet the needs of the province. Regarding faculty,

Committee Members discussed the need to recruit and retain the best individuals and address challenges with respect to precarious work in the sector. Members also discussed the need for financial flexibility for colleges to create equity with universities regarding the ability to draw on accumulated savings and reserves.

The Committee acknowledged that many students and student unions emphasized the burden of tuition costs on accessing post-secondary institutions. Members noted that finances should not be an impediment to education. They highlighted the importance of continuing needs-based grants, such as the BC Access Grant, to improve access to education, especially for marginalized communities. The Committee heard that students feel they are bearing more than their share of costs and a pathway to reduce tuition costs should be explored, including through subsidies and grants. Committee Members also discussed the need for accessible education for all, especially for students with disabilities and support needs. Members also heard about a lack of funding to support Indigenous students in accessing post-secondary education. They acknowledged that there is more work to be done in this area and continued

investments in inclusive and accessible education are necessary.

The Committee acknowledged the importance of training to address labour market shortages. They noted that skills training must be accessible across the province and should be available outside of urban areas. Committee Members particularly recognized the value of work-integrated learning and apprenticeship training and their importance to bringing more people into the workforce more quickly. Members highlighted that technology is one of the largest drivers of BC's economy and agreed that students should have the opportunity to gain the skills required to work in this sector. Committee Members also expressed their support for continued investment in research and knowledge creation, especially in areas and sectors critical for economic growth.

Committee Members acknowledged the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students in an already difficult and stressful time. They discussed the need for wrap around supports for students, especially in the area of mental health. The Committee agreed with the input received from faculty members, that more counselling supports need to be provided to students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

Adult Education and Literacy

14. Provide multi-year funding for literacy programs, including programs addressing digital and financial literacy, to meet the needs of communities.

Capital Funding

15. Allocate more money for affordable and accessible student housing on campus, and broaden the rental pool in communities.
16. Allocate resources to support post-secondary institutions to modernize infrastructure and address aging facilities to enhance students' physical and mental wellbeing.

Diversity and Inclusion

17. Enable workforce development by committing the necessary learner supports to ensure full post-secondary access and retention for under-represented groups, including Indigenous peoples, people of colour, immigrants, and persons with disabilities.

International Students

18. Create a provincial strategy for international students that includes predictable fees and ensures that international students feel welcomed and are supported.

Operational Funding

19. Create a new funding formula that recognizes inflationary pressures and the needs of institutions as well as the unique circumstances of institutions, especially those in rural and remote areas.
20. Grant colleges the flexibility in their annual budgets to make long-term investments in innovation and program development.
21. Work with post-secondary institutions to retain instructors, including by funding faculty positions in predictable, long-term contracts.
22. Create more program seats in sectors facing a labour shortage such as speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, and health care practitioners.

Research and Innovation

23. Increase investment in research with targeted investments in sectors critical for strengthening the province's well-being, that align with the government's key priorities, to retain highly skilled graduate students in BC.
24. Support knowledge creation in BC through increased investment in post-secondary research.

Student Supports

25. Increase mental health supports for students at post-secondary institutions across the province, including by providing funding to hire BIPOC counsellors, and continuing funding for mental health counselling and referral services.

Technology, Trades, and Skills Training

26. Increase core funding to trades training providers and ensure skills training is available and accessible throughout the province.
27. Recognize foreign credentials and encourage innovative skills programs such as micro-credentials.
28. Provide greater access to and investment in work-integrated learning and reskilling programs for transitioning workers.
29. Continue to develop and consider strategies to drive innovation, sustainability, apprenticeships, and trades, working with industry as a trusted partner to drive new programs and initiatives.
30. Invest in training and technology retooling grants for employers and workers with industry partners.
31. Support educational opportunities that connect secondary and post-secondary students with the skills required to work in the broader tech sector.

Tuition and Financial Assistance

32. Continue to provide need-based assistance to students, including by increasing the BC Access Grant and expanding the income eligibility threshold.

33. Reduce financial barriers to post-secondary education by providing grants, scholarships, bursaries, and subsidies for all students, including BIPOC, and migrant students.



ARTS, LIBRARIES, AND SPORT

Submissions regarding the arts, libraries, and sport sectors emphasized the unique values each provides to the province while highlighting a lack of funding and supports for both organizations and individuals. As these sectors are still recovering from the pandemic and now experiencing rising costs, consultation participants described the financial constraints and difficulties experienced by these sectors due to a lack of sufficient and predictable funding.

ARTS AND CULTURE

Organizations representing the arts and culture sector emphasized the value of arts and culture and advocated for more funding. The Penticton & District Community Arts Council noted the importance of arts and culture and the role they play in the identity of communities as well as supporting the mental wellness of British Columbians. The BC Alliance for Arts + Culture shared this sentiment, adding that art and culture's ability to complement other sectors and support economies makes it one of society's greatest resources. These organizations and others explained the need for funding of the sector that keeps up with inflation and cost of living increases.

The Committee heard from several organizations on the issues pertaining to the facilities used for arts and culture, with several requesting specific funding for new facilities. The Kamloops Symphony Society stated that a lack of music-specific performance space continues to be a major limiting factor for arts organizations in Kamloops in terms of availability and flexibility of use and recommended infrastructure funding for projects of all sizes. Juan de Fuca Performance Arts Centre Society echoed this in their identification of a lack of spaces in the Capital Regional District that are appropriate, accessible, affordable, and available. Western Canada Theatre shared that its home office and production facilities are in a converted cattle auction house which is in high demand as one of the only soft-seat theatres in Kamloops. They also noted the limited ability to bring in professionals from Vancouver and Victoria to perform at facilities due to increased costs related to travel

and accommodation. Science World reported that funding support for infrastructure repairs is needed to remediate critical issues that may impact their ability to continue in their current location as the dome is leaking, and systems like HVAC, chillers, electrical systems, and heavy decking need to be replaced.

Organizations in this sector highlighted the importance of BC Arts Council funding as the most direct and effective way to ensure that resources can reach and support individual artists and arts organizations. They noted that this funding supports organizational capacity building, reconciliation, equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. BC Museums Association and other organizations referenced a 2017 commitment to double the budget of the Arts Council and described issues facing the sector as a result of insufficient funding. The Exploration Place Museum & Science Centre described issues with the distribution of funds, stating that focusing the bulk of the Arts Council's annual operating grants on two or three large organizations in the Lower Mainland leaves the rest of the province unsupported. The organization recommended that funding be broadened to allow more of BC's arts and culture organizations to access funding.

With the easing of pandemic restrictions, organizations described the significant and unequal impact of the pandemic and stated that the full recovery and restart of the arts and culture sector is still in progress. For example, Kamloops Symphony Society shared that over 40 percent of previous symphony subscribers have not attended a concert since returning to in-person options in the fall which is concerning as ticket sales are crucial to the Society's sustainability. Le Conseil culturel et artistique francophone de la Colombie-Britannique described bottlenecks from the rescheduling of previously cancelled events which is further slowing recovery. Organizations noted that funding is needed for personal protective equipment, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning upgrades, digital agility, and access to rapid tests for front line staff as well as marketing and promotion to support the return of live audiences.

The Committee heard from organizations promoting the idea of tax credits and incentives for arts and culture. The Performing Arts & Live Events Labour Coalition of BC cited the benefits provided to the film and television production industry through labour incentivization and the absence of a similar benefit for the performing arts sector despite their similarities. The Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce noted that a tax credit for arts, culture and sport would also support families to engage in these beneficial activities and would support those that already do.

Individual supports for artists were suggested to assist with the unique challenges faced by those in this sector. Ballet Victoria and BC Alliance for Arts + Culture both recommended supports for individual artists due to low wages and limited opportunities to earn additional income. BC Alliance for Arts + Culture stated that artists are disproportionately affected by the current economic challenges as they have lower incomes and highlighted the need to keep artists in the communities where they live and work by addressing their cost of living. Ballet Victoria recommended the continuation of rent and wage subsidies brought by the pandemic while BC Alliance for Arts + Culture called for guaranteed basic income and housing to ensure artists are supported.

The Association of Book Publishers of BC explained that BC creators and publishers continue to experience a significant loss in licensing revenue, estimated at 16 percent, resulting from the education sector's uncompensated use of their works in classrooms. The organization also noted the rising costs of freight fees and paper production, which are impacting the thin margins for publishers. They recommended that the royalty rate set by the copyright board for the use of their copyrighted materials in the classrooms be paid.

Regarding museums, the Exploration Place Museum & Science Centre noted that repository space needs to be established throughout the province to continue to meet obligations under UNDRIP and provincial paleontological legislation. Similarly, BC Museums Association recommended ongoing grants to support the repatriation of Indigenous artifacts as a means of reconciliation, as institutions and collectors around the world hold culturally significant items that should be returned to Indigenous communities.

DIGITAL MEDIA, MUSIC, AND FILM

Motion Picture Production Industry Association highlighted the importance of Creative BC and BC Film Commission and

advocated for increased funding for both as they support the growth and development of the creative industry. Organizations also recommended funding to accelerate the impact of industry equity initiatives like Creative Pathways, a newly launched hub for diverse workforce development. The Motion Picture Production Industry Association noted workforce development strategies that address impending labour market shortages along with building a diverse and inclusive workforce are among the most pressing priorities in the production sector.

Women in Film and Television Vancouver suggested improving equity through the film industry tax credits, recommending an equity requirement that would advance work opportunities in BC's film industry for Indigenous, racialized, disabled, 2SLGBTQ+, and women. The organization also stated that implementing a record and report requirement on the demographic distribution of funds dispersed through tax credits would provide data-driven evidence that could be used to present strategic and actionable insights to industry stakeholders, organizations, funders, and broadcasters.

DigiBC explained that the BC interactive digital media tax credit enables the sector to invest in training for workers, the wider tech sector, and the broader economy and recommended it be increased to 20 percent. They were joined by Canadian Media Producers Association, BC Branch in recommending stable and dependable film and production tax credits as these are key drivers in bringing big business to BC in an extremely competitive international landscape.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Several library boards and associations recommended increasing the funding of public libraries to \$23 million dollars annually with ongoing incremental increases. These libraries and organizations noted the importance of libraries as community hubs and referenced increasing costs of operating, staffing, and providing physical and digital collections. BC Libraries Cooperative estimated that \$23 million a year would be the equivalent annual provincial grant today with inflation had it not been cut over ten years ago. Other libraries and organizations recommended increased funding to help meet increased demand, create more stability, expand programming, and enable the hiring of staff. The Powell River Public Library added that municipalities have had to increase their funding to libraries, with West Vancouver Memorial Library noting the limitations of municipal revenue options compared to the

province. Surrey Public Library Board recommended reviewing the funding formula to make distribution of this grant more equitable, noting that Surrey is a rapidly growing area that welcomes an average of 1000 new residents each month and many come to the library to learn about their community. Similarly, West Vancouver Memorial Library recommended a more progressive funding model that includes populations and inflation, and reflects the modern role of public libraries.

British Columbia Library Association highlighted the role libraries play in the opioid crisis, providing valuable resources to those struggling with addiction, homelessness, and mental health. This organization also spoke to how libraries adapted to the pandemic through the increased offering of digital book lending, allowing libraries to continue to provide services while being closed despite the higher associated costs. The Association of BC Public Library Directors additionally noted the role libraries have played during climate emergency events such as wildfires, heat domes, and floods and the services libraries provide during and after these events. Two organizations highlighted the role of rural libraries as hubs for community support and access to technology and noted that many rural and Indigenous communities in BC still have little or no access to library services.

SPORT

Sport organizations emphasized the benefits to participation in physical activity, including for physical and mental health, and referenced stagnant funding for the sector. Sport Medicine Council of British Columbia noted that the sports sector plays a critical role for BC citizens to live active and healthy lives and stay connected in their communities. In addition to these benefits, BC Ultimate Society spoke to the opportunities and experiences sport provides with respect to coaching, organizing, and volunteering.

Several sport organizations recommended an investment of \$15 million over three years in the sector, with some specifically linking this funding to implementing the Pathways to Sport framework designed to create a prosperous and sustainable sport sector in BC. Other recommendations in the sport sector relate to pandemic recovery funding especially for indoor sports, infrastructure, government sport agencies, and gaming.

BC Blind Sports and Recreation Association expressed concerns that COVID-19 and increasing costs will reduce participation in sports, emphasising the importance of

equitable opportunities in sport. KidSport BC similarly shared that marginalized populations like Indigenous youth, children with disabilities and new Canadians are significantly under-represented in sport and girls are dropping out of sport at an alarming rate. These organizations recommended funding to improve affordability for under-represented groups. Others made recommendations to increase youth participation, through increased funding and tax credits. KidSport BC noted that participation in sport provides a sense of belonging, promotes inclusion, develops healthy habits, and helps kids gain confidence and build friendships. The Committee heard about similar benefits resulting from BC Ultimate Society's work with an Indigenous School on the Saanich Peninsula near Victoria to bring disc sports to youth. They noted the successes they have experienced not only in the engagement of youth with the sport but with the wider community as well and shared testimonials from its participants.

Organizations shared the importance of provincial sport organizations and their role in the amateur sport system in BC, ensuring that sport is delivered with quality, to an appropriate standard, and in a safe manner. Along with supporting the call for an additional base investment in BC's sport sector, BC Blind Sports and Recreation Association recommended an increase in core funding for provincial sport organizations.

With respect to capital funding, British Columbia Amateur Athletics Association called for dedicated funding for sport infrastructure, equipment, and maintenance along with a review of provincial sport sector leadership to remove duplication and overlap among government agencies.

Regarding high performance, Curl BC explained that high performance programs are a necessity for the long-term health of any sport, providing an impetus for personal, provincial, and national excellence and inspiration. They noted that extended funding in the high-performance category can be used to help underwrite athletes with mental and physical preparation as well as educational programs in team dynamics, among other supports. Basketball BC recommended distributing funds through the Athlete Education Scholarship Program to help support the next generation of high-performance athletes.

CONCLUSIONS

Committee Members highlighted the value of the arts and culture sector, especially its contributions to mental health, building community, and preserving heritage. Members particularly emphasized the role of Science World with respect

to education and technology, including the promotion of STEM, and discussed the need for capital funding for this iconic institution to make necessary repairs and upgrades. Regarding individual artists, the Committee agreed that more support is needed to encourage individuals to pursue professions in this sector. It further noted disparity in funding for organizations in small and rural communities which is a significant issue as many British Columbians do not have the opportunity to visit the Royal BC Museum or Science World due to their location.

With respect to the digital media, music, and film sectors, Members highlighted the need to support and increase diversity and discussed engaging with these sectors to review the distribution of tax credits to achieve this goal. Further, they agreed workforce development and labour market strategies should promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within the film industry. The Committee also noted the importance of the film industry in bringing business to the province and they supported maintaining tax credits and incentives in this area. Members also agreed that digital media tax credits should be increased as tax incentives in this sector are comparatively low to the rest of Canada.

Committee Members recognized the changing role of public libraries as community hubs and centres for literacy,

creativity, diversity, and innovation. Further, they highlighted the important role libraries played during the pandemic and heat dome and discussed how libraries have been flexible in addressing community needs. Members agreed that libraries must be supported with adequate funding as they serve as equalizers – providing services, resources, connectivity, and entertainment to those who may not have access otherwise, especially in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities.

Regarding sport, the Committee described participation as a great way to keep society healthy, functional, and productive. Members also acknowledged the important role that sport plays in supporting mental health, both for children and adults, especially as we come out of the pandemic. Members also reflected on the importance of ensuring that there are mechanisms available for individuals in sport to safely report abuse in light of the recent reports of sexual abuse at Hockey Canada. Similar to recommendations in this area last year, the Committee heard from multiple groups who recommended an investment of \$15 million over three years in the sector. Members were once again supportive of this request recognizing the need for funding to improve affordability and access and to ensure that the sector is accessible, inclusive, and equitable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

Arts and Culture

34. Increase funding for the BC Arts Council and ensure equitable distribution of funds to organizations across the province.
35. Commit to arts infrastructure spending for both large and small projects, particularly cultural spaces.
36. Provide funding for museums in smaller communities and establish repository space throughout the province.
37. Extend the rent and wage subsidy programs for art organizations and artists introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic.
38. Work with Science World to address necessary infrastructure upgrades and repairs to ensure continued operations.

Digital Media, Music, and Film

39. Provide certainty for the film industry by maintaining the stability of the Film Incentive BC and production services tax credit programs.

40. Support the digital media industry by increasing and extending the interactive digital media tax credit.
41. Engage with the digital media, music, and film industries to review tax credits with a view to increasing diversity, including by exploring equity and reporting requirements on the demographic distribution of funds.
42. Collaborate on workforce development and labour market strategies that embrace the priority to grow a diverse, equitable, and inclusive film industry.

Public Libraries

43. Increase the annual operating grant for public libraries, linked to inflation, and provide targeted financial support for libraries in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities to increase access in these areas.

Sport

44. Invest \$15 million in amateur sport to improve affordability for low-income families and other under-served populations, and ensure that the sector is inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Concerns about supply chain challenges and disruptions were a key theme with respect to economic development with many calls for increased support for agriculture and food security. The Committee also heard about the need to increase economic reconciliation and partnerships with Indigenous peoples regarding forestry, mining, and natural resource development. Several suggestions were put forward to address labour market shortages through retraining, upskilling, and the recognition of foreign credentials.

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

The Committee heard about the need for a general increase in agriculture spending with organizations emphasizing the importance of the sector and noting that government support in this area is significantly behind other provinces. Further, BC Cattlemen's Association stated that the Ministry of Agriculture has not been given the support or funding necessary to keep agriculture sustainable within the province. BC Agriculture Council suggested additional funding could support research and development, ensure adequate resources for increased engagement and consultation with Indigenous peoples, and help repair and replace equipment and infrastructure.

Regarding farmland, a few organizations discussed farm classification with recommendations to increase the revenue qualifier, make the classification contingent on a minimum five-year lease, and review the thresholds of the farm classification definition. BC Agriculture Council explained that these thresholds were established in 1995 and no longer adequately ensure that farmland is being used for agricultural production. They recommended reviewing the *Assessment Act* to identify opportunities to ensure farmland is used for agricultural production and that municipalities receive taxation revenues from lands that are used for purposes other than agricultural production. The BC Fruit Growers' Association supported greater intensification of the use of agricultural lands and proposed an increased revenue qualifier for agricultural classification which would require more activity to receive the property tax reduction.

Some organizations made specific recommendations to increase affordability for farmers and ranchers, highlighting increasing costs linked to fuel prices, the carbon tax, and buying land. Cariboo Cattlemen's Association spoke to the difficulties in getting young people into the industry due to high costs and taxes and recommended reducing the carbon tax to make farming more affordable. Similarly, Quesnel Cattlemen's Association stated that for many ranchers fuel bills have doubled in the last two months which is keeping young people out of the industry as well as pushing others out.

A few organizations and individuals suggested measures to make agriculture part of the climate change solution and to mitigate the impact of natural disasters. Farmland Advantage highlighted their work with farmers and Indigenous communities to enhance natural assets and ecosystem values, which deliver critical ecosystem services like water filtration, flood management, wildfire risk reduction, and clean air. Their program identifies sensitive riparian and grassland habitat, works with farmers to develop a restoration plan, and provides tools and financial resources needed to maintain ecosystem services. BC Agriculture Council emphasized the challenges that adverse climate events like the heat dome, floods, droughts, and wildfires continue to present for farmers and ranchers and noted that the sector requires additional support to mitigate the impact of these events.

A significant theme in this area was the importance of addressing food security particularly in light of inflation and recent health and climate emergencies. This theme was also prominent in the survey with more than 100 responses highlighting the importance of local agriculture and food security to combat rising food costs. Respondents also advocated for increased awareness and opportunities for small scale urban farming and personal/community gardening to strengthen food security. In their submissions and presentations, some organizations focused on food security as it impacts specific populations such as seniors on fixed incomes, children, and Indigenous communities. Others

highlighted the role of food hubs and food policy councils. Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable spoke about the Food Hub Network which aims to foster growth and innovation in the processing sector through improved industry access to facilities, equipment, technology, and business support. They noted that these food hubs need to be funded to achieve their sustainable financial plans and grow new hubs into other regions. LUSH Valley Food Action Society and Comox Valley Food Policy Council noted that many regions across the province have created independent Food Policy Councils, to work with elected officials to increase food security, food literacy and local food economies but there is no formal provincial network to share resources and support more provincial-focused food policy changes. Similarly, United Way and Collingwood Neighbourhood House advocated for investment in a centralized data-capturing platform to better understand the food insecurity needs of communities across the province.

FISHERIES

United Fishermen & Allied Workers' Union noted that many salmon fisheries were shut down last year and, unlike the robust program of supports for forestry workers displaced by old growth deferrals, there are no transitional supports in place for harvesters out of work. They explained that roughly 60 percent of the commercial harvester were unexpectedly cancelled last year, with an unknown length of time before fisheries may be reopened. Further, they noted the need for alternative means of bolstering fishing stock, such as increased use of hatcheries, to reduce pressures on fish stocks threatened by over-extraction. Noting that every Canadian province except BC provides a tax concession from the motor fuel and carbon tax on diesel used in commercial fishing vessels, BC Seafood Alliance recommended an exemption to the motor fuel tax and carbon tax for seafood harvesters. They cited evidence that the environmental costs of animal-sourced foods created in the land-based farming industry far exceed the environmental costs of food produced from the sea; however, BC farmers enjoy an exemption from the motor fuel tax and the carbon tax while BC seafood harvesters do not.

FORESTRY

With respect to general forest management, the Committee received recommendations related to timber sales and supply and the tenure system. BC Wildlife Federation Region 5 Cariboo Chilcotin stated that over-harvesting timber supply

results in habitat loss, undermines reconciliation, and impacts local communities. Similarly, British Columbia Coalition for Forestry Reform noted that excessive human activity, pests, disease, and fire have drastically reduced the timber supply in BC, so harvesting is now occurring deep in community watersheds and much nearer to communities. This has damaged a wide range of non-timber values, including wildlife, water quality, tourism, and recreation. They recommended canceling tenures to improve the long-term health of forests and the forestry industry. Some organizations highlighted the need for more data with respect to forest management practices. Resource Works stated that government should consider a wide range of information while it pursues its forestry paradigm shift, including updated old-growth numbers, advice and data from the public service and insights from impacted First Nations on how to best protect BC forests and forestry communities.

The Committee also heard about supports for Indigenous land management. Nature United stated that many First Nations are seeking to play a greater role in forest management and in some cases will seek to manage forests under a new paradigm requiring access to expert analysis and resources that facilitate a transition to new management models.

LABOUR AND JOBS

A significant theme in this area is labour shortages and skills development. Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce cited challenges finding labour as one of the top barriers to growth for BC businesses. Likewise, BC Colleges highlighted the need to retrain and upskill BC workers as many jobs are being transformed by technology and climate change. Organizations suggested various ways to address labour shortages including through partnerships, supports for small and medium businesses, and sponsorship programs. Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC referenced barriers to newcomers in accessing the labour market such as the lack of foreign credential recognition, language barriers, and employer requirements for Canadian experience. With regard to sponsorship programs, Resource Municipalities Coalition shared that smaller businesses attempting to utilize the Provincial Nominee Program are challenged by the work associated with the application process, the lag in response, and challenges created for successful applicants. To support small businesses, they suggested that assigned clerical staff at the provincial level could work with businesses to complete sponsorship program applications to sponsor immigrant

workers. Restaurants Canada also referenced the Provincial Nominee Program and recommended a dedicated hospitality stream to address unique labour demand challenges in that industry due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Committee also heard about efforts to increase diversity and inclusion in the workplace and support underrepresented workers. Next Gen Men described their efforts to engage workers in male-dominant industries to promote gender justice in the workplace. They recommended making inclusive leadership programs eligible for the BC Employer Training Grant to help small- and medium-sized businesses access the benefits of outside expertise to transform their workplace cultures. Jelly Digital Marketing explained that many Indigenous people are forced to leave their community to gain access to the skills needed to work or open a business and as such they noted that many Indigenous people may feel disconnected from family, friends, and their support network for lengthy periods of time. They added that during the pandemic, online learning became more affordable and accessible, which offers the opportunity to develop a made-in-BC Indigitization Strategy which will help connect Indigenous people to jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Regarding supports for entrepreneurs, Futurpreneur noted that Indigenous, racialized, newcomer, and women entrepreneurs often face barriers to accessing the financing, business planning resources, and mentorship needed to launch a successful business. Further, structural barriers like financial literacy, access to collateral to secure loan capital, and understanding what impacts credit can limit opportunities for these entrepreneurs and, in turn, perpetuate historical inequalities in terms of business ownership and prosperity. As such, they recommended investing in programs and services that address barriers faced by young, diverse, underserved entrepreneurs.

Many organizations called for additional funding for the Employment Standards Branch for the hiring and training of staff to shorten wait times and increase proactive investigation. Dignidad Migrante Society noted that the branch's budget has been frozen for three years, yet the number of complaints to the branch has increased substantially due to the expansion of rights and benefits under the *Employment Standards Act*, COVID-19, and the removal of the self-help kit complaints process in 2019. BC Employment Standards Coalition cited issues of unresolved complaints, a lack of thorough investigations, inadequate staffing, and

complaint suppression which may involve employee fear and intimidation, language barriers, in-person access to branch staff and offices, and inconvenient hours of operation. West Coast LEAF emphasized that such issues are critical for women and people who experience gender-based marginalization because they are overrepresented in low-wage, precarious and part-time work in BC. Several organizations including BC Federation of Labour pointed to the misclassification of workers as independent contractors which means they do not receive benefits or employment insurance. Worker Solidarity Network noted that employers often mischaracterize employees as contractors to avoid meeting the minimum employment standards and this mischaracterization is typically workplace-wide, or even industry wide, rather than the occasional employee. However, when one worker submits a complaint, currently, the Employment Standards Branch focuses on the worker's wages rather than the employer's practices.

The Committee also received a few recommendations related to occupational health and safety and WorkSafeBC. Manufacturing Safety Alliance of BC stated that developing health and safety management systems has been successfully shown to have higher safety performance outcomes. They added that funding to assist manufacturers with establishing occupational health and safety systems could assist companies with building and maintaining a sustainable culture. CUPE 1004 cited numerous reviews of the workers' compensation system and shared concerns about the experience of workers navigating the claims system, especially workers with severe or complex injuries, and workers for whom English is not their first language. They recommended funding to develop a plan for the full implementation of the recommendations made through extensive reviews of BC's worker compensation system by WorkSafeBC. Greater Vancouver Board of Trade noted that as of December 2021, employers' contributions and the return on those contributions have been substantially more than what is required to fund WorkSafeBC, with a funding ratio of 155 percent to 166 percent. They further explained that if the target funding ratio was set at 130 percent, there would be a surplus of approximately \$3.5 billion to redistribute to employers which is similar to the approach taken in nearly every other province.

MINING AND NATURAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

The Committee heard about the need for planning and increased oversight with respect to mining and natural resource development. Regarding mining, Teck Resources Limited explained that BC remains the only major Canadian province without a critical minerals and metals plan. They recommended that a plan be developed and priorities within it include streamlining approvals and permitting for critical minerals and metals projects, and supporting the exploration, production, sale, export, recycling, and use of these products in clean infrastructure domestically and around the world. The Professional Employees Association stated that the current model of natural resource management in BC relies excessively on external professionals, noting that across the public sector the number of scientific professionals dropped significantly from 1,500 in 2001, to 1,200 in 2020, with government having insufficient professional capacity to review and independently assess their information and interpretations which jeopardizes the success of resource projects. They cited *Professional Reliance Review, The Final Report of the Review of Professional Reliance in Natural Resource Decision-Making*, a 2018 report by Mark Haddock, which highlighted the need for natural resource regulators to maintain sufficient technical knowledge to effectively conduct oversight. They recommended creating explicit scientific integrity and transparency policies such as those instituted at the federal level to ensure that the BC government has adequate knowledge and oversight of natural resource management.

Some organizations spoke to actions and funding to support reconciliation, revenue sharing and equity ownership. Mining Association of BC highlighted the sector's vital role in economic reconciliation and noted that to ensure Indigenous nations can fully participate in and benefit from projects in their territories, government needs to support nations, so they are placed on an equitable footing in government-to-government relations with the province. Similarly, Resource Works stated that economic reconciliation must include Indigenous equity ownership and revenue sharing in major projects. They suggested that up to half of the revenue of resource projects should be shared with the nations on whose land the project is located, subject to certain conditions, and invested in a sovereign wealth fund accessible to the relevant nations. Northern Confluence Initiative explained that the *Mineral Tenure Act* is inconsistent with the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* and still grants the same

free-entry certificate that was issued in the 1860s. They also recommended updating the *Mines Act* to support Indigenous and new protected areas explaining that retiring tenures for conservation requires compensation commensurate with expenses incurred. Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers explained that the court's findings in the *Yahey v. British Columbia* decision have created regulatory uncertainty, which is having ongoing impacts on industrial activities in northeastern BC and recommended funding for reconciliation and the necessary policies, systems, and resources to address the outcomes of this decision.

The Committee also heard about issues with permitting with organizations describing long wait times, delays, and uncertainty. Cariboo Mining Association shared that permitting for placer mining has gone from 60 days up to 240 days, and even upwards of 20 months, because it is no longer possible to apply for a permit and work in the same year. Association for Mineral Exploration stated that an efficient permitting system ensures land and water resources are being used responsibly, provides certainty for individuals, vendors and investors who are employed and/or supporting the mineral exploration sector, and allows for effective consultation with Indigenous peoples leading to economic opportunities. Similarly, BC Stone Sand and Gravel Association highlighted the importance of regulations and shorter permitting times for a healthy industry and stated that more than two or three mining inspectors in each region, or 15 in total, are needed to address backlogs of updates and new applications.

Several organizations recommended funding for electrification and decarbonization to reduce emissions and noted challenges in this area. BC Stone Sand and Gravel Association shared that many of their member operations would like to switch to line power instead of using diesel-generated power but are held back by capital costs. Similarly, Teck Resources Limited explained that converting energy-intensive activities to electric powered technologies will require more than three times the electricity available currently through BC Hydro. To address these challenges and reduce emissions, organizations recommended subsidies and rebates, support for new innovative carbon abatement technologies, and reinvesting more of the carbon tax into programs to help further decarbonization of trade-exposed industries. Enbridge noted that the use of a market-based mechanism, such as the Output-Based Pricing System, would enable increased flexibility and cost-effective pathways to compliance.

Some organizations put forward specific recommendations to increase the competitiveness of their industries. Enbridge stated that BC is well positioned to supply natural gas to global markets; however, the province is falling behind the United States due to regulatory uncertainty, competitiveness, and the inability to get resources to market. They recommended re-examining fiscal, tax, and regulatory elements to ensure global competitiveness to attract investment to build the next world-class LNG infrastructure. Association for Mineral Exploration stated that the province's incentives have long been one of the mainstays of the mineral exploration industry in BC and modest increases to the mining exploration tax credit and the mining flow-through share rate will lead to BC having the most competitive physical incentives in the country.

With respect to public geoscience, Association for Mineral Exploration stated that investment has fallen in recent years and that basic information about where to find critical minerals is necessary for a low-carbon future. Geoscience BC Society advocated for a shared funding model for public earth science programs that would focus on critical minerals and metals, geological carbon capture and storage, cleaner energy and understanding water.

TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Regarding technology and innovation, the Committee heard about three main areas: procurement, quantum computing, and data.

Regarding procurement, Council of Canadian Innovators stated that the current system of procurement does not work for domestic technology companies as it is too risk-averse, rigid, and cumbersome. They recommended an Innovative Procurement Fund to address this issue.

With respect to quantum computing, D-Wave Systems Inc. shared that many companies and governments are beginning to build quantum applications to tackle a wide variety of problems. They explained that a quantum sandbox could serve as a living lab, run through a public-private partnership, to develop proof-of concepts and test near-term quantum applications. They also recommended a high-performance computing data centre that is integrated with quantum computing to support building near-term quantum hybrid applications and ensure domestic access to systems while also creating a pipeline for talent development.

BC Tech stated that government currently captures massive amounts of data on the old economy and very little on the new and referenced a lack of data captured to understand and measure service exports and investment in the tech industry, they added that currently BC exports more services than it does goods, but this is not reflected in the data. They requested an investment of \$3 million over three years to start to address the data gap. Similarly, Canadian Council of Innovators emphasized that the economy is no longer fueled by capital assets but instead is driven by intangible assets like software, data and patents; however, governments have maintained policy strategies that continue to focus on capital assets and the tangible economy. They stated that a provincial data strategy is needed to ensure that the power of data as an economic asset is harnessed. IBM Canada Ltd advocated for a cross-government data fabric to maximize the value and potential of people and access. They cited benefits such as reducing the time for employees to find the right data, streamlining and automating the handling of increasing volumes of information requests, tackling the challenge of lost knowledge due to the retirement of senior employees, and creating insights across ministry boundaries.

TOURISM

Organizations in the tourism and hospitality sector requested funding for development and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Vancouver Airport Authority stated that attracting and growing airline services in BC and increasing capacity are critical to rebuilding the visitor economy. They recommended an air service attraction fund to generate increased overnight visitor expenditure, increase hotel stays and support tourism jobs across BC as well as improve access to the unique experiences provided by Indigenous tourism operators. Tourism Industry Association of BC recommended expanding the Resort Municipality Initiative to help additional tourism-reliant communities with capital projects, repairs, and other opportunities. They explained that the program is not accepting new entrants and cited a report that showed despite having only one percent of the total provincial population the 14 communities eligible for the program attracted 28 percent of total visitors to the province and contributed 29 percent of tourism tax dollars.

Regarding recovery, Restaurants Canada shared that an estimated 13,000 restaurants across Canada permanently closed as a result of the pandemic. Given the increasing importance of takeout and delivery sales as part of a

restaurant's sales, Restaurants Canada recommended the third-party delivery cap implemented during the pandemic remain in place permanently unless third party delivery companies commit to offer long term restaurant meal delivery fee options that are 20 percent or less. They also noted that recent labour policies, especially the new five days paid sick leave legislative requirement, have added thousands of dollars in additional payroll costs at a time when the industry can least afford it. As such, they recommended a commitment to not implement new legislation or regulations that will increase the cost of doing business as restaurants shift their focus from survival to recovery from the impact of COVID-19. British Columbia Hotel Association highlighted the role that crown corporations and government play in supporting accommodation across the province and recommended that in-person meetings and events be encouraged as the pandemic allows.

The Committee also received recommendations specific to adventure tourism. The Guide Outfitters Association of British Columbia stated that BC has the potential to be a world-class adventure tourism destination as the existing adventure travel economy generates over \$3 billion in direct annual visitor spending and provides partnership opportunities for First Nations and rural areas of BC. They recommended adopting a new adventure tourism policy to provide clarity on the land and improve communication between tenure holders. They also noted the need for an adventure tourism branch and supportive legislation for adventure tourism to grow to its full potential.

Regarding food and wine tourism, Wine Growers British Columbia explained the difficulties faced by their industry with back-to-back short crops severely affecting the 2019 and 2020 BC VQA vintages. They stated that an annual \$2,000,000 investment in food and wine tourism marketing will generate 57,500 new visitors per year with an increase of \$55.5 million in new direct tourism revenue per year and an additional \$31.7 million of indirect spending.

TRADE

Organizations including Finning International highlighted the importance of resilient supply chains as demonstrated by the COVID-19 pandemic and recent flooding. Prince Rupert Port Authority stated that an overreliance on Vancouver as the dominant trade gateway has proven to be a significant risk point for BC and for Canada; however, the potential for

rapid growth of the trade and transportation industry is a challenge for smaller communities as they struggle to provide complementary community infrastructure. They described challenges with recruitment in the area and noted the need to be able to ensure a livable and sustainable community that can manage that growth challenge. They recommended strategic northern BC trade corridor planning to coordinate investments and maximize the potential for future export growth as well as investment and incentives to support labour force growth and development in the trade and transportation industry and their communities.

CONCLUSIONS

The Committee highlighted that the world is facing unprecedented pressures on its food system, stressed the importance of local agriculture to both the economy and food security for all British Columbians, and agreed that there needs to be adequate funding in this area. Members acknowledged increasing costs of fuel, insurance, and labour are making it difficult for farmers and ranchers to remain competitive. As such, they noted the need for incentives so farmers and ranchers can remain in business, expand, and have flexibility in their operations. They further discussed the hardships faced by farmers and ranchers and ways to improve affordability, including accessible supports that are easy to navigate. Members debated how to best improve business models to increase economic outputs, and the merits of improved flexibility regarding the carbon tax, but were unable to reach a consensus. Regarding climate change, Committee Members discussed the role of farmers and ranchers in reducing emissions and the need to support regenerative agriculture and carbon sequestration. They also noted the need for a more robust risk management system with respect to agriculture and climate change. The Committee recognized temporary foreign workers as an essential part of the agricultural workforce and the need for all levels of government to work together to streamline processes in this area, including the ability to provide housing for workers on agricultural land. Further, the Committee discussed that while there is a system in place to protect temporary foreign workers, there is a need to ensure that temporary foreign workers are aware of their rights and them being protected in law. Members also called attention to the model regarding cattle and calf pricing as an area in need of review as the current model is causing difficulties for ranchers.

Regarding food security, Members highlighted the importance of local food processing and production facilities in light of supply chain crises. They also discussed innovations like vertical farming with respect to food security and local production. Committee Members noted that there are many food hubs already established but they need to be more coordinated and connected with local agriculture. Further, they discussed the need for data to determine where support is needed most and to find ways to reduce food waste.

With respect to fisheries, the Committee recognized that the industry is in transition and support is needed. Members emphasized the need to invest in sustainable aquaculture and to increase the number of hatcheries. They also discussed the need for more information and comprehensive planning in this area.

In discussing forestry, Committee Members acknowledged that the abundance of forests and their role in the economy have long been taken for granted. Members noted that many of the concerns they heard about the environment and climate change relate to forestry policy and agreed that forest management practices and policies need to be reviewed and diversified to ensure sustainability. Further, they highlighted the need to engage with local experts in the field to identify new ideas and opportunities in this area and to facilitate Indigenous leadership in forest management.

Members agreed that current wait times at the Employment Standards Branch are unacceptable and emphasized that they particularly impact many marginalized individuals. Members discussed identifying maximum acceptable wait times and the need for funding to achieve this. The Committee recognized that there are significant labour shortages and discussed several priority actions to address this issue, including by expanding micro-credential programs, increasing workforce housing, recognizing foreign credentials, and reaching out to trades workers internationally to attract talent to BC. Committee Members also reflected on changes resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic with respect to remote and hybrid work and supported a recommendation to assist Indigenous peoples who may not want to leave their communities for work to secure jobs in the digital economy. Regarding entrepreneurs, Members highlighted the presentations from Futurpreneur regarding barriers to supports and from BC People First Society about the need for supports for small business owners with disabilities.

With respect to mining and natural resource development, the Committee highlighted the importance of economic reconciliation in this sector and noted the need for mining legislation to align with the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*. Committee Members also discussed rare earth minerals as a niche industry for BC and a new economic driver that supports adaptations to climate change as the minerals are needed for electrification. Members noted that permitting is a significant issue in this area and emphasized the need for predictable timelines and a streamlined process to reach electrification goals. Regarding public geoscience, the Committee highlighted the value of Geoscience BC and new research like ground-penetrating radar to attract investment and develop the sector. It supported further resourcing in this area.

Regarding technology and innovation, Members were supportive of recommendations regarding quantum computing noting that BC is a leader in this area. Committee Members discussed ways to support BC based technology companies and solutions including through government procurement efforts. Further, they noted the need for accurate data with respect to technology exports, including software, to understand the size and complexity of BC's technology sector. Members also supported exploring options to increase cross-government data sharing and noted the need for provincial strategies regarding data and intellectual property to address how they are treated, created, monetized, and protected.

Members discussed the need to support tourism as we begin to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic; however, they recognized that inadequate hotel space impacts the size of conferences and other large events that can be hosted in BC and recommended data collection in this area. Regarding taxes, the Committee noted that short-term rentals are taking away from housing stock for workers and agreed that online accommodation providers should be obligated to collect the Municipal and Regional District Tax. Adventure tourism was also highlighted as an area that should be supported. Committee Members also acknowledged the impact of the pandemic on restaurants and discussed supports in this area including the possibility of making the third-party food delivery fee cap permanent. With respect to aviation, the Committee discussed an air service attraction fund as a way to attract and grow airline services in BC and support tourism.

While recognizing the need to shorten the supply chain and increase local production, Members also noted that trade

continues to be essential. They supported northern BC trade corridor planning as a way to support export growth, address congestion, and expand employment opportunities for rural

communities. The Committee emphasized the importance of BC port infrastructure and the need to ensure redundancies as well as adequate transportation linkages.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

Agriculture and Food Security

45. Recognize the importance of agriculture to the economy and food security by ensuring adequate funding is provided to support the sector as well as individual farmers and ranchers in BC.
46. Review an increase to the revenue qualifier for agricultural classification on farm parcels with a view to incentivize agricultural production and make the industry more attractive and supportive for young and new farmers.
47. Conduct a comprehensive review of insurance for crops and farms to ensure farmers are supported.
48. Conduct a comprehensive study with a view to finding incentives to reduce food waste and increase food security.
49. Provide funding for food programs in seniors' centres and in community-based senior-serving organizations.
50. Create more robust risk management programs to support BC wine vineyard resiliency to mitigate systemic short crop and to ensure BC vineyards are best positioned to support the growth and success of the industry.

Fisheries

51. Continue to invest in sustainable aquaculture and processing in BC, including by working with the federal government on regulatory and protection measures to enhance aquaculture.

Forestry

52. Continue to facilitate Indigenous leadership in determining forest management and engagement in the forest economy and enable forestry-related policies that manage forests in line with the practices and expectations of Indigenous communities.
53. Identify new ideas and opportunities, including by working with local experts on the ground to ensure sustainability through forestry regeneration practices.
54. Incentivize forestry and broom management by companies harvesting feedstock or fiber as biomass to make into biochar.

Labour and Jobs

55. Increase funding to the Employment Standards Branch to increase capacity, staffing, and training, and to expeditiously address wait times.
56. Amend legislation to ensure that workers in the gig economy are properly classified as employees rather than independent contractors and covered by the Employment Standards Act and provide targeted funding to the Employment Standards Branch for compliance teams.

57. Prioritize the implementation of the recommendations made through extensive reviews at WorkSafeBC in British Columbia's worker compensation system.
58. Explore an indigenization strategy to assist Indigenous peoples to secure jobs in the digital economy through government-sponsored online post-secondary and upskill training and to ensure that they have a greater ability to learn, work, and raise their family within their community if that is something that they wish to pursue.
59. Increase programs promoting inclusive leadership for the BC Employer Training Grant to help more small and medium-sized businesses access the benefits of outside expertise to transform their workplace cultures.
60. Address labour shortages by engaging in partnerships with the private sector, supporting programs that enhance the skilled labour market through education and immigration, and increasing workforce housing.
61. Enhance support to entrepreneurs, including young, diverse, and underserved entrepreneurs.
62. Continue investing in Sector Labour Market Partnership funding initiatives, as they are invaluable to collaboratively solving industry challenges.

Mining and Natural Resource Development

63. Develop, fund, and regularly update BC's critical minerals and metals strategy that includes objectives and actions for advancing BC's critical minerals and metals sector, including steelmaking coal, to treat it as economically and strategically important, in line with other jurisdictions.
64. Create explicit scientific integrity and transparency policies to strengthen oversight of natural resource management.
65. Continue to empower Indigenous peoples to participate in natural resource development, and advance economic reconciliation through revenue-sharing and equity ownership.
66. Enhance capacity to address permitting backlogs and ensure predictable timelines.
67. Ensure that Geoscience BC is well-resourced to attract exploration investment and maintain competitiveness.

Technology and Innovation

68. Support quantum-hybrid technologies by investing in a domestic high-performance computing data centre that is integrated with quantum computing.
69. Support a quantum "sandbox" program and fund opportunities for industry collaboration between quantum companies and academic institutions, including by establishing a government training program.
70. Fund the development and implementation of a provincial intellectual property strategy to incentivize domestic technology companies to create and keep intellectual property within BC, and a provincial data strategy to harness the power of intellectual property and data as economic assets and promote privacy, transparency, and equity.
71. Explore options to enable cross-government data sharing through technology and opportunities to harness this data to gain real time insights and analysis to inform decision making and policy development.
72. Build a net-zero BC by digitally transforming natural resource and agri-food industries in a responsive, green, and sustainable way, while ensuring scaleups and anchor companies remain globally competitive.

- 73. Find tools to incentivize innovative technology procurement and made-in-BC solutions.
- 74. Commit funding to capture better data about BC's technology and innovation sector.

Tourism

- 75. Protect the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) for its original intended purpose to support tourism projects, programs, and marketing, and obligate all online accommodation providers to collect the MRDT.
- 76. Collect data to gain insight into the number of hospitality establishments that have been lost in recent years, and work with the hospitality sector to ensure that BC is a destination with sufficient spaces for meetings, conferences, events, and leisure travel, attracting both domestic and international markets.
- 77. Explore making BC's third-party food delivery fee cap permanent.

Trade

- 78. Undertake strategic northern BC trade corridor planning to coordinate investments and maximize the potential for future export growth.
- 79. Encourage cooperation with the federal government to develop a comprehensive plan to ensure adequate transportation linkages between ports and goods and services.



ENVIRONMENT

Concerns about the environment and climate change were included in input received from a wide variety of organizations from every region of the province. The need to act on climate change was a clear theme as was the need to improve the resiliency of BC's buildings and municipalities for a rapidly changing environment. Several submissions called for increased work to be done to preserve BC's natural resources including water, wildlife, and forests.

BUILDINGS

Several organizations and individuals outlined concerns about the amount of greenhouse gases (GHG) released from buildings in the province, noting that because buildings are one of the largest sources of GHG in BC, more needs to be done to incentivize widespread retrofitting of buildings to improve energy efficiency. MoveUp explained that current retrofit incentives are not as efficient as they could be and suggested that establishing an agency to coordinate retrofits could improve the process. The importance of infrastructure investments was raised by the Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association, who noted that investments are essential in reducing, mitigating, and adapting to the risks of climate change but added that there is a lack of available sustainable assets in which private sector organizations can invest. AdvantageBC noted concerns about increased electrical loads as the province continues the switch away from carbon-based energy and noted the need for funding to upgrade electrical systems. Raising concerns that the demand for timely retrofits will outpace the current capacity, the Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Institute of Canada suggested that the province will need more well-trained workers. Similarly, Armstrong Fluid Technology noted that there will be numerous economic benefits to new retrofit programs.

Several organizations described to the Committee that the consequences of energy inefficient homes are greater than just increased GHG. They noted that outdated heating and cooling systems can significantly increase costs for low-

income individuals. Guy Dauncey, an author on the subject of sustainability, noted that about 20 percent of Canadian households experience energy poverty due to the high cost of heating, cooling and lighting for their homes. Dauncey added that to achieve CleanBC's targeted reductions, more than 70,000 homes and 10 million square metres of commercial buildings need to be retrofitted by replacing gas heating equipment with electric heat pumps which will cost \$1.6 billion annually for the residential sector. Ecotrust Canada echoed concerns about energy poverty, adding that a comprehensive retrofit program should consider not just home heating and energy efficiency, but also the role of cooling in maintaining health and safety. Ecotrust added that the current hydro rate reduction to low-income households has not been meaningfully updated in decades. Likewise, the BC Sustainable Energy initiative pointed to the connectedness of transitioning to clean energy and ensuring low-income individuals have access to affordable electricity.

The Committee also heard concerns that without financial assistance, many lower income individuals will not be able to afford the upgrades required to meet BC's emission targets. The Building Owners and Managers' Association of BC noted the financial barriers to retrofitting and explained the need for innovative financing tools to expedite decarbonization. CUPE 1004 suggested that funding will be required to assist schools, post-secondary institutions, and local governments to update buildings to meet emission targets. However, despite the increased need, the Canadian Home Builders Association noted that investments for energy efficient buildings was reduced in Budget 2022. AdvantageBC highlighted Property Assessed Clean Energy financing (PACE) as a financing tool which can be used to help property owners upgrade their buildings by paying off retrofits through increased property taxes.

Cariboo Mining Association described the difficulty in addressing the energy needs in northern rural communities, explaining that the energy needs of these communities are different than those in warmer parts of the province. They

noted that individuals often use carbon-based heat systems to stay warm in -40-degree weather as heat pump systems are not an option in these areas, and recommended incentives be provided to improve the efficiency of existing systems.

CLEAN ENERGY

Several organizations and individuals wrote in favour of clean energy initiatives, each suggesting a variety of solutions to BC's energy needs. When asked what can be done to improve the cost of living, several survey responses suggested that BC accelerate the transition to renewable energies and economies. Finning Technology encouraged continued engagement with industrial partners to drive innovation in the clean energy field. Some individuals encouraged schools to begin placing solar panels on their roofs. Others expressed concerns about LNG projects and encouraged the province to invest in renewable energy. Innergex Renewable Energy Inc. stated that green hydrogen is a sustainable energy source and should be supported by the government. They further raised a concern that energy planning is fragmented among different utilities (gas and electric) and government strategies that reinforce this siloed approach could undermine BC's ability to reach its climate targets. The organization suggested that the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low-Carbon Innovation develop a comprehensive provincial energy plan in line with BC's climate targets to guide utility and regulator decision-making.

The Committee heard from a number of industries who proposed specific solutions to meet BC's energy needs. With respect to geothermal energy, the Canadian Geothermal Energy Association noted that in certain regions of the province, geothermal energy is a lower-cost and higher reliability option than electricity for heating. Conversely, General Fusion noted the benefits of fusion energy, and explained that they are aiming to build the world's first commercially viable fusion powerplant, but they need the province's help to do so. In support of using gas to help transition BC's economy, FortisBC highlighted that BC needs to reduce its GHG emissions but noted that they deliver more energy to consumers than any other entity in the province and will be critical in ensuring BC can efficiently, reliably and affordably achieve the goals of CleanBC. They added that renewable gas extracted from landfills across the province are an efficient means of supporting a reduction in GHG emissions and suggested that both renewable gas and electricity will be required to power the province.

Several organizations expressed concerns about how low-carbon fuels and the carbon tax impacts industries in the province. The BC Bioenergy Network noted that BC imports 99 percent of its biofuels and developing low-carbon biofuel facilities in BC will create jobs and help BC transition to a decarbonized economy. Advanced Biofuels Canada raised concerns that the carbon tax applies to non-fossil fuels and noted that the BC Low Carbon Fuel Standard has delivered over 12 million tons of emissions reductions. Parkland noted that businesses in BC are at a disadvantage compared to their United States counterparts due to the United States' ability to import low-carbon fuels into BC at a lower price.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The Committee heard a number of concerns related to the challenges of climate change. In the survey, when British Columbians were asked whether they would be interested in seeing more funding for actions that address climate change and help proactively prevent climate disasters, 667 of 846 respondents stated that they would like to see more funding to address climate change. Youth Climate Corps referenced a recent international study which found that 75 percent of youth said the future was frightening, and 65 percent said they feel that the government is failing them and suggested more needs to be done to incorporate young people into climate action work. The BC Lung Foundation noted that heat and climate change are becoming an ongoing issue impacting air quality. They stated it is important that health authorities, NGOs and other stakeholders come up with a unified plan to address issues related to air quality and noted that solutions may include clean air centres. Further, the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition noted that marginalized individuals are more susceptible to the risks associated with climate change and called for immediate and urgent investments to fund mitigation and prevention strategies. To reduce carbon emissions, Nature United suggested natural climate solutions which provide numerous co-benefits like biodiversity protection, wildlife habitat, flood protection, water quality, and recreation opportunities. The BC Digital Supercluster suggested that BC's tech sector can help transform BC's economy to become greener.

Several individuals expressed concern about subsidies to the oil and gas sector, with one individual noting that they would prefer to see such funds allocated to solar companies. Survey responses also suggested redirecting fossil fuel subsidies to government services that address the rising cost of living. One

submission made note that taxpayers should not be funding an industry that is known to be producing emissions that are jeopardizing the health and future of people and the planet.

Municipalities also emphasized the need for increased funding to assist in climate mitigation and preparedness. The City of Kelowna noted that they have been disproportionately affected by climate disasters and require predictable, long-term funding to enable the city to rebuild after disasters, invest in retrofits for civic facilities and active transportation infrastructure. The City of Vancouver brought up the need for investments in greenwater infrastructure which they described as an approach to water management that protects, restores, or mimics the natural water cycle. They further noted that intensified green rainwater infrastructure corridors are foundational to the City's plan to deliver core water infrastructure services. Metro Vancouver stated that progress must continue on the electrification of light-duty transportation, and the identification of low-carbon technologies for industry and business.

Several submissions and presenters highlighted the importance of reducing British Columbia's transportation emissions. Hydra Energy Canada Corp. noted that the current funding level of the CleanBC Heavy-Duty Vehicle Efficiency Program is not sufficient to help transition the largest fuel users and most expensive vehicles to lower carbon options. They further added that programs must prioritize the replacement and retrofit of class 8 vehicles, the highest fuel users, to make the largest impact in GHG reductions. GCT Global Container Terminals recommended continued investments in decarbonization of the industrial transportation sector by increasing funding to programs such as the CleanBC heavy-duty vehicle efficiency program.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Several individuals and organizations spoke to the issue of environmental protection. Both the BC Cattleman Association and Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society commented on carbon sequestration. The former suggested that they need access to better data on Crown forage to determine levels of carbon sequestration while the latter recommended increased education on the importance of conservation and the role of nature in carbon sequestration.

Several individuals and organizations spoke to the importance of forests in carbon capturing, biodiversity, tourism, and the role that forests play in climate change. Several survey

responses also focused on the importance of protecting old growth forests. Over 100 respondents recommended stopping all old growth logging in the province and protecting ancient forest areas and recommended switching to sustainable logging practices in response to question two. Several individuals pointed to the recommendations made in the Old Growth Strategic Review, with West Coast Environmental Law endorsing the recommendation to enact a new law which establishes ecosystem health and biodiversity as an overarching priority across all sectors. Organizing for Change was also in support of a BC biodiversity and ecosystem health law.

Several groups noted the importance of collaboration with First Nations to adopt sustainable practices, while some suggested that additional funding needs to be made available to forestry workers and First Nations that will lose out on revenue from the harvesting of old trees. The Committee received a number of submissions supporting the Ancient Forest Alliance in requesting that a minimum of \$300 million be allocated to support Indigenous-led protected areas initiatives as a way of protecting BC's old growth forests. Submissions mentioned that significant funding is needed to offset the economic impacts of old-growth deferrals and stated that the fund should support the sustainable economic development and diversification of First Nations economies in lieu of old growth logging and be tied to the creation of new Indigenous Protected Areas. The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society - BC Chapter explained that Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas are a type of designation where Indigenous governments are the primary decision-maker on ecosystem conservation through their laws, governance, and knowledge systems. Organizations highlighted that Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas have been shown to make significant contributions to fighting climate change, protecting BC's world-class biodiversity, and supporting sustainable Indigenous economies, such as the cultural, eco-tourism and clean energy businesses and suggested that they would also be good for advancing reconciliation. The Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative added that the Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship intends to incorporate 24 First Nations in land use planning processes in the 2020-2021 fiscal year and they would like to see that number doubled. Nature United encouraged an appropriate policy framework to support these Indigenous-led conservation efforts.

Several individuals also wrote about establishing a provincial land acquisition fund and called for \$70 million in annual funding to create such a fund to systematically purchase private lands of high conservation, scenic, cultural, and recreational value. Some of these individuals suggested that the amount should gradually increase to \$100 million. Individuals referenced the lack of remaining old growth forest and suggested this fund would be essential in protecting 30 percent of BC's land by 2030. The Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance Society suggested that such funds would also foster reconciliation through increased Indigenous representation in recreation planning, development, and management.

FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

A number of organizations and individuals highlighted concerns about decreasing salmon populations in BC waters. The First Nations Fisheries Council of British Columbia noted that Pacific salmon have declined by 93 percent in the last thirty years, requiring urgent action and revitalization. The organization requested \$100 million over three years to establish a province-wide wild salmon strategy in partnership with the federal government and First Nations. They further suggested that a provincial recreational fishing levy be applied to recreational licenses and the funds from that be allocated to First Nations-led conservation activities. Watershed Watch Salmon Society also identified the need to incorporate fish-friendly floodgates and fish conservation into flood mitigation and planning strategies.

The Committee heard from several organizations who expressed concerns about the conflict between resource extraction and wildlife conservation. The BC Wildlife Federation noted that wildlife conservation in BC is understaffed and underfunded. They further noted that several species in the province are on the brink of extinction. Similarly, Wildsight noted that rural communities are often underfunded when dealing with wildlife related issues. BC Wildlife Federation Region 5 Cariboo Chilcotin also stated that BC is falling behind in its funding, and BC needs to collect better data to manage its wildlife resources. They added that by mapping BC's resource activities, the province can better determine areas to restore habitat for the benefit of wildlife and watersheds. To do this, they recommended the development of an independent Natural Resources Practices Board. The Guide Outfitters Association of British Columbia

noted that wildlife needs a healthy forest and a balanced predator-prey dynamic, but stated that traditionally, BC has focused on reducing the predator population to maintain a healthy ecosystem. They recommended that BC consider thriving wildlife populations as a key performance indicator of a healthy ecosystem. Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society suggested that BC conduct a review to determine the economic value of wildlife habitation and resource extraction compared to the value of the wilderness.

INVASIVE SPECIES

Several organizations and submissions raised concerns about the impact of invasive species on a number of at-risk areas across the province. Sea to Sky Invasive Species Council noted that invasive species have a significant economic impact and cause permanent environmental damage. Multiple organizations characterized the current regulations as outdated and noted that enforcement was lacking. Several recommendations were made to lift core funding to \$15 million and update and enforce regulations. Invasive Species Council of Metro Vancouver explained that existing legislation leaves gaps that limit effective management. Similarly, Invasive Species Council of BC stated that the four main provincial regulatory tools for invasive species have outdated, incomplete and inconsistent lists. The Okanagan Basin Water Board noted that the Okanagan is at risk of invasive mussels which can cause significant harm to native fish, degrade water quality, and damage water intakes, boats, and other infrastructure and equipment. The Shuswap Watershed Council supported measures to enhance enforcement via the provincial watercraft inspection program and recommended that it be expanded such that no entry-point to BC is vulnerable to unchecked watercraft. They further called for \$10 million of funding for the existing Invasive Species Trust Fund. The Thompson Nicola Invasive Plant Management Committee explained that the region experienced fire and flood events in 2021 which left the region susceptible to invasive plants which could have adverse impacts on the environment and economy. They recommended increased and continuous funding for invasive plant management on Crown land in the region.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Several individuals and organizations noted that since the beginning of the pandemic, use of BC's parks has increased significantly; however, the budget for parks and

recreations has not kept pace. As such, many parks and trails are underfunded and understaffed. Summit Trail Makers noted that BC provides over \$50 million for Destination BC to promote tourism but spends \$12 million to support recreation sites outside of the provincial parks. The Caledonia Ramblers Hiking Club stated that with less than 60 staff and an \$8 million annual budget, Recreation Sites and Trails BC is severely underfunded and does not have the capacity required to meet current demands as there are 2000 legally designated recreation sites and almost 26,000 km of trails in BC. Fernie Trails Alliance added that both BC Parks and Recreation Sites and Trails BC are unable to support recreation groups and volunteers who are instrumental in developing and maintaining recreation trails, infrastructure and facilities through their respective volunteer partnership programs. Similarly, The Trails Society of British Columbia noted that Recreation Sites and Trails BC requires a significant increase of funding and resources to upgrade and maintain all their trails and facilities. Pemberton Wildlife Association, Outdoor Recreation Council of BC, Horse Council BC and several individuals recommended increasing the operational budget of Recreation Sites and Trails BC to \$20 million and BC Parks to \$100 million.

The BC Lodging and Campgrounds Association suggested that the province could increase revenue for BC Parks and Recreation sites by increasing the price of a campsite by a few dollars per night. Likewise, the Regional District of East Kootenay suggested that implementing camping fees on Crown land could help maintain back country camping sites. The Committee also received suggestions to improve transparency and several individuals encouraged increased funding to promote outdoor recreation and education. Kootenay Outdoor Recreation Enterprise Initiative suggested that the province would benefit from a study to demonstrate the economic value of outdoor recreation in BC.

A significant number of submissions supported the establishment of a \$10 million BC Trail fund to help provide funding for trail clubs, Indigenous groups and local governments who have been maintaining trails in BC. The Pemberton Wildlife Association explained that outdoor recreation infrastructure has seen increased stress in recent years. While describing the increased interest in outdoor recreation, the Summit Trail Makers Society noted that increased use and changing technologies require updates to the trail strategy. The Fernie Trails Alliance added that recreation groups and volunteers have been instrumental

in developing and maintaining recreation trails, infrastructure and facilities through their respective volunteer partnership programs, but these groups are not receiving much support from Recreation Sites and Trails BC and BC Parks. Despite the dedication of volunteers, the Federation of Mountain Clubs of British Columbia noted several areas where roads and bridges have fallen into disrepair. The inability to maintain access roads means a loss of access to popular recreations sites and trails and an overcrowding of the remaining locations. The Nadsilnich (West) Lake Community Association explained that they had to close some recreation trails because of a lack of resources to maintain trail safety. Individuals also requested updated and well maintained 4x4 roads for all-terrain vehicles and better monitoring of trails.

The Committee also heard about the need for an improved Trails Strategy. Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance Society noted that the lack of staff has complicated the ability to obtain the necessary permits to construct, rehabilitate and maintain trails. They suggested that an improved Trails Strategy, along with resources to facilitate effective implementation, will allow for a much more strategic, coordinated and collaborative approach to trail-based recreation and leverage the province's strategic goals. North Okanagan Cycling Society recommended that BC adopt the Provincial Trails Advisory Body recommendation to amend the Trails Strategy for British Columbia and confirm adequate provincial support for the implementation of an updated strategy.

RECYCLING AND WASTE

The Committee heard concerns from organizations about the level of waste produced in the province. The Surfrider Foundation Canada explained that commercial fishing and aquaculture industries have largely contributed to coastal waste. They also raised concerns about cigarette butts, which they described as a pervasive, long-lasting and toxic form of marine debris and the amount of plastic nurdles that are discharged into BC waterways by plastic manufacturing facilities. Surfrider cited evidence that these plastic pellets are entering the marine environment from plastic production facilities in the Lower Mainland, particularly along the Fraser River. Pro-Claim Group also raised concerns about the current process of dealing with construction waste, noting that the only option to repurpose wood waste in BC is to convert it into biofuels. They added that other jurisdictions, such as California, set a high standard for recycling and reusing products like waste carpet and underlay. They suggested that as mills in BC

reopen, there is a unique opportunity to turn one or two of these facilities into a waste wood manufacturing plant. They described the endeavor as environmentally friendly and a way to reduce shipping of products from places like Russia, which is the largest source of Baltic Plywood. Quesnel Cattlemen's Association highlighted the longstanding problem of garbage dumping on range and explained that there is no budget in the Conservation Officer Service to remove this garbage, leaving ranchers to handle it at their own expense.

WATER

Several individuals and organizations raised the importance of establishing a coastal marine strategy. West Coast Environmental Law stated that coastal communities and ecosystems are an integral part of BC and British Columbians' identity and added that ocean-based economic activities are an important part of BC's economy. A commonly noted theme was that these communities and ecosystems are under stress from a multitude of challenges. Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society – BC added that the federal government has made an historic investment to support this initiative, establishing a fund that provinces, territories, and Indigenous governments can access to create new protected areas. Several individuals recommended that BC allocate funding to build capacity for First Nations to implement the BC coastal marine strategy, including support for co-management of the strategy.

The Committee received over 20 submissions from organizations and individuals that emphasized the importance of watershed planning. The Peachland Watershed Protection Alliance highlighted that rivers and lakes are the cornerstones of BC's local economies, forests, fish and wildlife, food crops, quality of life, and cultural memories. They stated that in the face of last year's devastating climate disasters, it is essential to recognize the important role watersheds play in providing natural defenses against droughts, fires, and floods. Organizing for Change explained that many of BC's watersheds are becoming increasingly degraded due to poorly planned development over the past 20 years which has compounded climate impacts and caused other problems including polluted drinking water, reduced food security, destruction of salmon habitat, and loss of cultural and spiritual values. While highlighting the impacts of water insecurity on agriculture, the BC Dairy Association noted that in the past few summers, farmers have developed water schedule plans to limited demand in the Cowichan Valley and noted that lack

of water planning has negative impacts on food production in BC.

Cumberland Community Forest Society explained that the watershed for the town of Cumberland was privately owned until the society purchased the land and converted it into a watershed and biodiversity conservation area. They noted that the majority of land on southeastern Vancouver Island is privately owned by companies, including land containing valuable watersheds. They explained that when this land is privately owned, the surrounding communities are vulnerable to land-use decisions by profit-based resource extraction companies. They explained that these communities need help acquiring land so they can make community-based decisions about water security. Expressing similar concerns about water security, Living Lakes Canada added that the Tobacco Plains and Yaqaan nu?kiy bands noted that aquifer oversubscription and reduced groundwater recharge rates have caused lake and well level drops in their territories. Many groups recommended the creation of a permanent Watershed Security Fund, with a funding level of \$75 million. BC Freshwater Legacy Initiative noted that in 2021-2022, the province invested \$27 million in watershed security, which created 800 jobs and restored several water sources, however annual funding renewals makes long-term planning difficult. Watersheds BC explained that such a fund can help create data to inform decisions that can help local economies and support climate adaptation measures that protect and restore critical habitat.

Regarding the importance of watersheds and reconciliation, the First Nations Fisheries Council of British Columbia explained that the deteriorating health of marine and freshwater ecosystems from accelerated development and climate change threats, including extreme weather events and wildfires, is infringing upon First Nations' rights, livelihoods, health outcomes, and food sovereignty. The Cowichan Watershed Board asked that any efforts to help with the Koksilah watershed include the Cowichan Tribes as partners in the process. Living Lakes Canada pointed to the importance that any watershed projects need to meet the four Indicators of success, (Scale for Impact, Sustainability, Indigenous Governance and Flexibility to Regional Needs) identified by the BC Watershed Security Coalition.

Several groups also identified the need for dam improvements in the Okanagan and Oliver, noting that the infrastructure is outdated and in need of repair. The Okanagan Basin Water Board raised concerns about its dam's operating plan, which

was developed in 1974, primarily for flood control. With climate change, the level of the lake fluctuates much more than in the past, and the infrastructure and operating plan are no longer adequate. In 2017, the Okanagan had the worst flood in memory, and in 2021 the lake was near the lowest level of its range, they noted that the aging infrastructure is in dire need of an updated Okanagan Lake Regulation System and Operating Plan. Recommendations from other groups also focused on new water infrastructure with specific asks from different regions.

ZERO EMISSION VEHICLES

Several organizations noted the importance of electric vehicles in the fight against climate change. The New Car Dealers of BC noted the benefits of the CleanBC go electric rebate but urged continued investment in charging infrastructure. Similarly, Parkland and the BC Trucking Association shared their support for expanded charging infrastructure while the Mountainair Campground and RV Park and the BC Lodging and Campgrounds Association encouraged investments for the installation of charging infrastructure in BC campgrounds. The Global Automakers of Canada stated that Ministry of Environment and Climate Change is considering including electrified vehicle batteries, including those from hybrid and battery electric vehicles, in the provincial extended producer responsibility framework; the organization expressed concern that such a framework may stifle innovation.

Regarding incentives, the British Columbia Co-operative Association noted that cooperatively owned vehicles such as Modo should be eligible for electric vehicle subsidies, highlighting that these are not currently extended to vehicle fleets. Likewise, Enterprise Rent-A-Car noted that the rebate only applies to fleets of up to ten vehicles, making their province-wide fleet of rental vehicles not eligible and noted the need to expand eligibility criteria to include commercial fleets. Electric Mobility Canada encouraged additional rebates to increase uptake of zero emission vehicles and suggested enhanced funding to CleanBC programs.

The Hydra Energy Canada Corporation noted concerns that the definition of Zero Emissions Vehicles does not include Hydrogen Internal Combustion Engine technology which can use 100 percent hydrogen with zero tailpipe emissions and recommended incentives be expanded to hydrogen engines.

CONCLUSIONS

The Committee expressed strong concerns about the increased risks associated with climate change, describing it as the existential challenge of our lifetime. The impacts of climate change were apparent in all areas of the economy from health to transportation, social services, public safety, and economic development, with the worst impacts most apparent in marginalized communities. Committee Members reflected on presentations and submissions which emphasized that an increasing amount of BC's budget will be spent on recovering from new climate disasters each year and as such, every aspect of BC's infrastructure must be girded against extreme weather events. They agreed that it is now vital to help adapt BC to mitigate the worst impacts associated with climate change and try to secure a healthy and stable environment for future generations. Though the Committee recognizes that the costs associated with these measures are significant, failure to act now will cost immeasurable sums of money in the future.

While discussing the need to reduce the GHG emitted by BC's buildings, the Committee recognized that the costs associated with retrofitting are expensive. It is therefore important to consider how to best manage the dual crises of climate change and affordability in BC. They further noted that improving the efficiency of buildings is not a one-size-fits-all situation, as green technologies can be better applied in some regions of the province than others. Members agreed that BC needs to prioritize solutions that incentivize the adoption of the best technology for their region. The Committee also made note of the ongoing process of seismically upgrading buildings and suggested that such upgrades are an opportunity to improve energy efficiency.

While discussing the sources of BC's energy, the Committee highlighted the importance of continuing to develop BC's infrastructure to ensure that the province can transition away from carbon-intensive fuels. It discussed whether existing programs in BC are as expansive as they could be and suggested it may be beneficial to encourage new innovations to deliver green energy, such as biofuels and geothermal energy. Committee Members took specific note of the presentation by the Canadian Geothermal Energy Association which highlighted that geothermal energy could provide more reliable electricity and reduce GHGs for rural customers. For example, the Committee heard that many individuals in Valemount currently rely on wood burning stoves for their heating needs and geothermal infrastructure could meet their

heating needs with lower GHG emissions. The Committee agreed that climate change is a whole of system problem and BC must leverage every tool available in a coordinated and systematic response. What works to mitigate emissions in the lower mainland may not be effective in the north of the province where temperatures are lower and distances traveled are significantly further.

The Committee also agreed that it will be important to ensure that the adoption of lower-carbon energy be economically desirable for both businesses and individuals. While discussing energy poverty, the Committee recognized that BC needs to continue to provide assistance to people who are struggling to pay their bills. This could include expanded assistance through the BC Hydro customer crisis line, and incentives for low-income families to lower their GHG emissions through the adoption of new technologies.

Regarding environmental protection, the Committee noted that this area requires more funding and better data to inform decision making. It added that it is difficult to assess what policies are working if the province cannot leverage good data. The Committee agreed that a comprehensive strategy is needed to guide the management of BC's natural resources. While discussing BC's forests, the Committee agreed that BC should take a close look at its forestry management strategy with a focused eye to environmental protection, resource extraction, reconciliation, and wild fire mitigation. Members reflected on the submissions outlining the need for more Indigenous leadership in environmental protection and agreed that Indigenous leadership should be more integrated into decisions about BC's environment. The Committee noted that forests play a key role in environmental protection, climate change mitigation, and wildlife conservation; however, it also recognized that deferrals to forestry have had an economic impact on numerous Indigenous and rural communities across the province. Committee Members discussed the need for clear harvesting rules and a comprehensive plan to help transition small communities to a thriving economy that aligns with the recommendations outlined in the Old Growth Strategic Review.

While discussing conservation, the Committee agreed that BC is not doing enough to protect its wildlife population, the wide range of experts clearly demonstrated to the Committee that if BC does not act soon, there is a serious risk of population collapse for a range of species, most concerningly of all salmon. Members agree that BC needs better predator

management to handle the pinniped predators who are detrimental to salmon populations. The Committee further discussed the importance of better data collection to inform a provincial strategy to manage its wildlife to ensure that future generations are able to enjoy BC's natural beauty.

With respect to invasive species, the Committee agreed that they are an increasing risk to BC's forests, waterways, animal populations and economy, and noted the importance of increased data collection to better identify critical risk areas and inform a provincial response. Members discussed how once a species, such as quagga mussels, have gained a foothold in a new environment, they are virtually impossible to get rid of. They agreed that the economic impact of failing to respond to this issue early with strong regulation, monitoring and inspection can be devastating to a range of industries and more needs to be done to protect BC's land and water from invasive plants and animals. Members were especially concerned about the lack of up-to-date legislation, noting that some invasive plants are still sold at nurseries across the province. The Committee further highlighted that collaboration with local governments will help inform provincial education initiatives in this area.

Regarding parks and recreation, Committee Members noted that during this period of unaffordability, camping provides an accessible and affordable holiday for many British Columbians, and as such, it should remain as accessible to as many people as possible. Members discussed how outdoor recreation is good for physical and mental health, and BC's trails can be used for a wide range of activities in almost every corner of the province. The Committee extended its appreciation to the range of volunteer organizations who have been supporting and helping maintain BC's parks and trails. Members noted that, similar to last year, volunteers once again requested that more resources be made available to BC Parks and Recreation Sites and Trails BC.

The Committee agreed that recycling and waste management in the province needs to improve. Members were empathetic to the problems associated with illegal dumping across the province, with specific attention drawn to illegal dumping on cattle ranges. While discussing this issue, they agreed that reducing and reusing need to be prioritized in the provincial strategy as much as recycling. Members discussed how addressing BC's waste is an important action the province can take to lower carbon emissions while simultaneously supporting a zero-waste circular economy. However, the

Committee noted that manufacturers will need to change the way products are designed, to ensure that longevity and right to repair are prioritized over strategies such as planned obsolescence, in which a product's short lifespan is built into its design. It further noted that when done efficiently, recycling programs can engage the public and reward good behaviour. Members noted that the current system of recycling is ad hoc and inefficient and establishing a strong, province-wide recycling program could improve use and contribute to the stabilizing of BC's supply-lines with made in BC recycling solutions. The Committee noted the Surrey Biofuel Facility, North America's first closed-loop organic waste facility, as an example of the types of innovation possible in BC. To achieve similar levels of success in other projects, British Columbians need to be incentivized to ensure that the right waste management decision is the easy one. Members agreed that the best way of dealing with waste, both industrial waste such as fishing nets and personal waste such as cigarette butts, is to reward people for making the right decision.

While reflecting on the significant input received by stakeholders, the Committee agreed that water was long considered an infinite resource in BC, but it has become clear that it is not, as the province is at risk of reaching a dangerous point of water instability and individual groups have been acting to try to study and address the problem. The Committee expressed considerable concern about the prospect of failing to address this issue now, noting that water conservation activities in BC are lacking compared to a lot of other jurisdictions. Members stressed the importance of ensuring that BC has effective and well-resourced monitoring of all bodies of water to ensure that water users are sustainably extracting clean and safe water. The Committee noted that there is only one protected watershed in BC, and the

investment in the Healthy Watersheds Initiative demonstrated the economic and ecological benefits of investing in water protection. However, the province needs better data on the health of BC's watersheds, better education on water conservation and more action to protect BC's water. While reflecting on the presentation by the Okanagan Basin Water Board, Members felt that the group effectively demonstrated the risks to lives and the economy of not ensuring that BC's dam infrastructure is up to date to deal with severe weather events.

Members agreed that zero-emission vehicles (ZEV) are an important contribution to reducing BC's GHG emissions. But they added that there are several factors limiting wider adoption largely related to the geographic size of the province including extreme cold which can significantly reduce the battery range of electric vehicles; limited cell reception; lack of charging infrastructure; and poor highway and road conditions which necessitate the use of large, rugged vehicles to safely traverse the area. The Committee also noted that the issue of insufficient charging infrastructure exists in both high- and low-density regions; it suggested that CleanBC expand Go Electric to increase the uptake of home charging ports to help reduce strain on municipal charging infrastructure. Despite these limitations, Members noted that the population needs to transition to ZEVs as quickly as possible and the province should also prepare for the associated challenges of widespread ZEV adoption, including preparing BC's electric grid for increased strain, developing battery recycling infrastructure, and ensuring that workers are trained on ZEV maintenance. Lastly, Members agreed that full electric is not the only way forward and a wider range of alternative vehicles should be considered as tools to lower GHG emissions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

Buildings

80. Continue to prioritize decarbonizing BC's buildings by incentivizing the widespread adoption of greener technologies with attention to the unique needs of remote, rural and northern communities.
81. Explore opportunities to incent retrofitting of public buildings in conjunction with planned seismic upgrades.

Clean Energy

82. Further support the transition to cleaner energy by incentivizing all industries and individuals to adopt a lower carbon footprint.
83. Continue to support the BC Hydrogen Strategy goal to accelerate the production and use of green hydrogen, and attract investment and skilled job opportunities to BC, by providing support to bridge the current cost gap between this clean fuel and fossil fuel-based alternatives.
84. Explore the inclusion of geothermal district heating and cooling systems to reduce electricity demand.

Climate Change

85. Provide urgent and substantive investments into climate adaptation, mitigation and prevention strategies with a view to reducing the worst impacts of climate change.
86. Provide research-driven increased supports and infrastructure to mitigate the worst socioeconomic and health impacts of climate change (including reduced air quality, food and water insecurity, extreme heat, extreme cold, flooding, and extreme storms) on low-income groups, specifically including seniors, unhoused people, lone parent families, Indigenous communities, people with disabilities, migrant workers, newcomers, people with mental and chronic health conditions, sex workers, and people who use drugs.
87. Increase investment on climate adaptation strategies that are also climate mitigation strategies with respect to bridges, roads, homes and other structures, and work to accelerate international efforts to reduce carbon emissions.
88. Make concrete commitments to reduce all greenhouse gases in the province, with a focus on the highest emitting industries.
89. Invest in a comprehensive, unified provincial air quality strategy to prepare all regions for impending wildfire, wood smoke, and heat dome seasons.

Environmental Protection

90. Increase resourcing to environmental protection, with a view to increasing data collection to more deeply integrate science-based approaches, including local and Indigenous knowledge and practices into conservation, environmental protection and old growth strategy.
91. As required by the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, when requested, provide supports to Indigenous communities to better fund their conservation engagement.

Fish and Wildlife Conservation and Management

92. Allocate funds from hunting license fees and a portion of natural resource profits to conservation.
93. Establish wildlife governance and dedicated funding models to improve wildlife management and habitat conservation by collaborating with stakeholders, including First Nations; ensure that BC manages its wildlife resources to meet the needs of Indigenous peoples and the residents of British Columbia for the future.
94. Establish dedicated funding for a data-based comprehensive predator management strategy.

Invasive Species

95. Significantly increase funding for invasive flora and fauna species prevention, monitoring, regulation, and inspection; including core inspection program funding for the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy and BC Conservation Service with a budget adjusted to inflation.
96. Implement 24/7 inspection facilities at all major border crossings to inspect vessels for quagga mussels and other invasive aquatic species.

Parks and Recreation

97. Continue to invest in BC Parks and Recreation Sites and Trails BC to address gaps in maintenance and staff, including dedicated funding to community-based organizations for trail maintenance and development.
98. Build the capacity of volunteers by establishing discretionary funding to ensure that BC's volunteer trail and park maintenance groups have the resources they need to continue to improve the accessibility of outdoor recreation.

Recycling and Waste

99. Develop a zero-waste provincial strategy to incentivize good behaviours, support made in BC recycling programs, and create a circular economy by using recycled materials from these programs to help secure and stabilize supply chain issues and build BC's fuel capacity.
100. Leverage CleanBC to incentivize municipalities to adopt a province-wide recycling program to ensure that recycling is accessible across the province.
101. Incentivize individuals to reduce, reuse, and recycle, and incentivize manufacturers to avoid planned obsolescence and develop innovative uses for recycled materials.

Water

102. Urgently develop a proactive, well-funded and coordinated water conservation strategy.
103. Provide \$75 million in sustained funding to the BC Watershed Security Fund.

Zero Emission Vehicles

104. Leverage all incentives to increase the accessibility of zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs), including expanding charging infrastructure, supporting mechanic training programs for servicing ZEVs, developing battery recycling facilities and developing regional and flexible plans that are adaptable both to the unique challenges of small and remote communities and high-density urban areas.



FISCAL AND REGULATORY POLICY

Regarding fiscal and regulatory policy, a key theme was the need for consultation with various stakeholders who will be most affected by the implementation of taxes and regulations. The tax burden on small businesses was emphasized by many organizations who noted increasing costs associated with labour, gas, and property. The Committee also received a number of recommendations with respect to specific taxation measures including the carbon tax, property tax, luxury tax, provincial sales tax, and speculation and vacancy tax. Individuals and organizations pointed to the need to increase productivity and competitiveness, reduce barriers, and ensure taxation thresholds are updated. The impact of regulations and taxation on liquor, cannabis, and alcohol were also noted by many organizations.

BUDGETARY AND TAXATION POLICY

In question two of the survey which asked what actions the province should take to improve quality of life, nearly 100 responses referenced budgetary and taxation policy with broad support for lowering taxes on lower income individuals, while increasing the taxes on corporations and the wealthy. A small portion of respondents made calls to reduce government spending and improve the efficiency of public spending. In their presentations to the Committee, both Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and CUPE British Columbia called for an increase in spending, noting the importance of public services in times of economic uncertainty and the economic benefits associated with increases in public expenditure. The former suggested that increased public spending could be funded by a combination of borrowing, particularly when used for growth-enhancing investments in social and physical infrastructure, and by raising revenue through inequality-reducing tax measures that focus on the rich, large corporations, and wealthy landowners. On the other hand, Association for Reformed Political Action (ARPA) Canada stated that the quality of public services in BC has declined in recent years and called for government to focus on improving the services

that are already under their umbrella rather than expanding into new service areas.

When asked how important it is to have a balanced budget, 17 percent of survey respondents indicated it was very important to them, 40 percent indicated it was not important, and 43 percent stated that it was somewhat important. With respect to balanced budgets and debt, both the Business Council of British Columbia and Association for Reformed Political Action (ARPA) Canada commented on low unemployment levels, rising inflation and interest rates, and recommended avoiding running operational deficits at this time. The latter also recommended using surplus funds to pay down the debt incurred over the pandemic.

A few organizations recommended consultation with industry and stakeholders on the implementation of taxes and regulations, highlighting the negative impact of various taxes and regulations on their sectors. Surrey Board of Trade noted that a review of the tax system, in partnership with the business community, could assist with identifying ways to eliminate redundancies and increase simplicity and efficiency to improve international competitiveness. Similarly, Business Council of British Columbia explained that a BC Prosperity and Productivity Commission could help ensure that policies and new regulatory provisions are viewed through a productivity or prosperity lens and advise on changes that support scaling up businesses, growing the export sector, increasing productivity growth and nurturing stronger real wage growth. Chartered Professional Accountants of British Columbia shared that nearly half of respondents to their BC Check-Up survey found that taxes were a major challenge to business success in 2022 and stated that a public consultation on the provincial sales tax would create an opportunity for feedback and identify ways to minimize negative impact of the tax on competitiveness.

In addition to consultation, some organizations proposed specific methods to address the tax and regulatory burden for small business. Canco stated that increased minimum

wage and labour costs are making hiring more difficult by increasing competition for employees and recommended carefully examining and limiting further increases in BC's minimum wage levels until current inflation and labour cost pressures are brought under control. Similarly, Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce noted that increasing the exemption threshold for the employer health tax would save small businesses thousands of dollars. In addition to increased payroll costs related to minimum wage and the new five-day employer paid sick days policy, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business also commented on increased costs of gas and insurance as well as rising property values and taxes. They recommended providing energy cost relief by reducing fuel taxes and expanding carbon tax exemptions as well as permanently reducing the provincial portion of the school tax for commercial properties by 25 percent. With respect to small business loans, VantageOne Credit Union highlighted that community banks and credit unions are more effective at lending to small business than large commercial banks and recommended avoiding excessive regulations that reduce credit unions' effort to drive GDP growth.

CARBON TAX

The Committee heard that the carbon tax has created disadvantages for emissions-intensive, trade-exposed sectors in BC as compared to competitors which have no or lower carbon pricing. Business Council of British Columbia stated that BC manufacturers and natural resource producers bear the cost of the carbon tax, yet they produce lower carbon goods compared to other economies. Both Teck Resources Limited and Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers recommended measures to improve or protect the competitiveness of this sector.

With respect to clean and renewable fuels, BC Bioenergy Network stated that it is important to continue to collect the carbon tax from fossil-based transportation fuels but applying it to renewable fuels reduces their competitiveness. Similarly, Advanced Biofuels Canada stated that eliminating the carbon tax on clean fuels used in BC will immediately reduce fuel costs at the pump for clean fuel consumers and relieve pressure on high cost imported fuels. Eliminating or reducing taxes on gasoline was also a prominent theme in question one of the survey, which asked respondents what actions the province should take to support people facing challenges from the rising cost of living. Further discussion of the carbon tax with respect to low-carbon fuels is in the Environment section.

CO-OPERATIVES

British Columbia Co-operative Association highlighted the importance of investing in co-ops as this funding stays in and contributes to local communities. They stated that extending government's recent investment of \$2 million will allow for the expansion and growth of existing supports, creating meaningful and self-sustaining employment opportunities that can be targeted to youth and precarious workers, Indigenous and racialized people, and people living with disabilities. They further recommended creating a Community Economic Development Investment Fund to drive greater investment by citizens in businesses and infrastructure. They explained that a Community Economic Development Investment Fund exists in Nova Scotia and is a pool of capital raised from individuals to invest in for-profit entities within a defined community.

LIQUOR, CANNABIS, AND TOBACCO

Regarding smoking cessation, Canadian Cancer Society and Heart and Stroke Foundation emphasized that tobacco continues to be the leading preventable cause of disease and death in British Columbia, killing more than 6,000 British Columbians annually. They noted that regulatory fees to recover costs from the companies rather than consumers have been introduced in Finland, Vietnam, France, Ireland, and the US, and recommended a similar fee for tobacco manufacturers in BC to recover the costs of the tobacco control and smoking cessation program. Imperial Tobacco Canada Limited noted that while they support a vaping product tax, it is critical that vaping products remain more affordable than tobacco to incentivize smokers to switch.

The Committee also heard about alcohol pricing and selling. Wine Growers British Columbia explained that BC's wine floor prices have remained flat for over two decades and changing minimum price mechanisms to reflect alcohol content can minimize accessibility to products that are more likely to enable harmful drinking. Convenience Industry Council of Canada cited research that enabling the sale of beer, wine, and coolers in convenience stores across the province would result in up to 2,700 additional jobs and an additional \$60 million in tax revenues and recommended the creation of a pilot program allowing the sale of these alcoholic beverages in convenience stores.

Arthritis Society highlighted the importance of medical cannabis for pain management but noted that the cost puts a

financial strain on many patients and recommended removing provincial tax on medical cannabis.

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Some organizations and individuals referenced a need for increased resources and funding for local governments, citing pressures and escalating costs for municipalities as well as limited means of raising funds. BC Urban Mayors' Caucus stated that municipalities across the province are operating in an environment of unprecedented escalating costs that are intensified by ongoing impacts of the pandemic, inflation, and disruptions in supply chain networks. They added that BC needs municipal finance reforms to provide municipalities with a broader range of sustainable, predictable and reliable funding tools in order to address increasing financial pressures related to a growing asset base, aging infrastructure, climate change, housing challenges, and the opioid crisis. Metro Vancouver specifically referenced a need for funding to build, maintain, and upgrade infrastructure such as wastewater treatment plants, especially when such projects are driven by regulatory requirements.

PROMPT PAYMENT LEGISLATION

BC Construction Association explained that construction is the only sector in which it is standard practice for purchasers of services to require 90 or 120-day payment terms, and then to delay payment even on those terms. They referenced other jurisdictions with prompt payment legislation and noted that the BC *Lien Act* has been reviewed and is ready to be updated, and the adjudication model, developed by Ontario, can be utilized in BC. According to the organization, enacting such legislation would help get funds to tradespeople who may be already struggling to afford housing and groceries due to inflation and rising interest rates as well as free up billions of taxpayer dollars, helping construction projects to be delivered on time and on budget.

PROPERTY TAX

With regard to property tax, three organizations cited the "highest and best use" criteria as a barrier for small businesses. Downtown Victoria Business Association stated that this approach to property tax assessments does not consider long-term leases, heritage concerns around renovation, or property easements, and that increases in property taxes are passed on to business tenants. Building

Owners and Managers Association of BC described the property tax as structurally imbalanced, with businesses paying a disproportionately high amount compared to the services they consume. They suggested targeted solutions could include the creation of a new split assessment category for underdeveloped buildings being taxed on development potential or tax deferrals for those properties. Bentall Green Oak stated that the updating of city plans to address the housing crisis has resulted in a dramatic increase in valuations and associated taxes which in turn creates an even greater burden on the small business community. They added that an equitable system that ensures taxation based on current utilization would enable property owners to continue to make the investments in properties, maintaining community and street appeal, while achieving a reasonable return on investment. One individual shared that due to the current property assessment process, property values increase when there has been no change to the property itself, and recommended a model similar to one in California which limits assessment increases to the cost-of-living adjustment for the year until the property is either sold or significant building alterations occur.

The Committee also heard about the property transfer tax with respect to thresholds and the need for review. Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver stated that there has not been a major review of the tax to adjust for housing market changes since it was introduced in 1987. Further, there are few re-sale or new homes that qualify for exemptions under the current thresholds of \$500,000 or \$750,000 respectively.

PROVINCIAL SALES TAX

Regarding the provincial sales tax (PST), organizations advocated for rebates for small businesses to provide relief from inflationary pressures and to stay competitive. Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce explained that the PST rebates for capital purchases for small businesses, announced in September 2020, allowed incorporated businesses to recover 100 percent of the PST on most machinery and equipment purchased. They noted that restarting this initiative would allow businesses to receive some relief from inflationary pressures and continue to grow and be competitive in the Canadian and global marketplace. Greater Vancouver Board of Trade stated that BC businesses are struggling to stay competitive compared to US firms, they suggested that a rebate on technology would incentivize investment, enhance productivity and competitiveness.

The Committee also heard about the need for specific exemptions to the PST. Richmond FarmWatch recommended removing the current minimum for greenhouse poly as specified by Bulletin PST 101 because it discriminates against small-scale farmers on leased land who lack the ability to install larger greenhouses because of landowner restrictions. BC Trucking Association advocated for exemptions to promote accelerated turnover of heavy commercial vehicles in order to meet government's climate objectives. Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association of Canada referenced an increase in PST affecting fossil fuel combustion systems adopted in April 2022 and stated that it hurt lower income British Columbians who cannot afford heat pumps, shows a lack of understanding of heat pump technology, and does not reflect the reality of not being able to rely on heat pumps during especially cold periods. They recommended it be either repealed or adjusted to clarify that it only applies to the firebox in fireplaces as the combustion system. With regard to online marketplaces, the Retail Council of Canada explained that adding PST to these services will significantly disadvantage BC-based business as online marketplace sellers who are not based in BC do not have to pay this tax. The Heart and Stroke Foundation also noted that for every minute that a person who has a cardiac arrest goes without CPR and/or an automated external defibrillator, their chances of survival decrease by seven to 10 percent. They recommended that the purchase of automated external defibrillators be exempt from the provincial sales tax.

OTHER SPECIFIC TAXATION MEASURES

Several organizations commented on specific taxation measures including the luxury tax, speculation and vacancy tax, and insurance premium tax. Regarding the luxury tax, New Car Dealers of BC explained that the tax applies at a \$55,000 purchase price and this threshold hasn't been adjusted for inflation for many years. They added that the average price of a new vehicle in Canada has now reached \$54,000 which is only slightly below the present threshold and as a result, many standard vehicles are captured by the luxury tax, including vans, larger SUVs, and pickup trucks. Global Automakers of Canada referenced the coming into force of a new federal luxury tax that will impact luxury zero-emission vehicles and stated that BC should eliminate the provincial luxury tax for these vehicles to mitigate the negative impact of dual luxury tax regimes on sales in BC.

Two organizations commented on the application and possible expansion of the *Speculation and Vacancy Tax Act*. Canadian

Home Builders' Association of BC described several factors that should be assessed when considering an expansion of the speculation and vacancy tax to new areas including assessed values of residential property, population, requests for inclusion, proximity to other specified areas and whether the municipality is primarily a vacation area. Kelowna Chamber of Commerce advocated for the tax to be focused on a benchmark rather than applied to specific communities and suggested transparent public reporting on revenue generated from the tax within each jurisdiction where it is being applied.

Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association recommended reducing the two percent tax on insurance premiums as it directly increases the cost of purchasing insurance for individual policyholders and employers offering group benefits plans.

British Columbia Co-operative Association highlighted the importance of co-operatives stating that investment into co-operatives stays in, and contributes to, local communities. They noted that co-operatives have a focus on meeting local needs and ensure government supports directly benefit British Columbians by creating good, sustainable jobs and providing access to important goods and services. They recommended creating a community economic development investment tax credit for cooperatives and community-based enterprises as well as investing an additional \$4 million in the sector.

CONCLUSIONS

Regarding budgetary and taxation policy, the Committee acknowledged the importance of maintaining competitiveness, innovation, and productivity in light of climate change, rising inflation, and supply chain challenges. It noted exceptional challenges for small and medium-sized businesses and the need to ensure appropriate supports are being provided in this area. To provide relief for these businesses, Members discussed the possibility of using the WorkSafeBC surplus toward reductions to premiums but did not come to a consensus on this issue.

With respect to public spending, Members were impressed with the number of presenters who addressed and quantified the social return on investment of their recommendations. Many presenters cautioned the Committee that the consequences of underfunding seemingly expensive preventative measures would lead to a much bigger demand on public funds down the road.

The Committee discussed the need for more education for children and youth about the health dangers associated with tobacco and vaping and suggested that a fee on the tobacco industry could be used to support costs related to health and public education. Regarding alcohol, Members focused on the need to support local producers to remain competitive with imports and discussed how the floor price could be adjusted to achieve this.

With respect to municipal governments, the Committee recognized the challenges related to new priorities and increased social pressures regarding housing, transportation, and climate change, which have placed strain on budgets. Members emphasized that a one-size-fits-all approach will not work in this area as there are unique circumstances in each municipality that need to be recognized. As such, they discussed the need to modernize the relationship between municipal and provincial governments with respect to funding and resources.

The Committee also debated the impact of several specific taxes on British Columbians including the speculation and vacancy tax and specific exemptions to the provincial sales tax. With respect to the carbon tax, Members noted that fuel sources are changing and further review to modernize the tax may be needed. They spoke about different ways this tax could be used to incentivize the shift to cleaner fuel alternatives, including hydrogen and biofuels, as they become available. Regarding the property transfer tax, Members noted that existing thresholds for homebuyers have not kept pace with the cost of housing and agreed that these thresholds should be raised. The Committee also recognized challenges associated with the highest and best use criteria and highlighted the need to explore split assessments and bring forward the voice of small business in this area. It discussed difficulties for small businesses associated with rising labour costs, such as the cost of extended benefits. Members also

commented on challenges for small and medium-sized businesses with respect to the provincial sales tax, noting that many businesses had to pivot to online business during the pandemic and need support with the continued transition to enhanced use of technology. The Committee reflected on the need to ensure competitiveness for BC-based online marketplaces and agreed that implementation of the PST on these services should be reviewed to ensure the intended outcome of the tax is being achieved. Members also supported the recommendation to remove PST from the sale of defibrillators. Regarding the luxury tax, the Committee described “luxury” as a misnomer as the current tax threshold has not kept pace with the increasing costs of vehicles as the tax now applies to pickup trucks needed for work as well as many family vehicles. Committee Members also debated the possibility of a means-tested exemption or a sliding scale for the luxury tax to incentivize zero emission vehicles but did not reach consensus in this area.

Committee Members also debated recommendations they received with respect to credit unions, cooperatives, and prompt payment legislation. They highlighted the benefits and flexibility provided by credit unions and debated whether streamlined regulations would help to support them. Members reflected on the submission from the BC Construction Association who highlighted increasing risk and uncertainty for small contractors related to cost of materials, gas prices, interest rates, labour shortages, and pandemic and safety protocols in advocating for prompt payment legislation. The Committee has recommended prompt payment legislation in the past and continues to support such a recommendation. Committee Members also highlighted the value of cooperatives with respect to supporting investment in local communities that are under-served by traditional for-profit enterprises and referenced the recent funding announcement by government in this area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

Budgetary and Taxation Policy

105. Recognize the exceptional challenges faced by small and medium-sized businesses and their importance to the BC economy by providing supports and incentives to increase productivity and competitiveness, reduce bureaucracy, and increase timeliness of supports.

106. Establish a BC Prosperity and Productivity Commission as an independent agency to ensure that policies and regulatory provisions are viewed through the lens of productivity and prosperity and advise on changes that support scaling up businesses, growing the export sector, and increasing productivity and nurturing real wage growth.

Carbon Tax

107. Explore a graduated carbon taxation system based on greenhouse gas emissions of fuels to incent the shift to new and cleaner alternatives.

Liquor, Cannabis, and Tobacco

108. Explore the viability of implementing an annual fee on the tobacco industry to recover the cost of the Ministry of Health's provincial tobacco control strategy.
109. Implement a retail floor price for all alcohol products of \$10.00/bottle (750 ml) with a corresponding increase to the wholesale price and a sliding scale for larger formats including annual indexing to the Consumer Price Index.

Local Governments

110. Review the Community Charter with a view to modernizing the relationship between municipal and provincial governments with respect to funding and resources in light of the increased pressures and demands facing municipalities relating to climate change, transportation, housing, and public safety.

Property Tax

111. Review split assessments on property taxation with a view to addressing rising costs for small and medium-sized businesses.
112. Increase property transfer tax thresholds for all home buyers including first time home buyers.

Provincial Sales Tax

113. Review the implementation of the online marketplace services PST provisions to ensure that the amendments result in the intended outcome.
114. Remove the PST from the sale of defibrillators.

Specific Taxation Measures

115. Review the luxury tax in view of the rising cost of vehicles.
116. Examine the payroll exemption threshold for the employer health tax in recognition of pressures on small businesses and index the threshold to the Consumer Price Index for annual increases.

Prompt Payment

117. Prioritize the enactment of prompt payment legislation that is inclusive of lien reform and adjudication.

British Columbians who participated in this consultation expressed several concerns related to the overburdened health care system. The vast majority of survey respondents encouraged more spending on health care and increased support for mental health and addictions. The input received by the Committee described a system under significant strain and offered a variety of solutions, including improving working conditions for health care workers, incorporating new health care professionals into primary care, and increasing investments to develop a preventative rather than reactive health care system.

CHRONIC DISEASES AND COMPLEX CONDITIONS

A variety of organizations highlighted challenges for those living with chronic and complex diseases. The ME|FM Society of BC outlined a number of issues related to myalgic encephalomyelitis, noting that physicians are unable to register a specific diagnosis because it falls under the generic diagnostic category of “Complex Chronic Disease” in BC. They explained that because of the lack of a diagnosis, access to research funding is not available and billing for doctors is more difficult. The organization highlighted the need for a medical diagnostic and billing code specific to the disease, complemented by funding for regionalized services to support patients.

On the topic of brain injury, the Brain Injury Alliance advised that individuals with acquired brain injuries are seven times more likely than the general population to be diagnosed with a mental health issue, comprise 50 percent of the homeless population, and up to 80 percent of the incarcerated population. They noted that between 2015 and 2022, the province provided the alliance with \$7 million in grants, of which they have distributed \$6 million for direct services to people with brain injuries and supporting organizations. The Comox Valley Head Injury Society explained that funding for the BC Brain Injury Alliance needs to be reinstated or the

organization will run out of money at the end of 2022. They added that these funds support 13 local brain injury societies across BC, allowing them to provide programs and services to brain injury survivors and their families.

Several issues were raised by the Cancer Society of Canada about coverage in BC. They noted that prostate cancer is one of the most common cancers, impacting one in nine Canadian men, and explained that early detection is critical in treating the disease, but the cost of the prostate-specific antigen test is currently paid out-of-pocket by asymptomatic individuals in British Columbia. They recommended this treatment be covered by the Medical Services Plan (MSP) when ordered by a physician. Concerns about the number of Canadian cancer patients who had to postpone treatments, tests and appointments due to the pandemic were raised by Merck Canada Inc., who cautioned that these delays may increase the risk of advanced cancer cases. Gilead Sciences raised concerns that BC is the only province that has not approved Yescarta® (axicabtagene ciloleucel) as a treatment for adults with certain types of lymphoma.

Diabetes Canada expressed concerns about the rates of diabetes and the economic impact of diabetes in BC, which is expected to cost \$565 million in 2022 and grow to \$732 million by 2032. They noted that diabetes increases the risk of complications in those with other health issues and recommended a comprehensive diabetes strategy to improve prevention, screening, and treatment for diabetes. They further raised concerns that the provincial reimbursement policy does not align with evidence-based national recommendations, creating barriers to medication and devices for people with diabetes. Young & T1 explained that the current policy does not align with the health risks associated with diabetes. For example, individuals with diabetes are at high risk for eye disease and dental disease, while eye exams for people with diabetes are covered under MSP, dental exams are not, despite the increased risk. The Abbott Diabetes Care - Freestyle Libre shared concerns that Plan W only covers blood glucose monitors when a sample of blood is provided, limiting blood

sugar checks for diabetics. Likewise, Young & T1 noted that though insulin pumps are covered, the necessary monthly supplies are not.

The MS Society of Canada explained that Canada has one of the highest rates of multiple sclerosis (MS) in the world, with approximately 17,000 people in BC living with MS. They explained that more research is needed on why one person's MS progresses while another's does not, they added that the MS Society invests \$6 to \$10 million annually in MS research; however, investment has slowed due to the pandemic. They further noted that they are on the cusp of treatments that target cellular and nervous system repair, actually reversing the effects of MS.

The Arthritis Society highlighted that the pandemic demonstrated a need to make changes to the health care system, as too many people are waiting too long for treatment. They highlighted that people living with arthritis require timely access to a team of health care providers, including general practitioners, specialists, therapists and social workers. Team-based arthritis care is important to the long-term health of the individual, and timely access to health care providers and community-based programs for managing arthritis symptoms improves outcomes. The society noted that this is especially lacking in rural and remote areas.

COMMUNITY CARE AND SENIORS

The Committee heard from a number of organizations on issues related to long-term care, assisted living, and home care. Several groups described the difficulties faced by workers in such facilities, with the Hospital Employees Union noting that privatization and reliance on contract workers has led to deteriorating working conditions for their union members. They highlighted a report by the BC Seniors Advocate that found that while contracted long-term care home operators receive similar levels of public funding, non-profit operators spend 24 percent more per resident per year compared to for-profits and provided better care. They recommended stronger accountability measures and emphasized the importance of provincially owned non-profit care homes. The BC Health Coalition described the retention of health care staff as a crisis exacerbated by COVID-19 and advocated for increased wages for health care workers and better working conditions. The BC Care Providers Association described the rise of Canada's aging population as an existential threat, noting concerns that BC is already short thousands of long-term care beds. They

explained that BC needs to build another 2,250 care beds per year until 2040 to meet demand.

The Family Council of BC emphasized that care home workers are stretched thin, requiring volunteer run counsels to advocate for the dignity of their family members. This sentiment was echoed by Action for Reform of Residential Care BC who noted that the system is stressed, workers are burned out and families have become the backbone of the care system. They noted that COVID-19 shone a light on the issues with care homes, representing 69 percent of all COVID-19 deaths in Canada, significantly higher than the international average. They recommend that BC fund a diverse and inclusive multi-sectoral long-term care advisory forum to develop an action plan to reform the long-term care system.

A number of submissions and organizations provided solutions focused on aging in place. The BC Health Coalition explained that many older adults want to live independently at home for as long as possible but are limited by the current funding structure. Subsidizing a long-term-care bed costs the taxpayer about \$57,500 per year. If two hours of daily home support were provided instead, it would save an average of \$29,860 per individual per year. The message that seniors want to stay in their own homes as long as possible was echoed by Save Our Northern Seniors, who noted that this can only be accomplished with increased access to home care and home nursing. However, Canadian Federation of University Women BC Council explained that there is limited financial supports to assist seniors in aging in place.

The Committee also heard from a number of organizations who expressed concerns about the rising rate of poverty among senior citizens. Burnaby Neighbourhood House Society explained that poverty among seniors is growing exponentially, and seniors require enough funding to allow them to age in place with appropriate supports. According to the Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC, half of BC's seniors live on between \$1,700 and \$2,500 per month. The Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness explained that their senior advocacy services that usually focus on maintaining independence, connection, and health, are struggling to help find affordable housing for their clients and suggested that financial supports be provided to ensure that seniors can live healthy lives.

Many organizations highlighted that these issues exist in communities across BC. Save Our Northern Seniors described long waitlists for every seniors' facility in Fort St. John, and

noted that the care facility, Peace Villa, should be expanded. The Kitimat Valley Housing Society explained that in Kitimat and Kitamaat Village (Haisla Nation), over 70 individuals are suffering from dementia and lack access to suitable care facilities. A project by Northern Health was greenlit in 2018, but since that time the need for beds has increased, requiring a larger investment. The Alzheimer's Society of BC noted that they are the only provincial organization dedicated to providing support and education for British Columbians on the dementia journey and highlighted the need for a learning management system to address education gaps across the province.

DENTAL

The Committee received several submissions and presentations outlining the need to expand dental coverage for persons with disabilities. The Canadian Association for Disability and Oral Health noted that BC has not updated the list of dental treatments covered by the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Dental Plan since the 1990s, leaving numerous essential treatments uncovered. They similarly noted that BC has not increased fees under the PWD Dental Plan since the early 2000s, so the plan fees are now less than half of the BC Dental Association recommended fees. As such, BC residents with disabilities have the worst dental health outcomes in the province. Several organizations noted that with the coverage provided under PWD or Healthy Kids plans, if an individual exceeds the coverage limit, they are only eligible for emergency care and must wait until they experience pain, infection, or health risks before receiving additional care.

Organizations also noted several deficiencies in how the province conducts oral cancer screening and oral surgeries. The benefits of early diagnosis of oral cancers were highlighted by the BC Dental Association who noted that early diagnosis can significantly improve survival rates and reduce the loss of facial structure. They explained that a hospital-based remote oral cancer assessment program would expedite the diagnosis of oral cancer for patients in remote areas. Canadian Association for Disability and Oral Health also cited the lack of dental surgery centres as especially problematic for persons with disabilities. They explained to the Committee that BC hospitals direct adults with disabilities to standard day surgery rooms for medically necessary dental treatment, but hospitals do not equip day surgeries for dental treatment. As such, dentists must bring dental equipment to the day surgeries

to complete dental treatment, making care inefficient and costly. They recommended that BC promote general anesthesia dental clinics near BC hospitals through revitalization of the Community Dental Partners Program (CDPP) to provide greater access to dental treatment for children and adults with disabilities who are not medically complex.

Citing the need for equitable access to dentists, the Vancouver Aboriginal Health Society also requested funding to develop an Indigenous dental building. Similarly, the BC Dental Association added that currently BC has a shortage of dental staff and needs to hire more dental assistants and hygienists.

HEALTH HUMAN RESOURCES

The Committee heard from a variety of groups who noted the need for more health care professionals in the province. Improvements to the current health care system were the most cited action that the province can take to improve the quality of life for respondents' families, appearing in over 400 answers to the survey. Respondents spoke to the issue of health care access, with almost two-thirds of all health care related survey responses citing calls to increase health care spending to recruit and retain more health care professionals to reduce wait times. A significant majority of respondents also expressed support for the province to spend more money on health care.

Canadian Federation of University Women BC Council noted that with over one million residents already without a family doctor, the health care system is in danger of breaking down from pandemic burnout. This sentiment was echoed by the Health Sciences Association of BC who explained that the health crisis began years ago but has been exacerbated by the pandemic. They noted that many health care professionals are burning out or moving to other provinces. The Resource Municipalities Coalition explained that this issue is more acute in rural and remote regions, adding that rural nurses are often required to have a skill set that is much broader compared to their urban counterparts.

The Committee received a number of suggestions to improve working conditions for health care professionals in the province. The Hospital Employees Union suggested that developing career paths for existing workers could improve retention. Citing the difficulties faced by nurses, the Victoria Community Health Co-operative explained that there are limited accommodations for nurses who want to upgrade their education, and suggested nurses be paid for any courses

they take. Several other groups encouraged more funding be allocated to training spaces and education opportunities. Other organizations focused on improving the pay of health care workers to match pay in other sectors. The BC Care Providers Association noted that it is estimated that BC will need another 19,000 health care aides and nurses in the next decade. To achieve this, they noted that working conditions will have to improve through better benefits, such as mental health coverage. The idea of restructuring workloads for nurses was suggested by the BC Anesthesiologists' Society, adding that creating childcare spaces in health care facilities could help alleviate strain. Several individuals also recommended that the worker shortage be studied to understand why the province is lacking in qualified health care professionals. Another individual suggested that fast-tracking qualified immigrants to work in the sector may alleviate strain on health care professionals. The Kootenay Boundary Patient Advisory Committee & Community strongly encouraged more funding for organizations which promote patient engagement, noting that patient engagement is a critical component of health care improvement, and it results in better health outcomes.

Several organizations came forward with suggestions on other models or other health care professionals that could be integrated into the health care or primary care system. The BC Health Coalition described the current situation as a crisis which has incorrectly been attributed to a doctor shortage. They explained that BC currently has more doctors per capita than at any previous time, but the current model is unsustainable. The Lower Columbia CHC Network Working Group explained that recruitment is falling behind because new physicians are not enticed by the fee for service model and suggested that switching to an alternative payment plan system would improve service and improve the patient-provider relationship.

Primary Care Centres were introduced in 2018 to alleviate the shortage of family doctors and provide a team-based care strategy for a variety of minor ailments. The Lower Columbia CHC Network Working Group suggested that funding for primary care centres be increased to reflect the growing number of patients in BC that are unattached to a family doctor. They noted that long wait times to access care have resulted in increased use of emergency room services and have degraded patient outcomes. They further added that community health clinics could be integrated into the system to further assist at alleviating strain and providing better patient outcomes. They explained that these centres are locally

governed non-profits and focus on identified community needs through a holistic approach that leverages existing community services and health care assets to improve the overall health of the community. While describing the funding model, the BC Association of Community Health Centres explained that community health centres receive limited public support, forcing them to rely on fundraising and grants.

The BC Chiropractic Association noted that because several patients see primary care providers due to musculoskeletal complaints, the integration of chiropractic treatments into a primary care model may alleviate stress on the health care system and reduce the practice of self-medication for pain management purposes.

The Canadian Association of Physician Assistants noted that across Canada, physician assistants are widely considered essential to improving patient flow, lowering wait times and boosting physician morale and productivity. However, they are not currently regulated in BC and thus not permitted to work in the province. They recommended regulating the profession under the College of Physicians and Surgeons in BC so that physician assistants are recognized health care professionals in the province, creating job positions and training seats for physician assistants in BC.

The Physiotherapy Association of BC voiced concerns about the decreased number of physiotherapists going into public practice due to lower rates of pay, heavy workloads, inflexibility, and a lack of opportunities. They noted that internationally trained physiotherapists can help alleviate issues in BC's health care system, but they need to be better supported and have an easier accreditation program. They also noted that there is an increased need for physiotherapists across the province; however, they are largely concentrated in urban centres. The Health Sciences Association of BC echoed this sentiment, adding that access to public rehabilitative care is declining in many regions. They described the erosion and privatization of public rehabilitative care and out-patient closures as a result of inadequate funding and staffing levels as demand for services grows.

The Neighbourhood Pharmacy Association of Canada suggested that pharmacies could alleviate issues in the health care system by assessing and prescribing medications for minor ailments. They added that similar programs have been enacted in other provinces and estimate that minor ailments programs in Saskatchewan have a potential positive return of \$2.53 for every \$1 invested. They further noted

that BC's routine immunization program saw declines of 40 percent in some regions due to COVID-19 and suggested that pharmacists could have a larger role in delivering immunization programs.

The BC Psychological Association explained that half of patient visits to physicians are related to psychosocial factors such as mental and behavioural health issues. They suggested that psychologists could be integrated into the primary care model to treat mental health concerns such as depression, anxiety, addiction, and trauma.

A shortage of technicians was cited as a concern by the Canadian Association of Medical Radiation Technologists, BC Division. They explained that 70 percent of radiologists felt that there are insufficient resources within their departments to meet service demands. The association suggested the cost of tuition, the wage discrepancy with other health care professionals such as nurses, and lack of awareness of the profession are contributing to recruitment challenges. They also raised issues with exhaustion, noting that the number of medical imaging technologists reporting signs of burnout in BC has doubled between 2018 and 2021. They suggested more needs to be done to retain radiation technologists, including adding the profession to BC's loan forgiveness program.

The Ambulance Paramedics and Emergency Dispatchers of British Columbia noted that without substantial financial assistance, paramedic training will not be able to meet future demands. The organization requested more funding in recruitment initiatives, better access to paramedic care across the province, and increased investments in retention through psychological benefits and employer funded education.

The Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists BC Chapter noted that occupational therapists are one of the 14 priority professions identified by the Ministry of Health that are in most need of focus for recruitment and retention to support the health care of British Columbians. They further added that BC lacks training capacity, has lower wages than other provinces for occupational therapists, and does not allow therapists to work to the full scope of their profession. They recommended increased investment in occupational therapists to try to make BC a desirable place to work.

Concerns about a lack of midwives in BC were voiced by the Midwives Association of British Columbia. For many in rural, Indigenous, and northern communities, midwives are the

only way to avoid traveling long distances to deliver a baby. As such, the association noted that more needs to be done to attract and retain midwives in rural communities. They recommended ensuring midwives are included in equal pay legislation, increased educational programming, and expanded Indigenous midwifery and rural maternity through secure funding streams. The Victoria Community Health Co-operative also shared that it would be beneficial to extend the time period that midwife services are available to a full year.

Several individuals and organizations raised concerns related to health care in rural and remote areas. The Kootenay Boundary Patient Advisory Committee & Community explained that there are not enough family doctors or nurse practitioners. They noted that possible solutions include training more family physicians and nurse practitioners and recruitment of students from rural areas. They also noted that integration of digital health could potentially help, but a lack of highspeed internet, software costs, and incompatible operating systems are significant barriers. They added that top-down communication has missed the mark and rural residents are becoming increasingly isolated from good information. They noted that investments are required to change the approach of communicating and connecting with rural residents. The Abbott Diabetes Care - Freestyle Libre cited concerns about rising rates of diabetes in Bella Coola, coupled with a lack of access to adequate medication in rural communities, and encouraged the Committee to focus on improving access in these areas.

HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE

Many presentations and submissions described the benefits of hospices in supporting those dealing with grief and bereavement. The Canadian Cancer Society raised the issue that BC does not recognize grief, particularly prolonged or complicated grief, as a mental health issue. As a result of this gap, grief and bereavement organizations are not publicly funded and the financial burden for providing grief support services falls to charities, hospices, and other not-for-profit organizations. The BC Bereavement Helpline is currently the only free grief-specific phone and email helpline in Canada. The BC Hospice Palliative Care Association explained that hospices provide valuable grief and bereavement support services to British Columbians, but are underfunded. The Vancouver Island Federation of Hospices noted that with a modest investment, grief support could be available in every small community in BC. Victoria Hospice added that

additional supports should be provided to ensure that people can die peacefully in their homes, noting that 75 percent of people say that they prefer the idea of aging in place and, ultimately, dying at home, as opposed to dying in an acute hospital setting. They noted that their Compass Program is an innovative way for volunteers to provide hospice supports in the home of a patient.

The Hospice Society of the Columbia Valley explained that there are significant discrepancies between rural and urban parts of the province and many rural hospices do not have access to grief counsellors. While the government partially funds the clinical operation of hospices, where there is an actual hospice building, in the case of rural community hospices where people are most often being supported in their home, funding is lacking.

The Canuck Place Children's Hospice Society brought up an issue that BC's palliative care policy currently excludes children at age 19 and under. They recommended ensuring that the Ministry of Health's Palliative and End-of-Life Care Policy be amended to address this.

MEDICAL COVERAGE

Several groups noted medical coverage shortfalls in the province and suggested policy changes to expand coverage. Dyslexia BC noted that dyslexia comprises 80 to 90 percent of all learning disabilities and recommended that psychology services be covered under MSP to assist individuals seeking a diagnosis (further discussion of dyslexia is in the K-12 Education section). With respect to migrant workers, MOSAIC explained that these individuals are in precarious situations, and recommended waiving the three-month MSP waiting period for eligible workers and creating a permanent emergency support fund for migrant workers in BC. The Prosthetics and Orthotists Association of BC noted that several PharmaCare and Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction policies have reduced the quality of life for those needing prosthetics because the rates have not kept pace with the increased cost of care. As such, individuals are often maxing out the coverage for emergency repairs to prosthetics and orthotics. If individuals are unable to afford a repair or maintain their orthotics, it could cause significant additional medical issues for the person. The association spoke to the importance of timely access to orthotics, as proactive orthotic care can save significant health care costs while preventing further disability down the road and noted the need for a

funding strategy so adults with disabilities and physical impairments do not lose orthotics care after their 19th birthday.

Several pharmaceutical companies articulated areas for improvement in BC PharmaCare. Innovative Medicines Canada noted the benefits of private and publicly funded pharmacare and encouraged a continuation of the current model. AbbVie Canada noted that BC PharmaCare has had the fewest number of new product listings compared to other provinces, their timeline for drug reviews has increased significantly and the program needs an increased budget to improve and expedite access and coverage of innovative drug therapies.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION

The Committee heard from many groups about the importance of increasing funding in several areas related to mental health. The Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division noted that over one third of people in BC reported a decline in their mental health since the start of the pandemic and stated that the current mental health system in the province is overburdened. In response to question two of the survey, asking about improving quality of life, several respondents made calls for improved addictions services and treatment for those struggling with addictions, made reference to the ongoing opioid crisis, or called for more treatment facilities and rehabilitation services. A similar number of recommendations were made for more investment in basic mental health services overall and a significant majority of respondents noted that more should be spent on improving access to mental health services. The BC Schizophrenia Society highlighted that schizophrenia and psychosis creates more social challenges than any other medical condition, which has a disproportionate impact on the individual's likelihood of unemployment, poverty, homelessness, family disruption, police incidents and suicide. They noted the importance of strong community-based services and supports for BC families, and added that the stigma around mental health has been a significant challenge. They highlighted the importance of education in improving health outcomes. The Community Connections Society of South East BC noted a positive change regarding wider social acceptance of mental health challenges but noted that changing public attitudes and awareness of mental health has not been matched by improved access to mental health care professionals. Poverty can also be an exacerbating factor for mental health issues. The Parent Support Services Society of BC explained that for individuals who are in precarious situations, mental health needs are

often neglected, and highlighted the need for accessible, low barrier supports and services. MOSAIC explained that increasing access to mental health services is important but added that it is vital to ensure that mental health services are culturally safe, multi-lingual and trauma-informed for migrant communities. The Community Connections Society of Southeast BC suggested that integrating counsellors and psychotherapists into the health care system could reduce strain on other areas of the health care system.

Several organizations described issues related to mental health funding for children and youth. The longitudinal impact of unresolved childhood trauma was explained by the Child Abuse Prevention and Counselling Society of Greater Victoria as having profound, lifelong impacts on children, families and communities. These issues can contribute to mental health issues, addiction and perpetuating the cycle of violence. They further explained that core funding is only made available for children and youth who have experienced sexual trauma and highlighted the lifelong impact of unresolved childhood trauma on mental wellbeing. Battered Women's Support Services described the importance of early intervention programs in preventing intergenerational cycles of violence and noted that such programs are underfunded. They highlighted that PEACE (Prevention, Education, Advocacy, Counselling and Empowerment) programs provide crucial group and individual counselling for children and youth who have witnessed domestic abuse, threats, or violence in the home and cited the need for more funding. The benefits of early intervention with respect to mental health and addiction issues faced by youth were described as essential by the YMCAs of BC. Big Brothers Big Sisters described how the response to mental health issues for children and youth is currently housed under multiple ministries and would better be addressed by a coordinated response.

The Phoenix Society highlighted the interconnectedness of mental health challenges and homelessness and further described the need for wraparound services. They noted that homelessness and mental health challenges intersect with multiple social concerns, including poverty, income inequality, lack of affordable housing, housing insecurity and domestic abuse. The South Cariboo Chamber of Commerce explained to the Committee that the South Cariboo needs assistance in addressing the problems of mental health, addictions and homelessness in the region.

The Committee heard from several 2SLGBTQ+ organizations who mentioned the difficulties that individuals face in the conventional mental health model. QMUNITY explained that mental health challenges are more prevalent among queer and gender diverse individuals. Rainbow Refugee urged the Committee to invest in community agencies that could provide targeted mental health services that are intersectional, culturally safe and 2SLGBTQ+ focused.

Many organizations pointed to the current issues in the province related to the poisoned drug supply and highlighted the need for treatment or safe supply. CUPE Metropolitan Vancouver District Council explained that toxic drugs have killed 9,400 British Columbians. Noting that more needs to be done in BC, the Realistic Success Recovery Society explained that about 17 percent of British Columbians experience substance use or mental health issues, and drug toxicity has decreased the life expectancy for males in Canada by 2.3 years. Several individuals wrote to the Committee to urge action on implementing a safe drug supply.

Several organizations also noted the need to improve funding for treatment facilities. The Realistic Success Recovery Society explained that the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction pays \$35.90 per individual per day to registered support recovery facilities. For the society, this amount made up 30 to 40 percent of the revenue required for them to operate in 2022. They emphasized that their experience is not unique as many such facilities are underfunded. The society requested that financial supports be adjusted and tied to inflation. The Cedars at Cobble Hill explained that recovery services have a return on investment of six dollars for every dollar spent. Two organizations, Wagner Hills Farm Society and the North Wind Wellness Centre Society, recommended increased funding for abstinence-based recovery facilities in the province. Northern First Nations Alliance Health & Wellness Committee requested funding for an Indigenous detox health and wellness centre in Northwest BC to focus on family and lands-based treatment. Noting the exponential return on investment of extending the alcohol and drug fee to all patients seeking care across the province, the Canadian Addiction Treatment Centres encouraged the removal of all financial barriers to seeking treatment for opioid addiction.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Several organizations highlighted budget shortfalls related to public health. The Public Health Association of BC explained that public health is roughly three percent of the health care budget, but for every dollar spent in public health, BC stands to save seven dollars in mental health and addiction treatment and approximately seven dollars in other social costs and loss of productivity. BC Alliance for Healthy Living explained that the Ministry of Health established the BC Health Improvement Fund earlier this year with an initial investment of \$450,000 to address upstream and social determinants of health with a focus on recovery from the pandemic, reconciliation, prevention of substance abuse and mitigation of health impacts as a result of climate change; however, they noted that this funding does not go far enough.

While describing the benefits of public vaccine programs, the Public Health Association of BC explained that immunizing children against measles, mumps, and rubella saves the province about \$16 per person in health care costs. Merck Canada Inc. noted that the pandemic disrupted the delivery of normal vaccination programs, particularly in schools, and strongly encouraged ensuring that the province get back on track in vaccinating children. The organization also emphasized the need to clarify the current criteria for human papillomavirus vaccines for older males to increase vaccination uptake.

AbbVie Canada encouraged the Committee to prioritize the development of a BC Hepatitis C elimination plan, prioritizing those populations that are most impacted. They explained that by increasing screening, linkages to care and accelerating approval times for Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) drugs by PharmaCare, BC can achieve the WHO's target to eliminate HCV by 2030.

The Heart & Stroke Foundation and Diabetes Canada explained that sugary drinks are the single largest source of sugar in Canadians' diets. The organizations warned that overconsumption of sugar is linked to heart disease, stroke, diabetes, high cholesterol, obesity, and cancer. Both organizations encouraged the introduction of a levy on sugary drinks. Diabetes Canada explained that a similar tax on non-dairy and non-alcoholic drinks with added sugar resulted in a decline in purchases in Mexico and Europe. The Heart and Stroke Foundation similarly noted that a 20 percent tax would result in \$11.5 billion in health care savings.

Highlighting the benefits of free contraception, AccessBC Campaign explained that it improves health outcomes for infants and mothers and saves the government an estimated \$95 million per year. They added that when contraception is not free, people can face a host of unnecessary barriers when trying to access sexual and reproductive health services. Options for Sexual Health echoed this sentiment and added that the cost of contraception often leaves younger people and people experiencing poverty making health decisions based on cost. They added that access to abortion outside of urban centres is challenging. This is especially pronounced for Indigenous and racialized communities who experience greater barriers to timely medical service.

RESEARCH

Several research institutes and foundations highlighted the need for investments in health-related research. TRIUMF stated that the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the need for increased life sciences research. Similarly, Burnaby Board of Trade stated that there were severe downsides to not having a manufacturing facility for testing vaccines and therapeutics in Canada during the pandemic. They noted that local biomanufacturing strengthens the supply chain in times of need and recommended building BC's biomanufacturing supply chain. Roche Canada stated the life sciences companies need access to top qualified talent to support their business, address market demand, and enable their business to grow. Both Roche Canada and Innovative Medicines Canada recommended a life sciences strategy to support research and innovation, attract talent, and create better health system sustainability. Innovative Medicines Canada cited a 2016 study by the Conference Board of Canada that showed a return of \$2.4 billion in health care savings and productivity gains from a \$1.2 billion initial expenditure on six classes of innovative medicines. They expressed concern that BC is falling behind in the development of medical innovations. VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation echoed this sentiment and encouraged supports to incentivize health innovations, adding that innovations today can save lives and lower health care costs. The BC Women's Health Foundation recommended that the province encourage the federal government to locate the National Institute for Women's Health Research Institute in BC.

CONCLUSIONS

The Committee appreciated the several organizations who came forward with recommendations on a wide range of chronic and complex diseases. Members noted that several of the therapies, programs, care regimes and treatments brought forward to the Committee are vitally important for improving the quality of life of thousands of British Columbians across the province. Members were particularly struck by the need to provide improved care for myalgic encephalomyelitis, which they described as a horrible disease that is in dire need of increased awareness province wide. The Committee highlighted the importance of providing a strong provincial response to diabetes and noted the importance of the diabetes 360 framework to improve prevention, screening, and treatment of diabetes. Members also noted that several of the recommendations brought forward by stakeholders are repeated recommendations from last year, and the Committee would like to draw attention to the need to improve funding to these important areas.

While discussing community care and seniors, Members agreed that BC has an aging population, and not enough is being done to ensure that BC is prepared for a rapid influx of senior citizens that will require adequate care facilities. The Committee discussed the benefits of allowing seniors to stay at home, noting that it typically has improved health outcomes. Of particular concern to Members was the number of senior citizens who are experiencing homelessness. They noted the importance of ensuring that seniors have the ability to stay in their home as long as possible, and that more supports should be put in place to help them do so. Members also discussed the concerning loss of life and strain on the long-term care staff as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. They agreed that the pandemic demonstrated a real need to improve long-term care in the province, both in terms of improved working conditions for staff and improved care for seniors. They noted that these are both important considerations driving the need to develop a comprehensive province-wide strategy to determine the role of the public and private sectors in caring for seniors and determining what mechanisms need to be in place to improve accountability. Members added that it is also important to ensure that BC has enough support facilities; linked to their discussion on housing, they contemplated the possibility of making policy changes such as mandatory zoning provisions to ensure that enough facilities are built across the province rather than just in major cities. Members were troubled to hear about the

lack of adequate long-term care supports in rural locations, including in Kitimat and Fort St. John.

Regarding dental care, presenters brought to the Committee's attention that there were significant gaps and Members agreed that inadequate dental coverage can have several wider financial and health implications. Members specifically pointed to poor dental care as a potential barrier to recovery for those battling addictions with drugs such as methamphetamines or crack cocaine. They noted that good dental coverage should be extended to low-income individuals and persons with disabilities, as the current coverage under disability assistance is lacking and does not ensure optimal health outcomes as the model is focused on providing limited and prescriptive care, removing the discretion of dentists in determining the best path of care. Members agreed that BC needs to provide better care regardless of the proposed federal dental program. The Committee also reflected on the need for new and renovated hospitals to consider the development of oral surgical units to ensure that complex oral surgical issues, especially for those with disabilities, are accommodated.

Committee Members noted that BC's health care is in urgent need of improvement; this was made clear by a wide range of stakeholders. The Committee appreciated the variety of suggestions from many health care workers on how to address shortages in this area. Members expressed interest in a number of ideas, including the prospect of approving physician assistants to work in BC as they do in other provinces. They noted that several foreign trained health care professionals are unable to work in BC despite the current strains on the healthcare system. Members also suggested that physician assistant positions could be a stepping stone to becoming a physician in BC. They further highlighted that a range of additional health care professionals could be integrated into BC's health care model including pharmacists, midwives, and mental health practitioners. Members agreed that BC needs more education seats, more residency seats, and that the College of Physicians and Surgeons will need to significantly expedite credentialing of health care professionals in the province. Further discussion on this topic can be found in the Advanced Education section.

Members expressed concern that the current fee structure for doctors may be undermining patient care, as doctors are incentivized to see patients as quickly as possible. They discussed particular challenges in rural areas where strain

on the system is most acute and noted the importance of ensuring that every community in the province is given the funding it needs to have fully functional health care supports.

While reflecting on the health challenges in rural and remote areas, the Committee noted that the health care system is under excess strain and more should be done to stabilize the healthcare system to ensure all British Columbians have access to sufficient medical care. Members noted that there are inconsistencies across regions in scope of practice for health care practitioners regarding the activities they are authorized to perform; reviewing and standardizing scope of practice may reduce inefficiencies in the health care system. The Committee was concerned about how distance can increase the difficulty of receiving basic prenatal supports to safely deliver a baby in northern communities and suggested that midwives should be utilized more frequently and be better supported. Members were especially interested in ensuring that Indigenous midwifery programs are well funded and supported by the province. They further supported improving access to digital health options but agreed that unequal internet coverage across the province is an obstacle to full adoption of digital health care.

Regarding hospices and palliative care, the Committee was moved by the presentations and strongly supports the work that hospices are doing. Members reiterated their comments from last year, that grief is a component of mental health, and as such should be well supported by the province. They further noted that there are a lot of discrepancies across the province and there is a need for consistent supports across all regions. The Committee highlighted the need to ensure that all British Columbians can gain access to hospices and palliative care, especially those under the age of 19.

While discussing the issue of medical coverage, Members agreed that several policies need to be modernized to ensure British Columbians can access necessary treatments, tests, and orthotics when they need them. Members remarked that orthotics are devices that provide considerable enhancement to people's lives and allow them to regain mobility and freedom after life altering incidents such as a stroke. They noted that when a device breaks, it not only stops a person from living their life to the fullest but can also prevent them from working. In line with these concerns, the Committee agreed that BC's health care policies should be oriented towards improving quality of life and preventing illness. Members also noted the need to review any exclusions of

refugees from the Medical Services Plan and suggested that the coverage of migrant workers should be reviewed to ensure that they have adequate coverage and the model is fair to employers and employees. The Committee also noted the benefits of the prostate specific antigen test and noted that groups have been asking for years that the test be covered under MSP.

The Committee remarked on the significant volume of information received related to mental health, and Members agreed that the system needs to improve but these improvements need to be guided by clear data and metrics. The Committee also noted the increased need for mental health awareness to ensure that people know how to access supports, including children and youth who have experienced abuse and middle-aged men, who often suffer silently rather than seek help. The Committee was concerned to hear reports that there are gaps in counselling for children and youth and suggested that it is necessary to ensure that all children who have experienced trauma should be able to access counselling services. They further noted that LGBTQ2SAI+ communities often have some of the highest rates of suicide and noted the need for specific intersectional programming to help people with specific mental health needs.

While discussing the issue of toxic drugs, the Committee described the loss of six people per day to toxic drugs as unacceptable. It further noted that this issue has spiraling impacts on public safety, crime and disorder and health; the cost to the province is significant and requires a strategy informed by specific goals. Committee Members agreed that BC needs more treatment beds to support the increasing number of people with addiction issues. They reflected on the range of organizations who provided recommendations in this area and acknowledged that there are many paths to recovery and there is no one size fits all approach to responding to this issue. The Committee was concerned that nearly every front-line organization confronting the toxic drug crisis who participated in the consultation reported significant funding shortfalls. As such, more needs to be done to ensure that people who need treatment can access it more quickly. However, Members noted that this is an extremely nuanced issue which is currently being examined by the Select Standing Committee on Health. The Members expressed their support for the work of this Committee and emphasized the need to implement data-driven solutions to provide a range of supports.

Members agreed that more needs to be done to improve primary care in BC. They discussed how the current model of urgent and primary care centres may be confusing to British Columbians, and more education may be required to inform people of how the system works in relation to walk-in clinics, family doctors and community care centres. Members noted that some of these care centres are working extremely well and alleviating strain in the system; they also noted that in some areas of the province, they are not as effective and having trouble retaining doctors. They discussed the possibility of integrating more nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and midwives into the urgent and primary care centres to help alleviate strain on the system. They highlighted the importance of patient attachment and noted the need for the urgent and primary care centres to reflect a strong patient practitioner relationship. The Committee heard from a wide range of doctors, health care professionals, and patients, who each had different suggestions on how to improve the system. As such, Members emphasized that BC needs to ensure that improvements are based on clear data and that family doctors with patient attachments are incentivized to work in the new model.

Related to public health, Members agreed there are several things that can be done to better front-load support to public health which will reduce costs in the long run; these measures could include highlighting the importance of a healthy lifestyle to reduce the risk of morbidity later in life. The Committee

noted that sugary beverages are a risk to health; however, it also expressed concerns that a tax on sugary drinks may have unequal negative consequences and suggested that it would be best to incentivize good behaviour through improved education. While discussing the negative consequences of the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV), Members noted that BC requires a re-focused effort to remain on track to achieve the World Health Organization and Government of Canada 2030 HCV elimination target. They also agreed that BC should prioritize the provincial vaccination program as it was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Regarding reproductive health, Members discussed the several benefits of ensuring that sexual health services and contraception are easily accessible throughout the province.

While discussing biomedical research, Members noted the need to have made-in-BC solutions in light of recent supply chain issues. The Committee highlighted several recent innovations in BC that have significantly improved the quality of life for millions of people around the world, and noted that it is important for the province to continue to be a global leader in biomedical innovation. The Committee spoke about how the COVID-19 pandemic illustrated the importance of local vaccine and personal protective equipment production capability and agreed that support is needed to build BC's biomanufacturing and vaccine supply chain. They added that supporting local medical innovation both increases good local jobs and ensures that BC is prepared for future disasters.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

Chronic Diseases and Complex Care

118. Prioritize and fund the development of myalgic encephalomyelitis-specific billing codes for BC clinicians and the development of continuing medical education credits, modules or incentives for BC physicians, medical students, and other medical professionals to attend training about myalgic encephalomyelitis.
119. Provide the Brain Injury Alliance with a secure, annualized, and ongoing funding agreement to offer more stability and opportunities for growth to address emerging issues in the brain injury sector.
120. Explore the listing of Yescarta® as an eligible treatment on the BC Cancer Drug Benefit list, with access through established provincial referral networks, and investing in cancer care infrastructure to provide Yescarta® CAR T-cell therapy to qualifying patients.
121. Further develop and implement the ten-year strategic plan to prioritize cancer care and treatment.
122. Commit to implementing a comprehensive diabetes strategy.

123. Ensure timely and affordable access to all multiple sclerosis treatments approved by Health Canada.

124. Provide access to arthritis-specific care, including pain management therapies.

Community Care and Seniors

125. Strike and fund a diverse and inclusive multi-sectoral long-term care advisory forum to assist in the development of an evidence-based action plan to reform long-term care in BC.

126. Improve accountability measures for funding to long-term care home operators.

127. Allocate more funding and supports to help seniors age-in-place and maintain healthy lives at home longer.

Dental

128. Recognize that poor dental care leads to poor health outcomes by providing improved dental coverage for lower income British Columbians with specific attention focused on providing better care for people with disabilities and with diabetes.

Health Human Resources

129. Integrate adequate mental health supports, including counsellors and psychologists, into primary care networks.

130. Alleviate strain on the health system by finding or accrediting alternative practitioners, such as pharmacists, physician assistants, midwives, foreign trained health care professionals, and mental health practitioners.

131. Review mechanisms to improve the recruitment, credentialing, and retention of foreign trained family physicians.

132. Increase supports for health care professionals to encourage retention; this could include on-site child care, reviewing the pay structure and providing improved benefits

133. Provide subsidized access to education and bridging programs to help health care professionals enhance their skillsets to allow them to work to their fullest potential.

134. Standardize the scope of practice for nurses across the province so they are not administratively constrained from providing health care, particularly in remote areas.

135. Examine the payment model and administrative structure for family doctors with a view to identify opportunities to incentivize physicians to work in British Columbia.

Rural and Remote Health Care

136. Build an effective health care system in rural areas complimented by more residencies in northern hospitals.

137. Improve access to health care in rural and remote communities, including by funding digital health care, exploring the use of physician assistants to extend hospital hours, increasing access to midwives, providing incentives to attract health care practitioners to these communities, and increasing seats and loan forgiveness for students.

Hospice and Palliative Care

138. Increase funding and adopt a provincial approach to providing culturally respectful grief and bereavement supports to build capacity for community hospices across the province.

139. Support newborns, children, and youth with life-threatening illnesses by amending the Ministry of Health's Palliative and End-of-Life Care Policy to include those aged 19 and under, who are presently excluded from the policy's scope.

Medical Coverage

140. Implement a funding strategy that covers the cost of modern prosthetics and orthotics, including the costs associated with emergency repairs, and ensure that BC adults with disabilities or physical impairments can access orthotic coverage after their 19th birthday.
141. Add coverage of the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test to the Medical Services Plan for asymptomatic individuals, when ordered by a physician.
142. Review access to the Medical Services Plan for refugees and migrant workers to ensure that the model is available in a timely way and fair to both employees and employers.

Mental Health and Addictions

143. Increase access to long-term counselling for children and youth who experience all types of abuse-induced trauma.
144. Develop targeted measured outcomes in mental health; and a plan to improve mental health and address addictions, the plan can include education to increase awareness, reduce barriers and stigma while also increasing access to counselling and treatment.
145. Identify and fund programming for identity-based counselling and mental health support services that are intersectional, culturally safe and LGBTQ2SAI+ focused.

Primary Care

146. Conduct an immediate review of primary care (including walk-in clinics, urgent and primary care centres, family doctors, and community care centres) to determine how the existing system can more effectively serve the community, increase access to longitudinal care, identify and resolve issues, and identify opportunities to improve navigation for the public.

Biomedical Sciences

147. Support more BC-based medical research to identify solutions for tomorrow.
148. Establish a comprehensive and coordinated BC life sciences and biomanufacturing strategy to build BC's biomanufacturing and vaccine supply chain.
149. Encourage the federal government to accelerate its efforts in making various antiviral therapies available to fight COVID-19.



HOUSING

Housing was cited as the largest contributing factor to unaffordability in the province. Several organizations noted that housing and rent prices are unobtainable for many. The spill over impact of this unaffordability is increasing rates of homelessness among a variety of vulnerable populations who were on the edge before parabolic price increases. A variety of solutions were proposed to increase the housing stock, but the common theme was that more needs to be done.

AFFORDABILITY AND SUPPLY

Housing affordability was a predominant concern among a wide range of organizations and individuals, including for survey respondents who ranked affordable housing as the second most common response to the question what can be done to make life more affordable, and the fourth most common answer in response to question two, which focused on how to improve the quality of life for British Columbians. Multiple organizations, including poverty reduction advocates, Indigenous organizations, chambers of commerce, and municipalities across all regions of the province agreed that BC needs to increase the housing stock. The BC Assembly of First Nations outlined the scope of the problem by noting that \$5.26 billion is required to repair and build enough units to meet the current projected needs.

When commenting on issues of affordability, the Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver told the Committee that in 2021, only 164 townhouses priced at less than \$500,000 sold on the MLS. The Chartered Professional Accountants of British Columbia explained that in BC the average home sold for \$980,324 in May 2022, up 38 percent from May 2020. Though money has been committed to building affordable housing, the BC Non-Profit Housing Association explained that units are not being constructed quickly enough, requiring an acceleration in spending. Commenting on affordability in the region, the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce described Southern Vancouver Island as the second-most expensive market in Canada which is impacting its workforce. This point was reiterated by CUPE Kootenay District Council who added that

working people are struggling to find adequate housing that they can afford to rent, and wages are not keeping pace with the inflated prices. The BC General Employees' Union identified housing as the largest contributing issue to the affordability crisis in BC.

Several organizations further noted concerns about the unsustainable increasing cost of rent. The Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver explained to the Committee that between 2010 and 2021, the average price of rent in Metro Vancouver increased by 52.8 percent, compared to an overall consumer price index growth of 19.6 percent. The BC Non-Profit Housing Association told the Committee that the cost of rent is increasingly out of reach for many, and the lack of available rental homes can now be classified as a crisis. The Committee was informed by the Community Legal Assistance Society that BC has the highest eviction rate across the country and called for the budget of the Residential Tenancy Branch to be increased. The Co-operative Housing Association of BC told the Committee that between 2015 and 2019, BC lost more than 34,000 affordable rental homes. To reverse this trend, they encouraged the development of a rental housing acquisition strategy. Metro Vancouver described Metro Vancouver Housing as one of the largest affordable housing providers in BC and encouraged additional funding and support to expand the stock of affordable rental units. The issue of tenuous rental stock for pet owners was also raised by the British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

The Committee also heard about difficulties facing particular groups in accessing affordable housing. The Performing Arts & Live Events Labour Coalition of BC explained the difficulties faced by performance artists in finding affordable housing. To solve issues of affordability, The Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation suggested that a rights-based approach could address some of the barriers to housing that are predominantly faced by marginalized groups. Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC and Rainbow Refugee noted the significant disadvantage faced by new immigrants and refugees to BC in trying to find housing.

A similar issue was expressed by Disability Alliance BC, who noted long wait times for low-income British Columbians in need of wheelchair accessible housing. The Anti-Violence Project described how tenuous the situation is for individuals attempting to leave intimate partner violence.

A number of seniors advocacy groups noted that BC's housing market has left many seniors in precarious housing. The BC Federation of Retired Union Members told the Committee that 21 percent of senior renters are spending more than 50 percent of their income on rent and encouraged an increase in the Shelter Allowance for Elderly Renters (SAFER) program and the BC Rebate for Accessible Home Adaptations. The 411 Seniors Centre noted that there is a large number of seniors who are eligible for SAFER but are not aware of the program. The Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC encouraged the province to work with municipalities to fund more social housing for seniors. Concerns about the rates of homelessness among seniors was raised by the Seniors Services Society of BC, adding that many of these seniors become homeless due to gaps between federal and provincial funding. They explained that many seniors on social assistance lose provincial funding when they turn 65, but do not begin to receive federal support immediately and as such can become homeless.

Several groups emphasized the need for an Indigenous housing strategy. The Aboriginal Housing Management Association explained that Indigenous people represent about 39 percent of the chronically homeless population and yet BC does not have Indigenous co-op housing projects nor government subsidized programs for home ownership. They expressed disappointment that the province has provided a targeted investment to support the development of 2,500 units of supportive housing through the supportive housing fund, but only 154 units funded through this investment will be operated by Indigenous-led organizations or housing providers. BC Non-Profit Housing Association and the Co-operative Housing Association of BC encouraged the Committee to support BC's first urban, rural and northern Indigenous housing strategy by reinstating the Indigenous housing fund, establishing a new Indigenous co-op housing program, and prioritizing investments in supportive housing for Indigenous peoples by Indigenous organizations. Covenant House Vancouver also advocated for a dedicated funding stream that provides housing and support services for Indigenous peoples that are culturally appropriate.

Several groups suggested that affordable, below market, non-market or non-profit housing could help alleviate supply issues, but funding needs to be prioritized and accelerated. The Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness revealed that over 10 percent of people in the Comox Valley are in core and extreme core housing need. UBC Medicine Political Advocacy Committee cautioned that several housing facilities are currently poorly maintained and substandard, as such they encouraged investments in affordable non-market housing at a rate of 10,000 units per year. Noting that the existing Community Housing Fund has created thousands of units, Hollyburn Community Services Society explained that the majority of these units are only 10 to 20 percent below market value, which is still unaffordable.

Organizations also outlined some specific issues that are driving up the price of housing. The Ishtar Women's Resource Society told the Committee that the cost of housing will become much lower if the government purchases large tracts of land, allowing below market pricing to become possible. Habitat for Humanity noted that unaffordability is caused by many factors, explaining that the cost of building has increased exponentially. They added that just the cost of the property transfer tax is difficult to afford for many of the low-income families that are provided housing by the organization.

The Chartered Professional Accountants of British Columbia noted that housing prices are a major challenge for business success in 2022. They further added that slow development and building permit approval processes with local governments reduces the ability to get supply online quickly. Multi-year approval processes are a common challenge for developers. This both increases cost and hinders supply. While agreeing that more development needs to happen, the Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation (CERA) noted that investments in the development of new housing at the municipal level should be premised on meaningful commitments to increase supply that is diverse, affordable to different income levels, and located near essential services and jobs. Kelowna Chamber of Commerce highlighted that integration of local governments may improve certainty for business, industry and lead to more efficient and timely project approvals. They suggested that the province could encourage regional cooperation by providing expertise and incentives for local governments to develop collaborative models of regional planning.

The real estate sector was described as a significant contributor to the provincial economy by the BC Real Estate Association, who cautioned the government that current political pressures around housing affordability and consumer protection are a risk to the stability of the real estate sector and encouraged careful examination of the issue. BC Association Appraisal Institute of Canada suggested that the data that they collect could be a vital resource to government and encouraged their integration when looking at issues and policies related to housing.

HOUSING INSECURITY, COMPLEX CARE, AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

The Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation explained that it costs the province approximately \$55,000 per year to provide someone experiencing homelessness with necessary social and health services. Covenant House Vancouver explained that the 'housing first' methodology is insufficient in meeting anything more than a person's immediate needs, adding that providing complex care designed specifically for youth helps to meet their immediate needs and reduces their likelihood of continuing to struggle with mental health and addictions into adulthood. The Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness highlighted the importance of drop-in centres in improving the well-being of people experiencing homelessness and decreasing costs associated with homelessness.

Several municipalities outlined the need for complex care facilities in their cities. The BC Urban Mayors' Caucus noted the importance of ensuring those who suffer from mental addictions challenges have a no-wrong-off-ramp approach to care and housing. They also outlined that the \$164 million in funding for 500 complex care beds across BC is a positive step, but noted that without adequate housing, many of those in need of supports are currently experiencing homelessness. The caucus urged significant capital spending to build more complex care housing throughout BC, noting the importance of providing help to those experiencing mental health challenges, and cited the need for involuntary treatment for those who may harm themselves or others. The City of Kelowna noted that there is no dedicated complex care funding earmarked for Kelowna, and current conditions do not meet the needs of the region. With respect to supportive housing, the City of Prince George stated that the traditional model is not working and described staff as overwhelmed

and lacking adequate expertise and resources. Similarly, the Downtown Victoria Business Association suggested that the current model of low-barrier supportive housing concentrates issues in a way that undermines the likelihood of an individual's success and has a significant negative impact on the surrounding neighbourhood. They noted that several of the businesses and residents in the downtown area have been negatively impacted by the introduction of these facilities. Both organizations encouraged the establishment of well supported complex care facilities.

STRATA

The Co-operators Group expressed frustration about the lack of transparency between strata corporations and unit owners regarding insurance coverage. They noted that the *Strata Property Act* requires strata corporations to provide a report on insurance coverage at an AGM each year, yet the onus is on unit owners to ensure compliance. This has resulted in negligent strata management and an overreliance on insurance to cover costs associated with deferred repairs. To address this issue, they recommended several reforms to improve financial certainty and lower insurance costs for stratas. The Insurance Bureau of Canada echoed many of the suggestions made by the Co-operators Group to improve transparency and risk management. Expressing concerns about the high cost of insurance for stratas, they recommended immediately eliminating the insurance premium tax (IPT), noting that the 4.4 percent IPT on property premiums in BC is one of the highest rates in the country.

CONCLUSIONS

The Committee noted the significant interest in housing affordability and agreed that this is the largest driver of unaffordability in the province, that the current time required to build a house is untenable, and that something needs to be urgently done to expediate the construction of housing stock. It agreed that the province needs to take bold action and fully mobilize the private and public sectors to ensure people have homes.

While reflecting on the obstacles currently in place, Members suggested that provincial mandates for municipal zoning coupled with advanced regional planning could expediate the construction of housing stock. They added that the current permitting and consultation process is long, complicated, and hindering development and that the process should

be reviewed. Members also noted that it is important to ensure that communities are active in outlining their official community plan and that housing align with the principles outlined in the plan.

While the Members noted that municipal ordinances and variance permits have slowed down the construction of new buildings, there are a variety of other policies that the government can adopt to incentivize construction. Members reflected that the current system does not incentivize developers to build rental units. They noted that in the 1970s, there was a rapid development of housing facilitated through federal Multi-Unit Residential Buildings (MURB), and suggested finding creative solutions. Members agreed that whatever solutions are pursued, they will require an all-hands-on-deck approach that includes the provincial government, municipal governments, and private sector developers.

Members recognized that many people in the province are not in a position to purchase a home, and as such must continue to rent housing; however, renting in the province is also difficult. Members noted that low vacancy rates have put renters in a precarious position, and the Residential Tenancy Branch is significantly understaffed with long backlogs. To increase the stock of rental units, BC needs to leverage all possible solutions and reimagine the role of the public sector in providing housing. The Committee discussed the need for innovative solutions to the problem, and noted that prefabricated homes are quality, easy to deploy, and can be built quickly. While discussing possible innovations, the Committee noted that Bill 16, *Transportation Amendment Act, 2022*, which was enacted by the Legislature, gave the Transportation Financing Authority the power to purchase land for the construction of housing and community amenities in addition to transportation projects, and noted that similar innovations can help increase housing density and help create connected mixed-use communities. Members also suggested that employers could be incentivized to build affordable housing for their employees to mitigate issues related to the labour shortage. They also noted that Seattle implemented a tax holiday on the construction of rental units, resulting in a significantly increased vacancy rate.

While discussing how to best support housing for marginalized and vulnerable populations, the Committee discussed the possibility of portable rent subsidies for people seeking housing that is close to necessary amenities. Members agreed that more funding should be allocated for Indigenous housing

initiatives in urban centres, but also recognized that there is a federal responsibility to improve housing on reserve land, and the federal government should be strongly encouraged to improve housing conditions.

Regarding complex care, the Committee appreciated the range of stakeholders who raised concerns about the need for complex care services and housing in their communities, and noted that there is a broad level of support for a clear and focused government plan in this area. The Committee discussed concerns raised by some municipalities about the level of committed funding for the construction of complex care housing and agreed that these services could more rapidly respond to community need.

While reflecting on the rates of people experiencing homelessness, Members agreed that this is a concerning problem that is clearly associated with the increased cost of housing. They also noted that this is an especially important issue to solve for youth, seniors, and individual leaving domestic violence. Regarding youth, Members discussed that outreach centres for youth have had to eliminate housing coordinator positions because there is no housing available for youth coming out of care. They reflected on the precarious nature of individuals leaving domestic violence and noted that a secure home is a necessary component of ensuring that people feel safe as they transition away from a bad situation. Committee Members also commented on the increasing number of seniors experiencing homelessness and agreed that urgent action is required to ensure that adequate housing is available for seniors (this issue is discussed further in the Health section). Lastly, Members noted that communities have a role in developing solutions to help those experiencing homelessness and the need for a collaborative approach between the province and municipalities.

While reflecting on the issue of strata insurance, the Members agreed that poorly managed strata boards are a problem but highlighted that strata councils are a collective responsibility and people should be aware of the risks associated with joining a strata. They noted that much of the input received on addressing the strata issue came directly from insurance providers. The Committee added that strata councils need to be aware of their legal obligations, including strong financial stewardship and risk management. The Committee determined that more could be done to promote education about the risks and benefits of stratas, and some reforms could be made to improve financial stability for those living in a strata.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

Affordable and Social Housing

- 150. Incentivize the private sector to be innovative and creative in addressing the low housing stock.
- 151. Increase resources for the Residential Tenancy Branch to ensure that people who are in danger of losing their housing are experiencing an equitable, just, consistent, and timely process that is fair for both tenants and landlords.
- 152. Support the role of BC Housing in funding and building public non-market housing.
- 153. Develop and fund an Indigenous housing strategy.

Complex Care

- 154. Accelerate the construction of complex care housing sites across the province and ensure full supports are provided for those who need them and adequate support is provided for surrounding neighbourhoods.

Homelessness

- 155. Prioritize investments and programs for those experiencing homelessness to help reduce their risk of being evicted and increase access to stabilized housing.
- 156. Provide funding to ensure that young people leaving foster care have access to affordable housing.
- 157. Provide more financial support to overnight and daytime drop-in centres for individuals experiencing homelessness.

Strata

- 158. Explore options to improve financial stability, risk management, and insurance pricing for strata councils.



K-12 EDUCATION

Challenges with operational and capital funding for K-12 education with respect to growth and maintenance were highlighted throughout the consultation. The Committee heard from numerous participants about the need to examine the current funding model, increase supports for students, especially the most vulnerable, and address recruitment and retention issues. Many organizations and individuals noted the challenges related to accessibility and affordability of child care.

CAPITAL FUNDING

Many school districts and organizations expressed concern about the chronic underfunding of capital projects in K-12 schools. School District No. 41 (Burnaby) noted that funding in the K-12 Education sector for major and minor capital projects is not keeping up with building needs. Similarly, BC School Trustees Association stated that the majority of BC public schools have reached the end of their life cycle, which has led to increased maintenance costs and these older buildings also require funds to address accessibility and equity concerns. They explained that school districts are asked to use their own funds to cost share projects and often, as that cost sharing is being determined, projects are delayed and costs increase. Additionally, one individual also highlighted that funding climate resiliency planning will enable schools to proactively take mitigative and adaptive action to avoid catastrophe. School District No. 42 (Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows) highlighted that current capital funding allocations are not sufficient to support the proactive acquisition of school sites and the development and delivery of new school spaces for students attending BC public schools. They explained that the current capital funding model requires school districts to use local funds for the building of administrative or maintenance facilities required to support the delivery of educational services in school districts. One individual highlighted that investing in schools with the right facilities and amenities will attract more teachers, reduce maintenance costs and provide better outcomes for students.

Several school districts highlighted the need for maintenance funding. School District No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay) highlighted that the learning environment for students and the health and safety of employees suffers as a result of aging facilities. Furthermore, School District No. 57 (Prince George) stated that the district's annual facility grant funding does not meet their full needs as the cost of maintenance is increasing between 25 percent and 33 percent this year. Additionally, Central Okanagan Public Schools has seen an increased use of portables year after year. They noted that portable costs are not funded within the capital budget, so the district ends up having to convert funding that should be going to support students.

Many school districts, individuals and parent advisory committees expressed concern about seismic upgrades for schools. For example, School District No. 38 (Richmond) noted that 37 Richmond schools were originally identified as having structural risks associated with a seismic event. But to date, the district has received support for only 13 schools. Nightingale Elementary Parental Advisory Committee (Vancouver) also shared that the Nightingale elementary school is an H1 seismic risk. They explained that there is concern it would not withstand an earthquake but despite this, the school is not currently a priority to upgrade. Similarly, Vancouver School Board also highlighted that there are 22,000 students in schools with a high seismic risk in the region. These organizations advocated for increased capital funding to accelerate the provincial seismic program.

The Committee also heard specific requests from Wells-Barkerville Parental Advisory Committee. They explained that the District of Wells community facility building, which houses the school, was purchased by the district in 2003. In 2020, an assessment of the building took place and identified the deferred maintenance, health and safety issues and upgrades needed over the next ten years. This amount totaled approximately \$2.5 million. The community is at risk of having the building shut down and requested financial support for the

upgrades needed for the Wells-Barkerville community facility building.

CHILD CARE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Many organizations and individuals described challenges in the child care sector due to rising costs and lack of supply. School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) noted that child care is a serious challenge for families in the Comox Valley region as 75 percent of families do not have access to licensed child care. The district is building new child care facilities at Lake Trail and Cumberland, and have two more in the works; however, there is more demand than these new spaces will fill, and it will be a struggle to find adequate staffing. Burnaby Neighbourhood House Society stated that since 2014, staffing costs have risen by 49.5 percent and operating costs such as rent and utilities have gone up by 27.5 percent; program costs have gone up by 12.5 percent. Although, parent fees have increased by 12 percent over this time, the organization shared that they continue to be challenged with fee caps and keeping child care affordable. These organizations advocated for increased funding for child care spaces including increasing the Child Care Operating Fund daily rate per child to match the rate of inflation.

With respect to the recent incorporation of child care into the Ministry of Education, School District No. 60 (Peace River North) stated that child care is being added at a time when schools are facing cost pressures. They explained that their mandate in this area has increased without clear parameters around expectations for operational guidelines and the scope of many staff's daily responsibilities has increased with before- and after-school child care. Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada discussed the impact in terms of space and stated that the shift has put additional pressures on nonprofit child care providers in the province as the clubs have lost access to physical space to run programs, and face increased competition for staff as some school districts move to consolidate child care through their schools. Conversely, CUPE British Columbia shared that integrating child care with the existing public education system is a natural fit for the creation of a world-class system of child care that will strengthen the existing education system. Further, they stated that the most significant barrier to child care is the lack of physical space and qualified staff, and school districts have

available space and a highly qualified workforce seeking additional hours.

The Committee heard recommendations surrounding the \$10-a-day child care program. When asked how to improve cost of living and quality of life, many survey respondents emphasized the need to improve the cost of child care, including increasing the availability of the \$10-a-day child care program. Association for Reformed Political Action Canada noted that the current federal-provincial funding arrangement subsidizes only institutional, licensed child care; therefore, although the \$10-a-day child care system is touted as universal, it will likely benefit only a minority of Canadian families. To achieve the goal of \$10-a-day child care, the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC stated that BC must replace the current competitive process of selecting sites with a planned transition of existing programs to \$10-a-day while creating new \$10-a-day sites. They advocated for a funding formula to provide sufficient public funds to bring parent fees down to a maximum of \$10-a-day for full-day care with no fees for lower income families, and improve the quality of child care to support full implementation of BC's Early Learning Framework.

In relation to early childhood educators, YMCAs of BC stated that to build a universal child care system, there is an urgent need to address the labour shortage of child care professionals. They also emphasized that wages must increase to attract and retain child care professionals including certified early childhood educators and other trained child care professionals that work as early childhood education assistants. They also advocated for school aged child care staff to be provided with the same wage enhancements as their colleagues working in early years. Similarly, the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC noted that, as part of an overall compensation strategy in the child care sector, government must develop, fund, and implement a provincial, competitive, and equitable wage grid as proposed in *Next Step: A Competitive, Publicly Funded Provincial Wage Grid is the Solution to BC's ECE Shortage*. Core Education and Fine Arts explained that the lack of accredited early childhood educators is a significant challenge. Many career colleges have intensive educational programs, reducing the quantum of time required to graduate; however, they are expensive. They explained that funding students attending this type of school along with traditional public colleges will reduce the educator shortfall more quickly. Additionally, Camosun College ELC second year class highlighted that Early Childhood Educators of BC

offer bursaries to students, but it would be more efficient to provide the colleges with this money to subsidize tuition costs. They also advocated for paying for early childhood education students to do their practicum as it would help alleviate the costs for students and validates their practice.

INDEPENDENT AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Self Design Learning Foundation shared that for an independent online school, the per learner funding from the Ministry is 33 percent less than typical funding provided to public brick and mortar schools. In 2020, the Ministry cut per student funding by 21 percent. They explained that the majority of Self Design Learning Foundation's learners, especially those with special needs, do not thrive or do well in traditional schools and the decreased funding negatively affects the support they can provide the most vulnerable learners. They advocated for increasing per learner funding received by a public online school back to the level it was prior to the 21 percent cut in 2020. Additionally, one individual expressed concern about the possibility of losing the homeschooling benefits from the government and advocated for home education to be supported with adequate and fair funding.

Regarding private school funding, the BC Humanist Association conducted an analysis which found that 70 percent of independent school funding went to religious schools, the majority of which were Christian or Catholic. They shared their support for the principle of public funds for public education and called for a phase out of public funding to faith-based and private independent schools.

OPERATIONAL FUNDING

Several school districts advocated for increased operational funding that is tied to inflation. School District No. 57 (Prince George) shared that the district is facing stagnant enrolment and therefore, not seeing significant increases to funding levels, while costs associated with transportation and food continue to increase. School District No. 43 (Coquitlam) and School District No. 38 (Richmond) described similar challenges and stated that the operating grants are not adequate to support school districts in maintaining the appropriate levels of services in the classrooms. BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils echoed this concern, stating that unpredictable funding and unfunded cost increases require school districts to cut programs and supports instead of

strategically planning the most effective use of funding to support student success. Additionally, School District No. 42 (Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows) advocated for the budget allocated to the Ministry of Education and Child Care for operating expenses to be increased on an annual basis to reflect the increased number of students attending BC schools, the increased salary and benefit costs for all K-12 staff, cost increases related to legislative changes, like the *Employment Standards Act*, and the increased cost of goods, services and utilities.

The Committee heard from the Institute for Public Education British Columbia that enrollment in K-12 education has increased every year, leading to more investment in education; however, the percentage of GDP spent on education has been decreasing. They explained that maintaining the priority of education funding based on GDP rather than inflation would provide the flexibility and confidence for long term planning of the changes that are needed for a sustainable society and economy in the context of climate change. The institute recommended that the percentage of GDP spent on education be increased to 2.5 percent.

School District No. 60 (Peace River North) shared that the district has received the same per-pupil allocation for two years despite increased expectations placed on districts, as well as inflationary factors. They advocated for a consideration of the impacts of a flat per-pupil allocation and inflation on school districts as well as the factors that affect equity of opportunity for students in the north, especially as it relates to transportation, operations, recruitment, and retention.

With respect to anti-racism programming and curriculum, School District No. 41 (Burnaby) cited that a significant level of funding is required to support school districts to do anti-racism work at the district level. They stated that additional funding needs to be provided to school districts to fully cover the costs of assessment and engagement at the local level, determine what resources are required and to develop and implement an anti-racism strategy.

The Committee heard a presentation from Victoria Disability Resource Centre who stated that bringing awareness about people's diverse abilities decreases misconceptions and increases inclusivity and opportunities for people with disabilities. They advocated for expanding and funding school programs that bring awareness about living with a disability and accessibility, stating that education about barriers that prevent many from participating fully will help change the way

the environment, buildings and devices are designed in the future.

With respect to arts programming, the Artist in Residence Studio Program highlighted the importance of arts programs in schools. They shared that even though the arts are a core curricular in public elementary schools from K-7, educators often do not have teaching expertise in this area nor is there funding to provide meaningful, sustained, knowledge-based experiences in the arts for all children. They explained that funding through the BC Arts Council is able to provide artist-in-classroom experiences for only 2.5 percent of the K-12 student population and public elementary schools are then reliant on parent fundraising and volunteerism to fill the gap. Therefore, they advocated for a strategic, supplemental incentive fund, by application, to enable school districts to develop and maintain innovative, high-quality arts programming to bridge the gap in access to the arts for all elementary students.

Regarding compensation, Peace River North Teachers' Association highlighted that teachers kept schools open during the pandemic which helped to keep the economy and BC going. They advocated for teachers' salaries to be increased.

CUPE Okanagan Mainline District Council and CUPE 728 informed the Committee of the need for more support and funding for custodial staff. CUPE 728 noted that expectations for custodial work increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and though additional custodial hours have now been eliminated, higher expectations continue. They further explained that the resulting increased workloads among custodians produce a higher risk of physical and mental injury, and ultimately a greater attrition among this workforce. Similarly, CUPE Okanagan Mainline District Council noted that through one-time pandemic funding, universal daytime custodial hours were implemented for all BC schools for the first time in 20 years. They shared that maintaining and expanding funds for full restoration of daytime custodial staff is a responsible direction that will enhance school health and help protect children, workers, and the public. Both organizations advocated for increased funding to school districts to maintain, expand and/or restore daytime custodial staff.

The Committee also received specific funding requests from school districts and organizations. The BC Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association requested funding to maintain

their Student Voice program which provides an opportunity for youth in BC to engage with partners in the public sector.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Difficulty with recruiting and retaining teachers, especially for rural schools, was described by multiple school districts and organizations. School District No. 59 (Peace River South) stated that for nearly a decade, northern and remote school districts have identified staff recruitment and retention challenges as a real risk to the future of students. Correspondingly, the BC Teachers' Federation stated that the issue of recruitment and retention is more urgent in more rural areas of the province. They noted that the teaching shortage impacts inclusive education and programming for students with diverse learning needs or students with disabilities. These organizations advocated for dedicated funding to improve teacher recruitment and retention. Further, Peace River North Teachers' Association advocated for allowing school districts to provide incentives to attract teachers to come to the north, but also highlighted the importance of retention of teachers who have moved to the region as the cost of living and housing are increasing. The Association stated that a targeted pilot program would allow the Ministry of Education and school districts to create and measure the success of incentives that will attract people to new careers in education to the benefit of students across the province.

The Langley Teachers' Association shared that they have not been able to staff specialty programs like French Immersion, digital media and technology education and other elective programs. Additionally, in response to a recent survey, 46 percent of Langley teachers reported that they had serious or significant concerns with workload management which in turn affects their mental health. To address this issue, the Langley Teachers' Association advocated for an expedited process to recognize the credentials of teachers with international training and experience so they could work in the profession—especially in cases where there are commonalities in education systems.

Additionally, the BC Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association advocated for professional development for vice-principals and principals. They explained that having effective principals benefits student learning and attendance and teacher satisfaction and retention and noted that BC does not have a formalized leadership development strategy.

The Peace River North Teachers' Association also shared that they have difficulty attracting and retaining educational psychologists, who test students and assign designations, which results in students not getting the support they need in the classroom.

STUDENTS WITH SUPPORT NEEDS

Increased funding and resources for students with support needs was recommended by many school districts, parents, and organizations. Inclusion BC shared that they continue to be concerned by the number of students with disabilities who are excluded from full participation in schools. School District No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay) and School District No. 43 (Coquitlam) also described challenges in providing learning assistance to students with support needs due to lack of funding. Furthermore, the BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils noted that there is a gap in resources and supports for students with special needs and other vulnerable students, including early identification and programming, and long wait-times for formal assessments of students who have been identified as having a learning difference. The BC School Trustees Association echoed this concern, stating that the funding formula for the inclusion of students with diverse needs has never been sufficient.

Additionally, one individual described difficulties getting the necessary resources and support for two diverse learners and a child with autism and complex medical needs in the public school system which resulted in turning to the private school system instead.

Committee Members also heard about funding for education assistants. CUPE 728 highlighted that education assistants work under challenging conditions with some of the most vulnerable learners, and do so with limited resources, and an income that leaves them struggling to make ends meet. Similarly, CUPE Okanagan Mainline District Council explained that education assistants frequently cite both hours of work and unpaid time as the most significant negative aspects of the job, as unpaid time is a significant issue for this profession. Both organizations advocated for increased funding to school districts to expand working hours of education assistants. BCEdAccess Society also noted that there are currently no standards for education assistants, who are the key supports for students with disabilities in schools and advocated for an education assistant standard of practice.

The Committee heard a presentation from Deaf & Hard of Hearing Education - Council of Service Providers who recommended changes to the current de-centralized model of Deaf and Hard of Hearing education and annual language assessments. They explained that the current Deaf and Hard of Hearing education model is largely district-based which results in rural and remote districts, which serve fewer students, lacking qualified personnel to meet students' needs. They also discussed that there is currently no uniform approach to tracking assessments of Deaf and Hard of Hearing students, either at school entry or throughout their school years. This includes assessment and tracking of language development and performance, communication, social-emotional development, advocacy skills, and technology competency. Lastly, they advocated for the development of short- and long-term plans for assessing, addressing and meeting the current shortages of qualified professionals to support Deaf and Hard of Hearing students.

Down Syndrome Society of British Columbia advocated for the inclusion of learners with Down Syndrome in all classroom settings by increasing funding to the Supported Child Development program, hiring and retaining specialists within the education system, training new speech language pathologists, and providing opportunities for all educators to learn about supporting students with Down Syndrome. They cited the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities which requires that persons with disabilities have access to inclusive, quality, and free primary and secondary education and that individualized supports be provided to maximize academic and social development.

With regard to students with dyslexia, one individual stated that there is no supplemental special needs funding within the Ministry of Education for dyslexia. Dyslexia BC shared that the school system does not use the type of reading instruction, called the science of reading, that is needed to support students with dyslexia. They both called for making dyslexia a priority by funding it within the K-12 system.

VULNERABLE STUDENTS

Several organizations and individuals called for increased funding for school food programs. Nourish Cowichan Society and Kalum Community School Society noted that investing in a universal food program benefits the children, the community in general, and the families that are struggling with food insecurity. Further, the BC Chapter of the Coalition for Healthy

School Food shared that, when combined with poverty reduction strategies, school food programs can alleviate the burden of food insecurity felt at home, especially with rising food costs, and can support local economies and contribute to building resilient communities. These organizations, along with Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable, Fresh Roots, School Food Shift Coalition, Shuswap Food Action Society, and Jon Mills, advocated for funding to support school food programs. School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast) shared that the district witnessed a dramatic 400 percent increase in food insecurity for their student population during the pandemic. As a result, they allocated a significant part of their discretionary budget and surplus funds to support food programs, despite not receiving any additional funding from the government. Further, the BC Chapter of the Coalition for Healthy School Food shared that research has shown that these programs are more likely to be effective when designed in partnership with the local community.

Some organizations called for expansion of existing programs. BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation highlighted that through the BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program, fruits, vegetables, and milk are delivered directly to classrooms throughout the province 24 weeks of the school year. Aside from the benefit to students, they noted that the program is also important for the economic stability of BC farmers and provides stability in the provincial supply chain with distribution of fresh fruits, vegetables and milk. They advocated for continued investment in this program to enable it to expand. Additionally, Breakfast Club of Canada, LUSH Valley Food Action Society and Comox Valley Food Policy Council advocated for additional funding for their school food programs.

Regarding newcomer students, Committee Members heard that the current funding system is not set up for continuous intake when refugees come to BC schools. School District No. 41 (Burnaby) stated that, although the federal government provides financial support for the Settlement Worker in Schools program, which provides important programming for newcomers to Canada, the current provincial education funding supplements to newcomers and refugee students is not meeting the complex educational needs of students today including education gaps and mental health issues.

The Committee also heard from School District No. 57 (Prince George) about the need to address the silos that exist between ministries to ensure that complete wraparound

supports are provided to students, especially those living in rural communities.

CONCLUSIONS

The Committee recognized issues with seismic upgrades and deferred maintenance and agreed that schools need capital funding to address these issues. With regards to aging facilities, Members stated that as schools age, funding should be increased to help with the increased maintenance. Members shared concerns about the use of portables, stating that they should only be a temporary solution, and noted that capital funding should be more reflective and proactive to population growth to limit the reliance on portables.

Committee Members recognized that K-12 education is underfunded, and the added pressure of inflation and the pandemic exacerbated existing issues. They discussed that K-12 education needs increased funding and recommended a new funding formula that is tied to increased operational costs, that is proactive, and that recognizes local needs. Similarly, the Committee agreed that when new curriculum and programs are introduced, they need to be fully funded and resourced to ensure success. Members also stated that funding should support value-added services such as custodial staff to ensure that schools are healthy and safe for students and staff. Reflecting on input surrounding recruitment and retention problems in K-12 education, the Committee discussed the many recommendations it received and recognized that proactive recruitment and retention programs are needed.

With respect to child care, Committee Members reflected on the level of input received and recognized that while progress has been made, more work needs to be done in this area as affordable, accessible child care is still unavailable for many. The Committee spoke about the desire to continue working towards a \$10-a-day child care and noted that there may be opportunities to reduce strain on the child care system. Members discussed multiple measures to address this issue such as creating a balanced system with support for all types of child care, including family care givers. As many highlighted recruitment and retention challenges in this sector, the Committee discussed recognizing equivalency credentials to address staffing shortages so individuals, such as teachers, could work in child care centres without early childhood education certification. Members also highlighted the need to accommodate everyone that requires child care including those who work outside of traditional working hours.

Regarding students with support needs, the Committee heard about the importance of supports and the challenges with respect to long waitlists for assessments. Members discussed the importance of early assessments and consequences of delayed diagnosis. They stated that supports should be data driven and reflect the needs of individual districts. Members noted that education assistants could help address the challenges of providing before and after school child care, they added that the extended hours would also improve job stability, a frequently cited area of concern for education assistants.

Members also reflected on presentations regarding independent, online, and private schools. They recognized that independent schools often serve students with distinct learning needs and some Members also noted that these schools can take pressures off of public schools. Further, Members were cognizant of challenges in the public school system and acknowledged that more people turning to

independent schools signals a need to improve public schooling. They also discussed how to balance private and public education funding, the desires of all British Columbians to have a good education, and allowing choice in this area.

The Committee discussed the importance of school food programs and their role providing healthy food to students and helping with food security. Members acknowledged that there is a lot of good work being done in this area and suggested that the province needs to undertake a review of the current programs to determine best practices, ensure coordination and identify areas in greater need. The Committee also highlighted the necessity for these programs to provide quality, culturally appropriate and local food for students.

Committee Members also reflected on issues raised with respect to supports for newcomer and refugee students and for student mental health. They acknowledged that these supports need to be fully funded.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

Capital Funding

159. Re-examine capital funding with a view to being proactive and responsive to anticipated growth and local needs as well as recognizing the increased maintenance costs as schools age.
160. Review policies regarding portables, recognizing the challenges created by the fact that portables are funded from operating budgets.

Child Care and Early Childhood Development

161. Increase the Childcare Operating Fund daily rate per child to recognize inflationary pressures.
162. Ensure child care is accessible for those who do not hold regular working hours.
163. Act urgently to recruit and retain early childhood educators in BC's child care system, including by allowing equivalency credits and providing paid practicums and tuition subsidies for early childhood educators, and by funding more child care spaces.

Operational Funding

164. Increase funding for K-12 education in recognition of increased operational costs and unique regional needs.
165. Improve funding and resources for new curriculum initiatives.
166. Consider factors that affect equity of opportunity for students in school districts that serve rural and remote communities, especially as it relates to transportation, operations, recruitment, and retention.

Recruitment and Retention

167. Explore measures to recruit and retain teachers, including by providing incentives, especially for teachers in rural and remote communities.

Students with Support Needs

168. Increase funding and supports for students with unique learning and development needs with earmarked funding for early identification and intervention.
169. Conduct an audit of the education of K-12 students with support needs to find ways to better support students and optimize resources.
170. Make pre-kindergarten wellness checks all-encompassing, including by integrating checklists to inform parents of further screening needs.
171. Utilize education assistants to help address the challenges of providing before and after school care.

Vulnerable Students

172. Collect data on current school food programs to inform a coordinated strategy, share best practices, and identify the greatest need.
173. Support the expansion of school meal programs to provide healthy, local, and culturally sensitive food to students.
174. Increase funding for mental health supports in K-12 schools.
175. Provide additional funding to support the significant educational needs of refugee and newcomer students.



PUBLIC SAFETY AND JUSTICE

A number of organizations described the need for funding for legal aid and digitization of court services to improve access to justice. Another area of emphasis was natural disasters and emergency preparedness, with organizations and communities requesting funding for prevention, response, and recovery. The Committee also heard about a need for investments in supports and services that respond to gender-based violence and sexual assault, as well as measures to improve safety of sex workers. Challenges regarding prolific offenders and emergency communications were also key themes.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND LEGAL AID

Committee Members heard from organizations advocating for increased access to justice. The Law Society of British Columbia highlighted that broadband internet is essential to the future delivery of legal services and access to justice. They explained that as court services move onto virtual and online platforms, participants in court processes will require secure, reliable internet and communication infrastructure. Similarly, Canadian Bar Association BC Branch noted that funding is still required to continue support remote appearances for pre-trial hearings in criminal, civil and family matters, digital information-sharing platforms, and a digitally skilled workforce to support the justice system. As some individuals cannot afford a computer or device that enables virtual access to services and hearings, the Law Society advocated for resources for access to legal services virtually in community-based locations and funding for broadband technology that enables British Columbians living in rural and remote communities to access legal services and participate in virtual justice hearings. Additionally, Pacific Legal Education and Outreach Society stated that the current system of legal support for non-profits is fragmented and more cross-sectoral collaboration would allow for legal support and services to help those who have traditionally been shut out such as Black-led and Indigenous-led organizations. They stated that allocating funds to these efforts will enable innovation in the provision of legal services, help meet access to justice, and heal social and economic inequalities.

Additionally, Canadian Bar Association BC Branch highlighted gaps in data collection regarding most areas involving public safety, justice and court services and administration that limit the ability of government, courts and tribunals to meet public expectations. They explained that collecting and publicly sharing data enables research and system improvements and increases access to justice.

With respect to legal aid, the Committee heard that the income thresholds for legal aid eligibility have not kept pace with inflation. Canadian Bar Association BC Branch stated that legal aid is an essential public service, but current funding is falling short of meeting the needs of British Columbians. Additionally, West Coast Leaf advocated for funding for legal aid services for child support matters. They explained that because of the gender division of caregiving, access to child support is a critical issue that is central to tackling increasingly feminized poverty and child poverty. They further noted that BC's current system of limited retainers provides some access to services but is ultimately inadequate to address complex matters, including those where family violence intersects. Furthermore, Battered Women's Support Services informed the Committee that, for survivors of gender-based violence, especially low-income racialized mothers, ongoing gaps in legal aid service delivery for family law and child protection matters creates serious barriers to accessing justice. They further noted that when leaving domestic violence, intimate partner violence, or sexual abuse, the complexities and stresses of navigating a legal system without legal counsel is an intimidating and traumatic burden, and becomes a significant barrier to both seeking safety and accessing justice. Lastly, an individual shared that the Canadian Bar Association BC Branch and its Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Community section have identified the need for a specialized legal clinic to serve the needs of the queer community.

Community Legal Assistance Society informed the Committee that, starting in 2023, some 20,000 people per year may be eligible to have one or more opportunities to obtain legal advice from a rights adviser when they are detained under the

Mental Health Act. This new rights advice service will create an increasing wave of requests for representation particularly at Mental Health Review Board panel hearings. Therefore, they advocated for increased funding to expand free legal representation at hearings before the Mental Health Review Board and the BC Review Board for people who have been involuntarily detained under the *Mental Health Act* or the mental disorder provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada.

Several organizations highlighted the value of child and youth advocacy centres. BC Network of Child and Youth Advocacy Centres stated that these centres provide a coordinated response to incidences of abuse and violence against children and youth in BC. The Treehouse Child & Youth Advocacy Centre also highlighted the importance of these centres and noted that sustainable operational funding would free up time for their organization which could better be spent expanding service delivery to communities without child and youth advocacy centres, enhancing service offerings within the existing framework, and focusing on crucial education and prevention work in the community. These organizations, along with Child Advocacy Centre of Kelowna, advocated for increased, sustainable funding for child and youth advocacy centres.

The Committee also heard from the British Columbia Notaries Association about the need for an expanded scope of practice for notaries, including the ability to incorporate companies and to maintain such companies in good standing by preparing and filing standard resolutions, creating a testamentary trust and life estate when preparing a will, and providing advice in preparing and filing probate documents in the court registry.

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Downtown Victoria Business Association shared that, as identified by the BC Urban Mayors' Caucus, there is a challenge in many communities regarding prolific offenders. They explained that these individuals and their actions fuel the negative narrative regarding downtowns and main streets across BC. The association advocated for comprehensive supports for those with chronic mental health and addiction challenges, but also called for comprehensive responses for those whose repeated criminal actions cause distress to the rest of the community. The City of Kelowna echoed these concerns, noting that 204 prolific offenders are responsible for 11,000 negative police contacts in 10 of BC's largest cities.

CANNABIS AND TOBACCO

Organizations noted that the distribution and sale of illegal cigarettes in BC are reducing public tax revenues from legal cigarettes as well as undermining public health efforts to reduce smoking. National Coalition Against Contraband Tobacco described how the combined provincial and federal tax increases on tobacco have made cigarettes especially expensive in BC: while a carton of legal cigarettes sells for \$160, a carton of illegal cigarettes can sell for as low as \$40. They stated that this major price difference, and the availability of contraband tobacco, has set the stage for criminal gangs to begin selling more illegal cigarettes in the province, which funds other criminal activities. Both JTI-Macdonald Corp and Imperial Tobacco Canada Limited referenced Quebec's strategy as a model to replicate in BC, explaining that in Quebec there is a dedicated enforcement unit focused on the organized crime groups behind the illegal tobacco trade. They stated that the strategy has reduced Quebec's illegal tobacco rate from over 40 percent to below 15 percent, recouping hundreds of millions of dollars in the process. Regarding cannabis, Kindred noted that illicit producers and sellers provide unfair competition to legal sellers. Further, illegal retailers are not obligated to adhere to the regulatory framework that legal operators do and as such unregulated products can be contaminated. To ensure that the public is not put at risk by unregulated cannabis products and help lawful producers gain a larger share of the provincial market, they recommended funding additional resources to penalize illicit cannabis producers and sellers.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND COMMUNICATIONS

Increased capacity and resources for police were supported by Paul Liggett and the National Police Federation. The National Police Federation stated that due to inadequate funding for the BC RCMP, it has become increasingly difficult to continue to provide the level of service expected. Funding has remained flat in previous years despite increasing populations, rising equipment and infrastructure costs, and more complex threats to public safety. They noted that without adequate resources, RCMP members are becoming overworked, leading to burn-out and safety concerns, and are also being pulled away from core policing duties. Similarly, Liggett supported minimum policing levels for all large cities based on population and mechanisms to hire replacement officers to cover those on leave.

Committee Members heard calls for funding and new mandates with respect to 911 services. E-Comm 9-1-1 stated that municipally provided 911 services in BC are under considerable pressure: call volumes are growing, federally-mandated improvements are required, and E-Comm's governance and funding have not evolved to keep pace. They also noted that the federally mandated rollout of next generation 911 across Canada over the next three years, which involves the transition of the current 911 infrastructure to IP or digital-based infrastructure, will require significant additional funding and consistent, province-wide 911 standards and protocols. Additionally, Emergency Communications Professionals of BC noted that E-Comm 9-1-1's current funding model does not provide for excess resources to be crisis-ready in anticipation of call surges, large-scale events, and unforeseen disasters.

Several emergency response organizations suggested that the integration of mental health care professionals into 911 services could help alleviate broader issues. The Crisis Centre of BC noted that they de-escalate 98 percent of community-based calls, saving \$49 million each year in police costs alone. Emergency Communications Professionals of BC noted that E-Comm 9-1-1 is not currently equipped to support mental health issues which are present in virtually every call. E-Comm 9-1-1 recommended that their infrastructure be updated in line with the recommendations from the Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act with respect to integrating a mental health option within 911.

With respect to search and rescue, Air Rescue One Heli Winch Society discussed their lack of a dedicated rescue helicopter which has meant that they cannot respond to all rescue requests. They explained that a rescue helicopter reduces the risk to first responders while decreasing the time it takes to rescue and transport injured citizens; increases capacity for emergency services in the province; and increases the security net needed for climate change disasters. They requested funding for a dedicated winch and rescue helicopter as well as funding to enhance their capacity to provide year-round rescue services.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Several organizations advocated for increased funding and support for survivors of gender-based violence. Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness informed the Committee that

each year 20,000 women in British Columbia experience relationship violence and up to 90 percent who have been in a violent relationship have received at least one brain injury at the hand of their partner. In light of this, Supporting Survivors of Abuse and Brain Injury through Research emphasized that training in intimate partner violence-caused brain injury must be mandatory for women's shelter staff, paramedics, police, child protection social workers, legal aid and other lawyers. They also recommended that this training include trauma-informed practice so that those tasked with caring for women understand the nuances and complexities of intimate partner violence, and the implications of trauma on survivors. Ishtar Women's Resource Society also highlighted that a lack of adequate resources to meet the needs of survivors directly perpetuates the cycle of gender-based violence. They explained that the current funding model of unpredictable donations and grants is precarious and exacts an additional time-consuming burden on over-taxed workers to research, apply for, and constantly seek contract renewal.

The Committee also heard calls for resources and support for sexual assault survivors. The Prince George Sexual Assault Centre highlighted that BC is one of the only provinces that is lacking a larger policy to guide, assist, and support all levels of sexual assault response which is especially problematic in the judicial system with reporting to police. They explained that a dedicated sexual assault response policy would provide guidance to law enforcement, the judicial system, and those who are doing the non-profit work of supporting survivors through their journey as well as supporting people who have done harm. Similarly, Sto:lo Service Agency - Qwi:qwelstom Wellness stated that it is important to provide effective services to ensure communities have the tools to address sexual violence in a culturally appropriate manner. They highlighted that the agency offers Elders support and mental health counselling for people who participate in the *Responding to Sexual Violence in Indigenous Communities* training and people who have disclosed that they have been harmed by sexual violence. WAVAW Rape Crisis Centre stated that 90 percent of sexual assault survivors will never seek support through conventional systems such as the medical system and the criminal legal system. They noted that sexual assault clinics increase access for the most marginalized and vulnerable survivors who will not seek attention within the conventional system.

With regards to education, Victoria Sexual Assault Centre shared that by learning about consent at an earlier age,

students not only learn how to prevent sexual harassment and violence but gain an understanding of what resources and supports are available if it happens to them. They advocated for funding for consent workshops in high schools and universities so that youth have an opportunity to learn about the importance of consent and how to recognize and talk about sexualized violence. Additionally, Kwantlen Student Association emphasized that sexualized violence continues to be an issue on post-secondary campuses across the province. They discussed the need for more funding for local non-profit organizations that support victims of sexualized violence, specifically on post-secondary campuses across BC. Alliance of BC Students, Anti-Violence Project and SD71 District Parent Advisory Council also advocated for funding and programs in this area.

Several organizations advocated for predictable funding for women's transition housing. Victoria Women's Transition House Society explained that by providing immediate shelter and services for women and children, transition houses reduce the longer-term impacts that result from intimate partner violence. However, they noted that current approaches mean that transition housing services are funded from multiple sources, often with conflicting priorities. Archway Society for Domestic Peace informed the Committee that the inability to secure safe affordable housing is a major barrier for women to successfully leave an abusive relationship which further increases the risk of serious harm. With respect to this, these organizations, as well as BC Society of Transition Houses, advocated for increased funding for transition houses including the Homelessness Prevention Program which provides critical resources for women to secure market rental housing and provides support to women and their families to access housing and employment.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

BC Common Ground Alliance advocated for a cross ministerial task force to examine the impacts of prescribing a ground disturbance program for all underground disturbance in British Columbia. They noted that underground infrastructure is often breached, creating vital outages for hospitals, homes, businesses, banks and emergency service providers and a task force should be convened to meld the experiential learning of ministries and industry, examining cause and effect, including environmental, financial, and societal impacts. They also recommended that the use of BC 1 Call be mandated prior to any underground disturbance on Crown Lands or properties

owned by the province of BC. They further explained that oil companies in BC are already required to utilize BC 1 Call prior to disturbing any ground but telecommunications, construction, and many other entities such as farmers or homeowners are not required even though they are all impacting underground safety.

NATURAL DISASTERS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The Committee heard from several organizations about emergency preparedness. Archway Community Services advocated for the creation of collective impact solutions for impending and imminent climate disasters and other catastrophic events, factoring in the needs of the most vulnerable populations. They emphasized that few communities are currently equipped to address natural disasters like last year's flooding with a systems-level approach to collaborative preparedness, response, recovery, resilience, prevention, and mitigation. An individual also advocated for the allocation of a larger portion of the provincial budget to nature-based solutions to future and current natural disasters. They explained that nature-based solutions are more resilient to natural disasters that are outside of expected norms than engineered ones. Additionally, the British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals advocated for animals to be included in emergency planning and response. They noted that they provide emergency response services for the pets of victims displaced by natural disasters and helped more animals in 2021, due to the wildfires and flooding, than ever before.

The Professional Employees Association advocated for a change in how professionals are compensated for their work in response to emergencies. The Committee heard that the Professional Employees Association's collective agreement allows for compensation of members who step up during emergencies. They noted that the compensation is often delayed by weeks or months after the member has contributed long hours not knowing if they will be paid for any of the work that they have performed and Professional Employees Association members are only compensated with straight time. This discourages Professional Employees Association members to contribute during times of natural disasters and emergencies and when deciding whether to pursue additional training. This has led to a shortage of professionals within BC who can step in to help resulting in increased reliance on out-of-province personnel and more expensive private contractors.

Regarding flooding, the Insurance Bureau of Canada explained that updating flood mapping, improving land-use planning and enhancing community resilience and consumer risk awareness, all allow the creation of a national flood insurance program to provide financial protection for those at highest risk. BC Dairy Association highlighted that BC dairy farmers have dealt with catastrophic floods throughout the Fraser Valley and other parts of BC while many farmers have lost crops and faced economic challenges due to drought and lack of water. Therefore, they advocated for prioritized funding for Abbotsford's \$2 billion flood prevention system.

With respect to wildfires, Farmland Advantage advocated for financial support of BC Wildfire Service to contract farmers through Farmland Advantage to manage their lands in such a way to provide wildfire protection to communities. They noted that provincial wildfire mitigation has mostly targeted Crown lands, but often it is private farms and ranches that border the developed areas. They explained that the province spent \$650 million fighting fires last year, and stated that for a fraction of this amount, BC farmers could be contracted to manage their land in a way that will create an effective fire break on the land surrounding communities. Also, with respect to wildfire, Insurance Bureau of Canada emphasized that in order to enhance community resilience to wildfires before they occur, the province must increase investments in forest fuel mapping and support initiatives that better protect homes and businesses.

The Insurance Bureau of Canada also discussed preparedness for earthquakes. They stated that there is a likelihood that a large earthquake could occur that may threaten the solvency of Canada's insurance industry. Thus, they advocated for continued support for the development of a national earthquake resilience strategy to address a catastrophic earthquake in Canada including increasing investment to better prepare British Columbians for an earthquake.

The City of Prince George advocated for a new model for emergency response, and the establishment of centres in the interior to support large-scale disaster response. They explained that Prince George has the track record, location, infrastructure, and knowledge to implement this recommendation.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

The Committee heard a presentation from Vancouver Island Region Restorative Justice Association which highlighted the value of restorative justice. They shared that restorative justice is known to make communities safer and reduce court costs and backlogs. Regarding funding, they explained that the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General provides a \$4000 annual grant to Community Accountability Programs and there are opportunities to apply for Civil Forfeiture grants; however, applying for grants is time consuming and unpredictable and forces programs to compete with each for a limited pool of money. They also noted that the Ministry stopped allowing new programs to apply to the Community Accountability Program; therefore, communities that had not yet established programs are required to find alternative sources of support or accept restorative justice services from a neighbouring community. The Association advocated for the removal of the moratorium on the creation of new Community Accountability Programs as well as the recognition of restorative justice as a human right and an essential service by providing adequate, stable funding.

Prisoners' Legal Services stated that Indigenous people represent 35 percent of people in custody in BC correctional centres. Further, they noted that BC should be ensuring Indigenous communities have the resources to offer alternatives to incarceration in colonial prisons, such as Indigenous-run healing lodges. They recommended that, rather than fund BC Corrections, BC should negotiate with Indigenous groups to ensure responses to harm in Indigenous communities are led by the communities themselves.

SEX WORK

Living in Community advocated for increased funding for front-line organizations across BC that deliver peer-led and person-centred programming for sex workers. They explained that misguided approaches to address exploitation and trafficking, such as more criminalization, surveillance and interference, lead to the criminalization of sex work, which drives sex work underground. This leads to unsafe working conditions, prevents sex workers from reporting violence, makes it difficult to identify true victims of human trafficking, and creates further systemic vulnerabilities to trafficking and exploitation. They informed the Committee that by funding peer-led and person-centred programming, the province can ensure that sex workers are getting the specific supports that

they need without prescribing one solution that is meant to work for a variety of needs and experiences and without further criminalizing or marginalizing people.

Living in Community also described a project currently underway to develop and create a bad date and aggressor reporting system which is a peer-led tool where sex workers share information with each other and help keep each other safe. They recommended funding for this system to ensure that more sex workers and sex worker serving organizations can participate fully in the project's consultations and ensure that the tool will meet the needs of diverse sex workers across BC.

CONCLUSIONS

The need to ensure access to justice across the province, particularly in rural and remote communities, was brought to the Committee's attention. Members noted that limitations on access to justice and legal aid is causing denials of justice. Additionally, they highlighted that the digitization of court services is an important component to promote access to justice. They discussed several measures to improve access, including funding for legal aid services and examining the financial thresholds that determine eligibility for these services. Members also noted family law legal aid is difficult to access due to a lack of funding in this area, and agreed that more resources are required to reduce barriers for lower income individuals. Members also discussed the importance of support for those requiring legal representation for those detained under the *Mental Health Act*. The Committee highlighted the important work done by child and youth advocacy centres and the need to continue to support these centres.

The Committee discussed the importance of programs and services for people affected by gender-based and sexual violence and acknowledged a need to support these programs and review systems currently in place. Members noted that programs in this area are underfunded as is evident by the number of specific funding requests they received from organizations including Surrey Women's Centre, Sto:lo Service Agency - Qwi:qwelstom Wellness, and Archway Society for Domestic Peace. They discussed the need for a provincial sexual assault policy or process that will ensure that everyone interacting with sexual assault survivors is trained appropriately and that there is equity regarding the manner in which cases are addressed. Members heard about significant rates of sexualized violence on post-secondary campuses and

highlighted the need to increase prevention and response programs on campus as well as to educate students in K-12 education and the public on these issues. Committee Members also heard that there is an urgent need for transition housing and housing supports to ensure people affected by gender-based violence do not have to return to an abuser or experience homelessness due to lack of appropriate housing. Further, they recognized that child care is also an issue for those leaving gender-based violence. Committee Members noted that there needs to be supports for sex workers that are not criminalizing or stigmatizing and discussed the need to continue to fund the provincial bad date and aggressor reporting system to protect sex workers.

The Committee reflected that natural disasters and emergencies are more front of mind than ever before and noted that the province needs to be more proactive by investing in preparation, risk mapping, and climate change resiliency. Members also highlighted that the province needs more resources and a modern strategy for responding to emergencies, including public education and availability of consistent resources. Further, they discussed that there is a need for more public awareness about how to prepare for emergencies and what to do during natural disasters. In reflecting on last year's flooding driven by an extreme weather event, Members discussed the need to ensure animals and livestock are included in emergency planning and response. Additionally, the Committee highlighted the importance of search and rescue efforts and discussed emergency communications. The Committee expressed support for the recommendations of the Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act regarding integration of mental health within 911 options. When considering funding for 911 services, the Committee recognized that while the initial emergency call to 911 is answered by E-Comm 9-1-1, dispatch is operated by a number of agencies throughout the province including E-Comm 9-1-1, BC Emergency Health Services, a variety of city-based and RCMP-based police dispatch centres, as well as several municipal and regional fire dispatch centres. Committee Members noted that funding for these services must be equitable and all of these stakeholders, along with crisis centres, should be involved in reviewing how best to incorporate mental health as a 911 option. Further, Members heard that local governments in BC are currently only able to fund 911 services through property taxes or by collecting a call-answer levy from landline subscriptions, which have significantly decreased, but in other provinces there are

standardized wireless call-answer levies administered on behalf of municipal governments. Members also agreed that ground disturbance is a serious issue and supported the continued use of BC 1 Call.

Committee Members stated that restorative justice programs are part of a comprehensive justice system, many of which are run by volunteers and community-based organizations that are in need of funding. They heard that offenders involved with these programs are less likely to reoffend and there are potentially significant cost savings for the judicial and correctional systems. Further, they highlighted the importance of Indigenous justice and healing.

The Committee also recognized the challenges and issues created by prolific offenders, reflecting on the example of Kelowna, where Members heard that since 2016 one offender generated 346 files and 29 convictions for property crimes and assaults and continues to reoffend. They stated that resources need to be provided to address this issue. Additionally, Committee Members expressed concern about the rise of contraband tobacco in BC and were supportive of enforcement in this area. Further, they noted that illicit cannabis retailers are also a significant problem that has been identified by First Nations and Indigenous communities who expressed concerns that illegal cannabis dispensaries on reserve lands are having a negative impact on Indigenous youth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

Access to Justice and Legal Aid

176. Increase ongoing annual funding for legal aid services and access to justice, including for family law and child protection matters, and examine the income thresholds for eligibility.
177. Provide stable and adequate funding and supports to child and youth advocacy centres across the province.

Correctional Services

178. Ensure proper resourcing and supports to deal with prolific offenders challenges.

Cannabis and Tobacco

179. Fund additional resources and enforcement to address the distribution of contraband tobacco and illicit cannabis.

Court Services

180. Increase funding to improve access to the courts and justice system, including by identifying opportunities to improve efficiencies; to enhance the skills and knowledge of court staff in all communities to support a modernized court administration system; and to complete the digital transformation and modernization of the court system.
181. Establish robust data collection and disclosure infrastructure within the justice system, including Court Services, BC Corrections, and administrative tribunals.

Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Assault

182. Provide funding and support, including mental health supports, for survivors of brain injury resulting from intimate partner violence.
183. Conduct a system-wide audit of how the province is dealing with gender-based violence and sexual assault to ensure supports are appropriate and adequate.

184. Create a provincial sexual assault policy, working with data and insights obtained from police and hospitals, to ensure appropriate response in all sexual assault cases across BC.
185. Develop and fund intersectional and culturally sensitive gender-based violence awareness and prevention programs in K-12 schools.
186. Develop and fund intersectional and culturally-sensitive gender-based violence awareness and prevention programs, as well as response and support services in post-secondary institutions.
187. Partner with community organizations to develop and fund intersectional and culturally sensitive gender-based violence awareness and prevention programs.
188. Provide funding for transition housing and expand the Homelessness Prevention Program to all eligible transitional housing programs across the province to prevent homelessness and increase safety for women and children leaving violence, with emphasis on paying attention to child care needs.

Ground Disturbance

189. Create a cross-ministerial task force to examine the beneficial impacts of prescribing a ground disturbance program for all underground disturbance in BC.

Natural Disasters and Emergency Preparedness

190. Invest in and upgrade Emergency Management BC, including necessary technical upgrades.
191. Provide more resources for responding to natural disasters and emergencies, and create a modern strategy that includes public education, investments in climate change resiliency, and proactive response.
192. Commit new funding for flood and wildfire risk mapping, improving land-use planning and community resilience, and building back better following a disaster
193. Include animals, particularly livestock, in emergency planning and response.

Emergency Response and Communications

194. Provide funding for the leasing of a dedicated rescue helicopter to Air Rescue One Heli Winch Society and funding for staffing and capacity of the Air Rescue One Heli Winch Society for year-round rescue services.
195. Implement a provincial wireless call-answer levy, similar to those that exist in other provinces, to ensure equitable funding for 911 dispatch services in the province and create a taskforce inclusive of all emergency services providers to determine how to best integrate mental health supports into emergency response through a fourth option for 911.

Restorative Justice

196. Recognize restorative justice as an essential service by providing adequate and stable funding, and by increasing system-wide awareness.

Sex Work

197. Provide increased funding for frontline organizations across BC that deliver peer-led and person-centered programming for sex workers.
198. Provide funding toward the provincial bad date and aggressor reporting system, which is being developed.



SOCIAL SERVICES

Children and youth with support needs was a key area of focus throughout the public consultation, with many discussing the need to eliminate waitlists and increase funding for early intervention. The Committee also heard about a need for increased supports and resources for children and youth in care, increases to income and disability and rates, as well as supports for community social services and the not-for-profit sector.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CARE

Organizations described the need for the province to demonstrate a commitment to reconciliation and decolonization by making new investments in services and supports for children in care. The Federation of Community Social Services of BC stated that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's first Call to Action says that governments must provide adequate resources to enable Indigenous communities and child-welfare organizations to keep families together. They explained that this is an area of Ministry of Children and Family Development practice that has not seen the same transformative investments as other service areas. Furthermore, West Coast LEAF shared that a transformative investment is needed to support Indigenous communities and nations to care for children in accordance with their own traditions and practices. Therefore, they advocated for an investment in prevention and family support services as part of Ministry of Children and Family Development's proposed transformation and dedicated funding for Indigenous communities to support existing or new promising practices that keep children out of government care and within their families and communities. They further noted that this funding must be equitable, sustained and long term and cover the delivery of holistic services that are identified by communities themselves.

With respect to kinship programs, Fairness for Children Raised by Relatives shared that the Child in Home of Relative program was discontinued in 2010 and as of November 2021, there were 353 children who had been grandfathered

into the program. They highlighted that the program has not received a rate increase in 12 years, since the program ended in 2010, and the amounts they receive are drastically less than any other Ministry of Children and Family Development family support program. They advocated for Child in Home of Relative program families to receive the same monthly benefits as those on the Extended Family Program (EFP), Out of Care and Foster Care programs under the administration of the Ministry of Children and Family Development. Additionally, Fairness for Children Raised by Relatives noted that the Ministry of Children and Family Development's 54.01 and 54.1 family support programs, which is a permanent arrangement where guardianship has been transferred to the kinship caregiver, are usually provided some financial support to assist families; however, these families are ineligible to receive any children's federal benefits as the Ministry of Children and Family Development receives all the federal allowances on behalf of these families because of its claims under the federal *Children's Special Allowances Act*. They also cited a recent report from the BC Ombudsperson highlighting the negative impacts of the Ministry's policies and the unequal treatment of 54 program children, they recommended that 54.01/54.1 kinship families, including those caring for children with disabilities, receive all of their child's federal benefits, or be provided the equivalent as a top up to their 54.01/54.1 allowance.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH SUPPORT NEEDS

Several organizations advocated for increased funding for children and youth with support needs and to ensure this funding is needs-based. BC Association for Child Development and Intervention shared that families in BC that have children with developmental disabilities are in crisis due to underfunding in the sector, inflation and the pandemic. They further noted that the government is obligated to provide increased resources to agencies through the collective bargaining agreement, but those increases go strictly to

wages and benefits and not to operating expenses. Similarly, First Call Child and Youth Advocacy Society advocated for budget increases focused on prevention and early intervention through accelerated investments in quality child care, including a wage grid for early childhood educators, elimination of wait lists for early intervention therapies and Supported Child Development Program access, young parent programs, and non-barriered family support services throughout BC.

Regarding behaviour analysts, British Columbia Association for Behaviour Analysis highlighted that students seeking to become behaviour analysts compete for a limited number of seats at the University of British Columbia, the only graduate program in BC that provides the necessary coursework. Therefore, they recommended that increased funding be allocated to post-secondary programs that provide behaviour analyst training.

Regarding family connections centres, Child Development Centre of Prince George and District Association stated that changes to the Children and Youth with Support Needs Framework and the introduction of the family connection centres will increase demand for support; however, the province has not increased funding for support. British Columbia Association for Behaviour Analysis also shared concerns about the capacity of family connection centres to deal with existing waitlists. They noted that the family connection centres will serve an additional 8,300 children and families across the province, which is impossible without increased funding. They also highlighted that families who live in rural and remote areas of the province will be supported through outreach and virtual services and for families without reliable internet, this discrepancy will severely limit their access to the virtual supports provided through family connection centres. These organizations advocated for increased funding for the family connection centres.

Several organizations and individuals called for individualized autism funding to be reinstated as well as increased autism funding. Individuals noted that centre-based systems, such as the family connection centres, in other provinces have resulted in longer waitlists for services and children require different therapies and their parents know what they need. BC Autism Advocacy stated that retaining individual autism funding will allow families to keep their existing support teams, which their child has grown to trust, in place and also ensure that families with children that are very high need are not forced into a centre or virtual therapy, a shift which can

and will be traumatic. Additionally, Autistics United Canada BC Chapter shared that they conducted a survey of autistic people, parents, caregivers, clinicians, and educators to provide feedback on how autism services should be funded in BC. The survey found that 89 percent of respondents indicated that they would like the direct funding model to continue, either alone or in conjunction with the new hub model that is being proposed, while only six percent wanted to switch solely to family connection centres. AutismBC stated that diagnoses are essential to validate a person's identity as autistic and inform clinicians and service providers so they can develop effective therapeutic approaches. They expressed that the services offered at the family connection centres cannot replicate this.

The Committee heard the need to invest in early intervention and address waitlists in this area. BC Association for Child Development and Intervention explained that early intervention therapies, including physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and speech and language pathology, have consistently had lengthy wait times to access which can result in individuals aging out of programs before receiving supports. The Centre for Child Development requested funding to help them address waitlists including funding for early intervention occupational therapy. They explained that increasing funding in full time equivalents means more manageable caseloads, therefore reducing burnout of communication health professionals, which increases retention.

Down Syndrome Resource Foundation shared that, despite an accurate diagnosis and a generally high level of need in all cases, many children with Down Syndrome are still denied access to supports, and children with other disabilities, especially those who wait years for a diagnosis, share similar stories. They noted that for individuals with disabilities like Down Syndrome, the effects of limited or lower-quality early intervention are well documented, with lifelong repercussions including impacts on health and mental health outcomes. They advocated for individualized funding in the amount of \$25,000 per year to every individual with Down Syndrome in BC, based solely on the diagnosis of Down Syndrome, to be spent, as needed, on registered therapy providers, counsellors, associated tools and travel costs, and respite for caregivers.

With respect to speech language pathology, Mainland Speech Language Pathology Inc. shared that there are some communities where the average wait for children to receive speech and language pathology services is between 18 months and almost three years and as a result, children

may only receive a few sessions before they age out. They also noted that some adults needing speech and language therapy are not able to access government services at all. One hundred seventy-five more full-time positions are needed to support speech and language needs in BC. They advocated for increased funding for more full-time positions within public health for speech and language services and audiology services.

Many organizations suggested increased program seats in areas facing staffing challenges. Child Development Centre of Prince George and District Association and AutismBC advocated for an increase in the number of post-secondary training seats to train more individuals including in early childhood care and learning, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech language pathology, therapy aide and rehabilitation assistant. Similarly, Speech and Hearing BC stated that increased funding for speech language pathology seats in advanced education to improve staffing issues would lead to better access to services. Further discussion with respect to increased program seats is covered in the Advanced Education section.

BC Complex Kids Society discussed the need for increased investment in the At Home program. They shared that the At Home program is meant to provide access to respite, medical equipment and supplies, speech therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy. They explained that the program is difficult to access, as the child needs to be completely dependent in at least three areas of daily living, such as feeding, dressing, bathing and toileting, in order to qualify. Further, they noted that upon qualification, the suite of services available are 30 years old and eroded. They recommended an investment of \$25 million for creating a funding component within the At Home Program to support families in making their homes and vehicles accessible. They also advocated for the creation of a caregiver benefit of \$2,200 per month that empowers families of children with support needs to hire support workers. They explained that a flexible caregiver benefit would empower families to hire support workers so they can join the workforce or alternatively use the funding as income support when the best or only option is for the family to provide that care.

The Committee received specific funding requests from Canucks Autism Network. In response to COVID-19, Canucks Autism Network successfully launched 16 weekly virtual programs, delivered in real-time over Zoom. These innovative online programs allow families in Northern BC to

directly experience Canucks Autism Network's programs for the first time. To continue offering these programs, Canucks Autism Network requested \$550,000 to expand their child, youth and adult and community training programs to Northern BC. They also requested \$870,000 to fund an autism training collaboration with Foundry BC aimed at improving mental health supports specifically for autistic youth and adults across the province.

COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICES, NOT FOR PROFIT SECTOR, AND SOCIAL POLICY

The Committee heard about the value of the community social services sector and the need for increased funding for the sector. BC CEO Network shared that service providers increasingly find themselves in the position of responding to needs with critically limited resources. Additionally, Islands Wellness Society shared that having reliable funding and not having to constantly write grants could relieve the pressure placed on these small organizations or individual volunteers that provide piecemeal responses to people in crisis. The Federation of Community Social Services of BC recommended investment in the sustainability of the social services sector by addressing the rising cost of business pressures that organizations are facing and build this into base contract dollars. They shared that the community social services sector has been misunderstood and underfunded for decades while costs have continued to rise and the funding formula for administration in contracts has never been fair or adequate.

With respect to crisis response and prevention, Family Services of Greater Vancouver advocated for expanded social service delivery to create earlier intervention for crisis prevention. They explained that timely and effective support is critical to ensuring the health and safety of vulnerable populations but currently some programs have significant waitlists that impact providers' ability to support victims. Furthermore, the BC RCMP advocated for increased funding for social services and the continuum of care, including the police, to improve response to mental health, addictions, and other complex social issues, such as opioids and homelessness (see also Public Safety section).

A few organizations also advocated for funding for community based nonprofit seniors' centres and other nonprofit community-based seniors-serving organizations. BC Federation of Retired Union Members shared that non-profit community-based seniors organizations provide a wide range of programs

and are critical in providing supports to seniors so they can continue to live and participate in their communities. Similarly, 411 Seniors Centre highlighted how they play a critical role in the healthy aging continuum by providing a place where seniors can learn, meet with others, have fun, volunteer in meaningful ways, receive assistance, and have someone to talk to. They explained that this practical and social support it offers reduces senior social isolation and helps seniors continue to live vibrant and full lives. Both emphasized that short term grants and fundraising which community-based nonprofit seniors' centres rely on often require annual applications and have complicated reporting structures.

The Federation of Community Social Services of BC emphasized that there are funding inequities for Indigenous organizations, especially Indigenous child welfare organizations. They noted that a 2022 report by the Representative for Children and Youth found that funding inequities leave Indigenous agencies short-staffed and unable to provide adequate services and supports, with social workers at Indigenous agencies often carrying twice the recommended caseload. They recommended that the province address funding inequities that exist for Indigenous, off-reserve service providers.

With respect to human resources, organizations described the crisis of recruitment and retention issues in the non-profit community social service sector. CUPE 1936 stated that the community social services sector has experienced significant underfunding, resulting in recruitment and retention issues. To address this issue, they stated that the provision of five, 100 percent paid mental health days in addition to 100 percent paid sick leave provisions, is needed. Board Voice Society of BC highlighted that the constant churn of short-term contracts, hiring and rehiring creates other inequities by wiping out the gradual wage increases over time that employees generally expect. Additionally, Equal Pay BC noted that there are 17,000 workers in the community social service sector that are non-union employees doing the same work as unionized community social service workers. They highlighted that the government should accept the recommendations of the Public Sector Employers' Council report on the gap between union and non-union social services workers and fully fund that gap so that government treats all workers fairly and honours its commitment to pay equity. Along with Archway Community Services and Board Voice Society of BC, they advocated for all community social service employee wages to be competitive

with the public sector and equitable for both union and non-union staff.

The Committee heard about the need to increase or expand the Recovery and Resiliency Fund for the not-for-profit sector. Vantage Point noted their support for the continuation of this fund that was created by the province in 2022 with funding of \$30 million dollars in partnership with funding leaders in the sector. Association of Fundraising Professionals Greater Vancouver Chapter also shared that ongoing investment through this fund will help the sector continue to serve communities throughout BC. Similarly, Vancouver Foundation recommended that more resources be mobilized for community services by adding an additional \$30 million to the fund and expanding the program for non-profits to be allocated unclaimed financial property.

Several organizations also described the need for stable and increased funding for the not-for-profit sector. Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable stated that organizations in the not-for-profit sector spend a lot of time and energy applying for funding and grants. They advocated for increased and multiyear funding to the not-for-profit sector. Similarly, Covenant House Vancouver shared that many charities are stressed due to declines in donations and recommended implementing a matching fund for donations to charity. They explained that people are more likely to donate to a charity when donations are matched.

With respect to operational costs, Hollyburn Community Services Society noted that not-for-profits are under pressure to provide competitive wages to attract and retain employees but government contracts and grants are lacking with respect to administrative costs. They recommended that provincial funding and contracts realistically reflect not-for-profit administrative costs. Also regarding operational funding, Burnaby Neighbourhood House Society advocated for annual unrestricted core funding for not-for-profit neighbourhood houses and community-based social service organizations to sustain operating costs. They shared that the infrastructure cost of operations is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain through community fundraising, as short-term grants often do not include contributions to rent or administration.

Additionally, Family Services of Greater Vancouver discussed how financial literacy is a proven tool for improving quality of life, yet many vulnerable people encounter personal, institutional, and systemic barriers that prevent them from accessing financial products and services. They support

investments for financial empowerment programs delivered by community-based not-for-profits.

INCOME AND DISABILITY ASSISTANCE

Many organizations and individuals advocated for increases to income and disability rates. BC Poverty Reduction Coalition stated that current rates for both income assistance and disability assistance are well below the poverty line. BC People First Society stated that these low rates result in people disproportionately facing poverty and ongoing debt, homelessness and tenuous shelter, starvation and malnutrition, and being unable to pay for much-needed medication or medical support and resources for mental health issues. YWCA Metro Vancouver and Inclusion BC expressed similar concerns.

With respect to people with disabilities, BC Poverty Reduction Coalition noted that people with disabilities in BC have a higher cost of living as they often require specific meals, home care, and mobility devices. Similarly, Disability Without Poverty noted that disability assistance is subject to a number of claw backs that come into effect once the combined earned and unearned income reaches the annual earnings exemption. This leads to monthly funds being reduced or, if monthly income consistently exceeds disability rates, being cut off entirely. They advocated for these claw backs to be stopped to allow people to receive and earn funds that will move them above the poverty line without any impact to benefits. Additionally, one individual stated that when an individual is diagnosed with a serious ailment, a social worker should be available to assist them in filling out forms so they can access all support services that may be available.

The Committee heard about the need to increase the shelter portion of income and disability assistance. UBC Medicine Political Advocacy Committee noted that the current shelter allowance for a single individual on disability or income assistance is \$375 a month. In contrast, the average rent in BC exceeds \$2,000 a month. Furthermore, Comox Valley Head Injury Society stated that many people are paying well above the \$375 monthly shelter allowance. These organizations advocated for an increase to the shelter rate.

Regarding eligibility and administration of income and disability assistance, Disability Without Poverty also recommended that disability assistance be provided to the individual, regardless of their living arrangements with a partner or spouse, roommates, or family caregivers by

removing the requirement to report joining or separating from a partner, spouse, or roommate. They explained that in a partner or spousal relationship scenario where a person with a disability is receiving the benefit, but their partner does not, any income their partner earns could still be counted towards the individual's annual earnings exemption of \$18,000 per year (higher than \$15,000 for a single person). Additionally, MS Society advocated for government programs to be inclusive of episodic disability in eligibility criteria. More detail about health coverage for those with disabilities and accessing government financial supports can be found in the Health section.

BC People First Society described the need to broaden the terms and conditions of accessibility employment grants so that programs and supports can be put into place for disabled small business owners. They shared that they had reached out to multiple organizations, including Small Business BC, about the Workplace Accessibility Grants and were told that due to the terms of the grant they were not permitted to allocate any of those funds to create resources for disabled small business owners.

POVERTY REDUCTION

Some organizations described the need to address poverty in the province. First Call Child and Youth Advocacy Society emphasized that, in 2019, the child poverty rate in BC was 18 percent, increasing to 49 percent for children in lone-parent families, and the average child poverty rate on 64 of BC First Nations reserves was over 40 percent. They advocated for targeted child poverty reduction efforts to help those with higher poverty rates through direct income supports, welfare rate increases, family-supporting wages, rent controls, and childcare investment.

Also with respect to poverty reduction, BC General Employees' Union stated that a healthy and inclusive economy depends on a foundation of strong and well-resourced public services and programs which also serve as protections against poverty, vulnerability, inequality and exploitation. Therefore, they recommended that additional funding be provided to help strengthen and expand public programs and services including improving the overall quality, accessibility and public reach of services that address affordability and help reduce poverty and economic and social vulnerability.

CONCLUSIONS

The Committee noted the work currently underway to transition child welfare under the jurisdiction of Indigenous communities and highlighted the need to continue to adequately fund and resource this transition. Members acknowledged that youth aging out of care face significant challenges and need access supports to help them with this transition. As it relates to kinship caregivers, Members discussed that they are not receiving fair and equitable supports compared to other caregivers covered by the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

With respect to children and youth with support needs, Committee Members acknowledged the importance of diagnosis and early intervention services and the need to eliminate waitlists for programs and services. While reflecting on requests for a parent directed funding model or more choice in the current model, Members agreed that there is room to improve the family connection centres and highlighted the importance of ensuring that such programs and services are fully funded and well-resourced. The Committee further discussed the importance of ensuring that children and families are not stuck waiting for important therapies and interventions. Members also discussed options for addressing recruitment and retention of occupations that support early intervention services, including by increasing seats in these programs.

With respect to community social services, Members highlighted the importance of this sector with respect to poverty reduction. Committee Members discussed the critical work being done by this sector, including the Foundry model, which they described as an innovative tool for dealing with mental health, addictions, and social supports for youth, and also discussed the wider application of the model for adults.

The Committee heard about retention challenges in this sector as well as concerns about pay equity, and noted that many organizations shared that there is a lack of funding for the administrative aspects of their work. Members agreed that community organizations that provide social services are spending far too much time and resources applying for funding and grants, time which could be better spent fulfilling their respective mandates; they agreed that streamlining application processes would alleviate strain. They also acknowledged that many programs and organizations provide frontline services on behalf of the province and are underfunded and could be doing more with additional funding, including preventative work. Regarding the not-for-profit sector, Members also noted the important work done by these organizations and shared their support for them to continue their work regarding reconciliation, decolonization, and anti-racism. Additionally, Members discussed the vital role that community-based seniors' centres and organizations play in supporting and improving the lives of seniors. Lastly, Members debated the issue of the distribution of contracts between unionized and non-unionized workplaces providing government programs but did not reach consensus on this issue.

As it relates to income and disability rates, the Committee examined barriers related to earnings exemption policies for individuals on income and disability assistance and suggested these policies should be reviewed with the aim of providing more flexibility. Members were especially moved by the presentation from Donna Campbell who shared difficulties navigating disability assistance and supports for her son who has primary progressive multiple sclerosis. They agreed that there is a moral imperative to support the most vulnerable and ensuring access to necessary supports, including medical resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

Children and Youth in Care

199. Improve and increase supports for children and youth in care, including by facilitating the jurisdictional transition of child welfare to Indigenous communities, and improving supports to kinship caregivers.

Children and Youth with Support Needs

- 200. Ensure any changes to services for children and youth with support needs are fully funded to provide appropriate resources and eliminate waitlists.
- 201. Address recruitment challenges for occupations that support early intervention, such as speech language pathologists and occupational therapists, by increasing seats in these areas at post-secondary institutions.

Community Social Services, Not for Profit Sector and Social Policy

- 202. Provide increased, predictable, multi-year funding to the community social services sector, including administrative funding and supports to address compensation challenges.
- 203. Expand social service delivery and the continuum of care to improve response to mental health, addictions, and other complex social issues.
- 204. Provide funding for community-based seniors' centres and senior serving organizations.

Income and Disability Assistance

- 205. Review the eligibility and administration of income and disability assistance, including earning exemptions policies and thresholds, with a view to reducing barriers to work, providing flexibility, and ensuring that the most vulnerable have access to all necessary supports and medical needs.



TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT

Reducing greenhouse gases and improving infrastructure were key themes among input received by the Committee. Specific areas of focus included increasing access and safety of active transportation infrastructure, and adopting greener technologies for public transit. Several submissions and presentations highlighted concerns about the stability of BC's transportation infrastructure during climate-related disasters and noted that infrastructure is deteriorating in many areas of the province.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Several individuals and organizations expressed support for increasing the budget for active transportation. Friends of Rails to Trails - Vancouver Island explained that British Columbians use active transportation when good infrastructure is available, noting that the Galloping Goose–Lochside rail trail sees about 4,000 active transportation trips a day in comparison to the Malahat Highway which has about 25,000 trips a day. The BC Alliance for Healthy Living explained that regular physical activity is a protective factor against numerous chronic conditions and added that by shifting 20,100 people to activity each year, BC could avoid \$1.1 billion in direct health care costs by the year 2036. Transition Kamloops raised concerns that transportation emissions are the single biggest source of GHGs in BC, accounting for 39 percent of emissions province-wide in 2019, up 22 percent since 2007. While electric vehicles are an important tool for greening BC's transportation systems, the current rate of uptake is already high in BC. They added that current provincial plans over-emphasize the importance of electric vehicle infrastructure and should instead focus towards improving use of active transportation alternatives. They recommended high-quality active transportation facilities be mandated and provincially funded as part of all new projects. The Better Transit Alliance of Greater Victoria noted that CleanBC's emission reduction targets are currently undermined by the dozens of highway expansion projects planned, as more traffic lanes induce more

traffic, contrary to commitments to reduce travel distances for light vehicles.

The BC Cycling Coalition noted that British Columbia is only investing \$36 million over three years to active transportation infrastructure grant projects, which is less than one percent of the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure's Service Plan projections. They added that a fundamental change is needed in the way transportation investments are planned and evaluated. Hub Cycling explained that consistent funding year over year is needed to meet CleanBC targets, and the province needs to prioritize providing equitable access to safe, basic, healthy and independent mobility. A number of individuals also described the current budget as insufficient to improve active transportation infrastructure and recommended that funding be lifted to \$100 million annually.

The BC Cycling Coalition emphasized e-bikes as an important aspect of active transportation and noted the need for more rebates and financing options, a position that was echoed by Hub Cycling. Organizations such as Transition Kamloops and the Horse Council of BC also highlighted the importance of ensuring that active infrastructure is safe. The Horse Council of BC described a variety of ways to enhance road safety including the creation of multiuse pathways, traffic calming measures, reducing the speed limit on roadways, and advancing safety technology in vehicles.

The Trails Society of British Columbia stated that the atmospheric river and subsequent floods wiped out 150 kilometers of the TransCanada Trail and described the need to rebuild the trail in a way that is considerate of reconciliation and active travel and transportation.

AUTO INSURANCE

MoveUP noted that British Columbians enjoy the lowest auto insurance rates in Canada and noted this should remain protected by keeping ICBC public. They suggested that BC should protect this success by mandating ICBC to create product offerings in additional insurance areas, in the

competitive marketplace. They suggested that by expanding into new product lines, such as home and tenant insurance, life insurance and travel insurance, ICBC could make life easier for British Columbia residents.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

A number of organizations and individuals highlighted the need for increased funding to public transit. Just under 100 responses to the survey focused on transportation, with many of those identifying improved public transit as something that would make life better for their families. This sentiment was echoed by the BC Sustainable Energy Association. Arrowmaker Advisory & Accounting noted that it is currently difficult to travel across the province without the use of a personal vehicle, which is expensive to acquire and maintain. They suggested that a light rail across the province would improve the quality of life for lower-income British Columbians. The BC Urban Mayors' Caucus added that planning for transit infrastructure developments is hindered by the one-year budget cycle which does not provide for predictable long-term planning. They suggested that three-year budgeting would be more advantageous. School District No. 42 (Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows) also highlighted the importance of reliable public transit in getting students to school.

Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1724 highlighted the importance of public transportation to support BC's aging population and noted that handyDART, which provides services to those with mobility issues, is key to this support. The organization added that BC needs to expand the service province-wide and couple the expansion with permanent handyDART maintenance centres and charging stations to electrify the fleet.

Transition Kamloops and MoveUP both expressed a desire to see fares removed for public transit, and CUPE Fraser Valley District Council would like to see transit provided as a lower-cost, higher-quality alternative to personal vehicle transportation. They highlighted the importance of transit in making communities more sustainable, affordable, and less car dependent.

There was also a strong push to see further electrification of public transit in the province, and 19 submissions expressed a desire to see the electrification of public school bus fleets, highlighting the health and environmental risks associated with diesel transportation. For Our Kids highlighted that

exhaust from diesel school buses is linked to numerous negative health impacts including asthma, allergies, lung cancer and cardiovascular impacts. Several individuals noted that electric school buses have significant climate benefits, with each electric bus resulting in 17 tons of carbon emission 'savings' per year and added that the current funding through CleanBC does not cover enough of the cost to purchase an electric school bus.

Several organizations noted the need for more and improved public transit in rural and remote areas, particularly between communities as British Columbians often travel from community to community to access services. CUPE Kootenay District Council highlighted the issue of unreliable public transit in the Kootenays. CUPE Northern Area District Council highlighted that BC Bus North is a lifesaving service and must be protected by ensuring fair wages and safe working conditions for BC Bus North workers. They added that any bus service along Highway 16 should be required to pick up every woman and girl encountered walking or hitchhiking between those First Nation communities, towns, and cities which are along the Highway of Tears. Let's Ride: Make Public Transit BC Wide noted that since Greyhound left BC in 2018 there is only a patchwork of private bus operators. The Society for the Protection and Care of Seniors highlighted the need for affordable transit to improve hospital access for rural British Columbians.

Several organizations also called attention to specific regional projects such as the Westshore to downtown Victoria Ferry, the Vancouver Island Railway, improved transit infrastructure from North Shore to Capilano University's North Vancouver campus and the need for a transit hub near University of British Columbia Okanagan.

ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

Several groups made note of deteriorating roads and highways, many with a specific focus on northern communities. South Cariboo Chamber of Commerce noted that the roads in the region have severely deteriorated. Innergex Renewable Energy Inc. explained that resource roads are a highly valued part of BC's transportation network. In addition to providing essential access for many communities, they have become platforms for broad rural economic growth and support a variety of sectors and public interests. North Peace Rural Roads similarly mentioned that 74 percent of their rural roads are not adequately maintained. They explained that

roads that were previously upgraded to 100 percent legal axle loading year-round are in jeopardy of deteriorating to the point that they will be restricted in future years. One individual wrote to the Committee that part of the year in the Peace region, the roads are largely impassible for truck drivers which negatively impacts the economy.

Wildsight outlined the need for fencing and large animal crossings to reduce animal-related car accidents. They mentioned that driver warning systems like signage and flashing lights have been tried but evidence from around the world demonstrates that dedicated animal crossings and fencing are the most effective solution. To be truly effective, a number of large overhead crossings in key locations are needed to protect the genetic diversity of large carnivores such as female grizzlies. They highlighted that one such crossing is in the critical Yellowstone to Yukon corridor in the Elk Valley near Alexander Creek. Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative similarly noted that hundreds of large animals are killed every year along Highway 3 and noted that in addition to detriments to animal populations and genetic diversity, there are also direct social costs including human injury and vehicle insurance claims estimated at about \$2.8 million every year. They highlighted the need for continued funding to finish the Reconnecting the Rockies project, which is a five-year integrated project that includes wildlife underpasses and overpasses, linked together with wildlife exclusion fencing. It includes a major overpass at the highest priority area, the continentally critical Alexander-Michel Linkage Corridor just west of the Alberta border.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Several organizations raised concerns about the impact of climate change on transportation infrastructure across the province. The BC Road Builders & Heavy Construction Association highlighted the need to immediately invest in climate resilient infrastructure and encouraged sustained long-term funding to allow industry to develop innovative and efficient solutions. They also noted the importance of considering sustainability when procuring contractors for infrastructure projects, as this saves money for the taxpayer in the long-term. GCT Global Container Terminals expressed the need for BC's Goods-movement Strategy to examine all transportation infrastructure assets, both under provincial and federal jurisdiction, and to collaboratively identify pathways to optimization and resilience. BC Dairy Association expressed concern about the impact of climate change on agricultural

production and highlighted the need for upgrades to supply chain infrastructure.

The BC Road Builders & Heavy Construction Association raised concerns related to labour challenges, noting that the industry has had to dedicate significant resources to attracting workers for current and future projects. Without a fully staffed sector, almost every other industry sector in the province will be negatively affected whether through less frequently maintained infrastructure or slower responses to future natural disasters. They further noted that union mandates for projects reduces the number of contractor bids. The BC Truckers Association noted that a recent woman in trucking survey highlighted that 59 percent of respondents raised significant safety concerns from being on the road and 35 percent of respondents cited significant concerns with rest areas. They noted the need to improve safety, but also accessibility for women across the province.

Several municipalities, chambers of commerce, and boards of trade championed projects in their respective regions. The Kelowna Chamber of Commerce outlined that failing to address emerging transportation needs will limit growth, minimize prosperity, create inter-community transportation challenges, and limit the region's contribution to BC's economy. The Surrey Board of Trade cited the need to address the backlogs at ports and the need to expediate construction of port infrastructure. In discussing the importance of upgrading the port at Port Alberni, the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce highlighted that 90 percent of consumed goods are imported to Vancouver Island through Vancouver, and directly importing to the island would reduce greenhouse gases. The need to reactivate the 99-kilometer Interurban Rail Corridor was raised by the South Fraser Community Rail Society. The rail corridor connects 16 population centers, 14 post-secondary institutions, 14 First Nations communities, major industrial parks, and tourist attractions south of the Fraser. The Resource Municipalities Coalition noted several issues for Northeast BC including replacing the Taylor bridge, realigning South Taylor Hill, and widening Highway 97 from the Alberta Border to Fort St. John to enhance safety. They noted that current infrastructure is an obstacle for industry development in the region.

With respect to airports, the Vancouver Airport Authority (YVR) noted the importance of airports in maintaining supply lines but added that BC's current lack of air cargo capacity results in longer in-transit time, higher costs to local business, and

increased GHG emissions. They recommended funding to build up BC's aviation cargo capacity. They also highlighted BC's potential in becoming Canada's first domestic supply chain of sustainable aviation fuel but recommended that a task force be established to oversee sustainable aviation fuel.

CONCLUSIONS

The Committee agreed that active transportation provides a range of benefits for both personal health and the environment but highlighted the need to ensure that the safety of those who partake remains a top priority. With the uptick in active transportation resulting from the pandemic, and the widespread adoption of e-bikes, more people are traveling on BC roadways. Members were pleased to see the high level of adoption, but discussed several high-profile incidents where drivers were inattentive to their surroundings, resulting in serious injury to other road users. They highlighted the need for better connectivity and safety measures in the infrastructure, but also noted the importance of improving driver awareness. They further added that active transportation is not a one-size-fits-all situation; solutions to improve safety in the lower mainland may not improve safety or ridership in the Okanagan. However, they agreed that getting active transportation right is important for both tourism and making communities more connected.

While discussing transportation infrastructure, the Committee highlighted airport infrastructure as a way of providing flexibility to BC's supply chain. The Committee was cognizant of the supply chain challenges the province has faced as a result of climate change and discussed the role of transportation infrastructure in supporting the economy and health of British Columbians. Members recognized that roads and highways connect many communities of this province and are arteries that get goods, services, and people where they need to go, and noted that many roads and highways are in serious need of repair. They flagged that highways are vulnerable to climate related disasters, which has had a spill-over impact on the degradation of secondary roads due to unprecedented overuse. Members agreed that BC's transportation infrastructure (including highways, expanded aviation cargo capacity, and port infrastructure) needs to be flexible, resilient, and adaptable to withstand the increasing wear from extreme weather events. Members stressed the importance of ensuring that BC's transportation infrastructure is forward looking and able to withstand extreme weather, and work towards decarbonizing BC's transportation through

initiatives like expanded charging stations and the adoption of ZEV heavy vehicles. Though Members noted that these costs are higher now, they recognized that ensuring BC's roads are built correctly will ultimately save money.

Members also noted the importance of helping BC become a world leader in sustainable aviation, as well as more broadly decarbonizing BC's transportation system. They agreed that if BC increases its reliance on aviation as a way to help stabilize its supply lines, the province must invest in developing clean aviation fuel.

Members noted several areas in the province in need of increased public transit, including the North Shore and the Okanagan, and suggested that improved public transit could help decrease traffic congestion and its subsequent GHG emissions. The Committee also encouraged the province to continue to invest in massive public transit projects to get more people off the road, such as the Surrey to Langley SkyTrain extension. The Committee also highlighted concerns that the current focus on electrification may not be the most prudent decision for mass transit, and that it is important to decarbonize and expand access to public transit using the full suite of green technologies available to the province, including hydrogen.

While discussing province-wide transportation, Members discussed the need to ensure transit is accessible and affordable while recognizing the need to maintain revenue streams in this area to expand fleets. Members also noted that the current lack of reliable transit services in some areas of the province is a danger to the economy and the safety of British Columbians. They agreed that communities need to be safely linked across the province, especially in northern and rural areas.

Members also highlighted several concerns regarding the state of road safety across the province and agreed that it is vital that all British Columbians, particularly truckers, feel safe while traversing the province. The need for improved safety in the rural regions of the province was especially important for Members. They emphasized the state of disrepair of several arterial roadways across the province and questioned how people could be safely and quickly evacuated from an extreme weather event if the highways are undrivable. They agreed that communities need more autonomy to determine how to best upgrade and maintain their roads. While discussing concerns about wildlife related car accidents, Members agreed that

increased animal crossings and barriers would make roads safer for animals and people.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

Active Transportation

- 206. Increase investments in active transportation and safe active transportation infrastructure in partnership with municipal governments and community-based organizations, with particular attention to the distinct needs of rural, remote, and Indigenous communities.
- 207. Enhance oversight of active transportation infrastructure with a view to improving safety for British Columbians.

Transportation Infrastructure

- 208. Take a whole-of-system look at BC transportation to build a sustainable and green transportation network that is reinforced to be climate resilient.
- 209. Ensure BC's infrastructure is flexible, safe, and includes appropriate redundancies to ensure that people and goods can remain connected even in times of emergency.

Aviation Industry

- 210. Maintain BC's sustainable aviation fuel leadership by creating a multi-agency task force that mirrors the complexity of this emerging market and that represents aviation, clean fuel, innovation, and investment expertise.
- 211. Support building aviation cargo capacity and reliability.

Public Transportation

- 212. Fund BC Bus North and expand service frequency on all four BC Bus North routes; couple this expanded service with enhanced safety features such as well-lit and safe bus-stops and a requirement that BC Bus North provide a free, safe ride to every woman and girl walking or hitchhiking on the Highway of Tears.
- 213. Increase investments in a province-wide public transit plan to ensure accessible, affordable public transportation options are available across the province, with a view to addressing gaps in regional services, and enhancing support for high traffic corridors like the Okanagan and North Shore.
- 214. Invest in decarbonizing BC's fleet, increasing accessible transportation options such as handyDART, and addressing the needs of small, rural, remote, and Indigenous communities.

Roads and Highways

- 215. Empower local area managers in rural BC with the financial resources they need to prioritize road maintenance.
- 216. Increase funding for wildlife connectivity through highway crossings and fencing to make the transportation system safer for wildlife and humans alike.



SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Accessibility

1. Create an independent disability protection advocacy office to safeguard the rights of people with disabilities in BC.
2. Broaden the terms and conditions of Workplace Accessibility Grants so that programs and supports can be put into place for small business owners with disabilities including neurodivergent people.
3. Install reader boards for public transportation, including BC Ferries, to improve accessibility for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community.

Systemic Barriers – Gender, Sexual Orientation, and Race

4. Build on existing practices regarding workforce development agreements to make sure that opportunities are provided for equity-seeking groups in skilled trades.
5. Take immediate action to address pay equity for women.
6. Invest in collecting disaggregated data on workers who experience gender-based oppression including non-binary, trans, Two-Spirit, as well as racialized and migrant workers.

Democracy

7. Create a strengthening democracy fund to increase community capacity building; equity, diversity, and inclusion in democracy; and innovations in democratic systems and institutions.

Indigenous Peoples and Reconciliation

8. Implement the Declaration Act Action Plan, and provide required resources to ensure that First Nations and Indigenous peoples are true partners and leaders in this work.

9. Implement the Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.
10. Celebrate and protect Indigenous cultures through increased funding and supports for Indigenous cultural infrastructure and projects.
11. Build on progress to ensure clean water for Indigenous peoples across the province.
12. Provide funding to the Métis Nation BC for governance and to ensure that the Métis culture is recognized, respected, and protected in the distinction-based approach.

Digital Connectivity

13. Ensure that rural and remote communities have sufficient access to high-speed internet and cell phone connectivity.

ADVANCED EDUCATION

Adult Education and Literacy

14. Provide multi-year funding for literacy programs, including programs addressing digital and financial literacy, to meet the needs of communities.

Capital Funding

15. Allocate more money for affordable and accessible student housing on campus, and broaden the rental pool in communities.
16. Allocate resources to support post-secondary institutions to modernize infrastructure and address aging facilities to enhance students' physical and mental wellbeing.

Diversity and Inclusion

17. Enable workforce development by committing the necessary learner supports to ensure full post-secondary access and retention for under-represented

groups, including Indigenous peoples, people of colour, immigrants, and persons with disabilities.

International Students

18. Create a provincial strategy for international students that includes predictable fees and ensures that international students feel welcomed and are supported.

Operational Funding

19. Create a new funding formula that recognizes inflationary pressures and the needs of institutions as well as the unique circumstances of institutions, especially those in rural and remote areas.
20. Grant colleges the flexibility in their annual budgets to make long-term investments in innovation and program development.
21. Work with post-secondary institutions to retain instructors, including by funding faculty positions in predictable, long-term contracts.
22. Create more program seats in sectors facing a labour shortage such as speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, and health care practitioners.

Research and Innovation

23. Increase investment in research with targeted investments in sectors critical for strengthening the province's well-being, that align with the government's key priorities, to retain highly skilled graduate students in BC.
24. Support knowledge creation in BC through increased investment in post-secondary research.

Student Supports

25. Increase mental health supports for students at post-secondary institutions across the province, including by providing funding to hire BIPOC counsellors, and continuing funding for mental health counselling and referral services.

Technology, Trades, and Skills Training

26. Increase core funding to trades training providers and ensure skills training is available and accessible throughout the province.
27. Recognize foreign credentials and encourage innovative skills programs such as micro-credentials.

28. Provide greater access to and investment in work-integrated learning and reskilling programs for transitioning workers.

29. Continue to develop and consider strategies to drive innovation, sustainability, apprenticeships, and trades, working with industry as a trusted partner to drive new programs and initiatives.
30. Invest in training and technology retooling grants for employers and workers with industry partners.
31. Support educational opportunities that connect secondary and post-secondary students with the skills required to work in the broader tech sector.

Tuition and Financial Assistance

32. Continue to provide need-based assistance to students, including by increasing the BC Access Grant and expanding the income eligibility threshold.
33. Reduce financial barriers to post-secondary education by providing grants, scholarships, bursaries, and subsidies for all students, including BIPOC, and migrant students.

ARTS, LIBRARIES, AND SPORT

Arts and Culture

34. Increase funding for the BC Arts Council and ensure equitable distribution of funds to organizations across the province.
35. Commit to arts infrastructure spending for both large and small projects, particularly cultural spaces.
36. Provide funding for museums in smaller communities and establish repository space throughout the province.
37. Extend the rent and wage subsidy programs for art organizations and artists introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic.
38. Work with Science World to address necessary infrastructure upgrades and repairs to ensure continued operations.

Digital Media, Music, and Film

39. Provide certainty for the film industry by maintaining the stability of the Film Incentive BC and production services tax credit programs.

40. Support the digital media industry by increasing and extending the interactive digital media tax credit.
41. Engage with the digital media, music, and film industries to review tax credits with a view to increasing diversity, including by exploring equity and reporting requirements on the demographic distribution of funds.
42. Collaborate on workforce development and labour market strategies that embrace the priority to grow a diverse, equitable, and inclusive film industry.

Public Libraries

43. Increase the annual operating grant for public libraries, linked to inflation, and provide targeted financial support for libraries in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities to increase access in these areas.

Sport

44. Invest \$15 million in amateur sport to improve affordability for low-income families and other underserved populations, and ensure that the sector is inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Agriculture and Food Security

45. Recognize the importance of agriculture to the economy and food security by ensuring adequate funding is provided to support the sector as well as individual farmers and ranchers in BC.
46. Review an increase to the revenue qualifier for agricultural classification on farm parcels with a view to incentivize agricultural production and make the industry more attractive and supportive for young and new farmers.
47. Conduct a comprehensive review of insurance for crops and farms to ensure farmers are supported.
48. Conduct a comprehensive study with a view to finding incentives to reduce food waste and increase food security.
49. Provide funding for food programs in seniors' centres and in community-based senior-serving organizations.
50. Create more robust risk management programs to support BC wine vineyard resiliency to mitigate systemic short crop

and to ensure BC vineyards are best positioned to support the growth and success of the industry.

Fisheries

51. Continue to invest in sustainable aquaculture and processing in BC, including by working with the federal government on regulatory and protection measures to enhance aquaculture.

Forestry

52. Continue to facilitate Indigenous leadership in determining forest management and engagement in the forest economy and enable forestry-related policies that manage forests in line with the practices and expectations of Indigenous communities.
53. Identify new ideas and opportunities, including by working with local experts on the ground to ensure sustainability through forestry regeneration practices.
54. Incentivize forestry and broom management by companies harvesting feedstock or fiber as biomass to make into biochar.

Labour and Jobs

55. Increase funding to the Employment Standards Branch to increase capacity, staffing, and training, and to expeditiously address wait times.
56. Amend legislation to ensure that workers in the gig economy are properly classified as employees rather than independent contractors and covered by the Employment Standards Act and provide targeted funding to the Employment Standards Branch for compliance teams.
57. Prioritize the implementation of the recommendations made through extensive reviews at WorkSafeBC in British Columbia's worker compensation system.
58. Explore an indigenization strategy to assist Indigenous peoples to secure jobs in the digital economy through government-sponsored online post-secondary and upskill training and to ensure that they have a greater ability to learn, work, and raise their family within their community if that is something that they wish to pursue.
59. Increase programs promoting inclusive leadership for the BC Employer Training Grant to help more small and

medium-sized businesses access the benefits of outside expertise to transform their workplace cultures.

60. Address labour shortages by engaging in partnerships with the private sector, supporting programs that enhance the skilled labour market through education and immigration, and increasing workforce housing.
61. Enhance support to entrepreneurs, including young, diverse, and underserved entrepreneurs.
62. Continue investing in Sector Labour Market Partnership funding initiatives, as they are invaluable to collaboratively solving industry challenges.

Mining and Natural Resource Development

63. Develop, fund, and regularly update BC's critical minerals and metals strategy that includes objectives and actions for advancing BC's critical minerals and metals sector, including steelmaking coal, to treat it as economically and strategically important, in line with other jurisdictions.
64. Create explicit scientific integrity and transparency policies to strengthen oversight of natural resource management.
65. Continue to empower Indigenous peoples to participate in natural resource development, and advance economic reconciliation through revenue-sharing and equity ownership.
66. Enhance capacity to address permitting backlogs and ensure predictable timelines.
67. Ensure that Geoscience BC is well-resourced to attract exploration investment and maintain competitiveness.

Technology and Innovation

68. Support quantum-hybrid technologies by investing in a domestic high-performance computing data centre that is integrated with quantum computing.
69. Support a quantum "sandbox" program and fund opportunities for industry collaboration between quantum companies and academic institutions, including by establishing a government training program.
70. Fund the development and implementation of a provincial intellectual property strategy to incentivize domestic technology companies to create and keep intellectual property within BC, and a provincial data strategy to harness the power of intellectual property and data as

economic assets and promote privacy, transparency, and equity.

71. Explore options to enable cross-government data sharing through technology and opportunities to harness this data to gain real time insights and analysis to inform decision making and policy development.
72. Build a net-zero BC by digitally transforming natural resource and agri-food industries in a responsive, green, and sustainable way, while ensuring scaleups and anchor companies remain globally competitive.
73. Find tools to incentivize innovative technology procurement and made-in-BC solutions.
74. Commit funding to capture better data about BC's technology and innovation sector.

Tourism

75. Protect the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) for its original intended purpose to support tourism projects, programs, and marketing, and obligate all online accommodation providers to collect the MRDT.
76. Collect data to gain insight into the number of hospitality establishments that have been lost in recent years, and work with the hospitality sector to ensure that BC is a destination with sufficient spaces for meetings, conferences, events, and leisure travel, attracting both domestic and international markets.
77. Explore making BC's third-party food delivery fee cap permanent.

Trade

78. Undertake strategic northern BC trade corridor planning to coordinate investments and maximize the potential for future export growth.
79. Encourage cooperation with the federal government to develop a comprehensive plan to ensure adequate transportation linkages between ports and goods and services.

ENVIRONMENT

Buildings

80. Continue to prioritize decarbonizing BC's buildings by incentivizing the widespread adoption of greener

technologies with attention to the unique needs of remote, rural and northern communities.

81. Explore opportunities to incent retrofitting of public buildings in conjunction with planned seismic upgrades.

Clean Energy

82. Further support the transition to cleaner energy by incentivizing all industries and individuals to adopt a lower carbon footprint.
83. Continue to support the BC Hydrogen Strategy goal to accelerate the production and use of green hydrogen, and attract investment and skilled job opportunities to BC, by providing support to bridge the current cost gap between this clean fuel and fossil fuel-based alternatives.
84. Explore the inclusion of geothermal district heating and cooling systems to reduce electricity demand.

Climate Change

85. Provide urgent and substantive investments into climate adaptation, mitigation and prevention strategies with a view to reducing the worst impacts of climate change.
86. Provide research-driven increased supports and infrastructure to mitigate the worst socioeconomic and health impacts of climate change (including reduced air quality, food and water insecurity, extreme heat, extreme cold, flooding, and extreme storms) on low-income groups, specifically including seniors, unhoused people, lone parent families, Indigenous communities, people with disabilities, migrant workers, newcomers, people with mental and chronic health conditions, sex workers, and people who use drugs.
87. Increase investment on climate adaptation strategies that are also climate mitigation strategies with respect to bridges, roads, homes and other structures, and work to accelerate international efforts to reduce carbon emissions.
88. Make concrete commitments to reduce all greenhouse gases in the province, with a focus on the highest emitting industries.
89. Invest in a comprehensive, unified provincial air quality strategy to prepare all regions for impending wildfire, wood smoke, and heat dome seasons.

Environmental Protection

90. Increase resourcing to environmental protection, with a view to increasing data collection to more deeply integrate science-based approaches, including local and Indigenous knowledge and practices into conservation, environmental protection and old growth strategy.
91. As required by the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, when requested, provide supports to Indigenous communities to better fund their conservation engagement.

Fish and Wildlife Conservation and Management

92. Allocate funds from hunting license fees and a portion of natural resource profits to conservation.
93. Establish wildlife governance and dedicated funding models to improve wildlife management and habitat conservation by collaborating with stakeholders, including First Nations; ensure that BC manages its wildlife resources to meet the needs of Indigenous peoples and the residents of British Columbia for the future.
94. Establish dedicated funding for a data-based comprehensive predator management strategy.

Invasive Species

95. Significantly increase funding for invasive flora and fauna species prevention, monitoring, regulation, and inspection; including core inspection program funding for the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy and BC Conservation Service with a budget adjusted to inflation.
96. Implement 24/7 inspection facilities at all major border crossings to inspect vessels for quagga mussels and other invasive aquatic species.

Parks and Recreation

97. Continue to invest in BC Parks and Recreation Sites and Trails BC to address gaps in maintenance and staff, including dedicated funding to community-based organizations for trail maintenance and development.
98. Build the capacity of volunteers by establishing discretionary funding to ensure that BC's volunteer trail and park maintenance groups have the resources they need to continue to improve the accessibility of outdoor recreation.

Recycling and Waste

- 99. Develop a zero-waste provincial strategy to incentivize good behaviours, support made in BC recycling programs, and create a circular economy by using recycled materials from these programs to help secure and stabilize supply chain issues and build BC's fuel capacity.
- 100. Leverage CleanBC to incentivize municipalities to adopt a province-wide recycling program to ensure that recycling is accessible across the province.
- 101. Incentivize individuals to reduce, reuse, and recycle, and incentivize manufacturers to avoid planned obsolescence and develop innovative uses for recycled materials.

Water

- 102. Urgently develop a proactive, well-funded and coordinated water conservation strategy.
- 103. Provide \$75 million in sustained funding to the BC Watershed Security Fund.

Zero Emission Vehicles

- 104. Leverage all incentives to increase the accessibility of zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs), including expanding charging infrastructure, supporting mechanic training programs for servicing ZEVs, developing battery recycling facilities and developing regional and flexible plans that are adaptable both to the unique challenges of small and remote communities and high-density urban areas.

FISCAL AND REGULATORY POLICY

Budgetary and Taxation Policy

- 105. Recognize the exceptional challenges faced by small and medium-sized businesses and their importance to the BC economy by providing supports and incentives to increase productivity and competitiveness, reduce bureaucracy, and increase timeliness of supports.
- 106. Establish a BC Prosperity and Productivity Commission as an independent agency to ensure that policies and regulatory provisions are viewed through the lens of productivity and prosperity and advise on changes that support scaling up businesses, growing the export sector, and increasing productivity and nurturing real wage growth.

Carbon Tax

- 107. Explore a graduated carbon taxation system based on greenhouse gas emissions of fuels to incent the shift to new and cleaner alternatives.

Liquor, Cannabis, and Tobacco

- 108. Explore the viability of implementing an annual fee on the tobacco industry to recover the cost of the Ministry of Health's provincial tobacco control strategy.
- 109. Implement a retail floor price for all alcohol products of \$10.00/bottle (750 ml) with a corresponding increase to the wholesale price and a sliding scale for larger formats including annual indexing to the Consumer Price Index.

Local Governments

- 110. Review the Community Charter with a view to modernizing the relationship between municipal and provincial governments with respect to funding and resources in light of the increased pressures and demands facing municipalities relating to climate change, transportation, housing, and public safety.

Property Tax

- 111. Review split assessments on property taxation with a view to addressing rising costs for small and medium-sized businesses.
- 112. Increase property transfer tax thresholds for all home buyers including first time home buyers.

Provincial Sales Tax

- 113. Review the implementation of the online marketplace services PST provisions to ensure that the amendments result in the intended outcome.
- 114. Remove the PST from the sale of defibrillators.

Specific Taxation Measures

- 115. Review the luxury tax in view of the rising cost of vehicles.
- 116. Examine the payroll exemption threshold for the employer health tax in recognition of pressures on small businesses and index the threshold to the Consumer Price Index for annual increases.

Prompt Payment

117. Prioritize the enactment of prompt payment legislation that is inclusive of lien reform and adjudication.

HEALTH

Chronic Diseases and Complex Care

118. Prioritize and fund the development of myalgic encephalomyelitis-specific billing codes for BC clinicians and the development of continuing medical education credits, modules or incentives for BC physicians, medical students, and other medical professionals to attend training about myalgic encephalomyelitis.
119. Provide the Brain Injury Alliance with a secure, annualized, and ongoing funding agreement to offer more stability and opportunities for growth to address emerging issues in the brain injury sector.
120. Explore the listing of Yescarta ® as an eligible treatment on the BC Cancer Drug Benefit list, with access through established provincial referral networks, and investing in cancer care infrastructure to provide Yescarta ® CAR T-cell therapy to qualifying patients.
121. Further develop and implement the ten-year strategic plan to prioritize cancer care and treatment.
122. Commit to implementing a comprehensive diabetes strategy.
123. Ensure timely and affordable access to all multiple sclerosis treatments approved by Health Canada.
124. Provide access to arthritis-specific care, including pain management therapies.

Community Care and Seniors

125. Strike and fund a diverse and inclusive multi-sectoral long-term care advisory forum to assist in the development of an evidence-based action plan to reform long-term care in BC.
126. Improve accountability measures for funding to long-term care home operators.
127. Allocate more funding and supports to help seniors age-in-place and maintain healthy lives at home longer.

Dental

128. Recognize that poor dental care leads to poor health outcomes by providing improved dental coverage for lower income British Columbians with specific attention focused on providing better care for people with disabilities and with diabetes.

Health Human Resources

129. Integrate adequate mental health supports, including counsellors and psychologists, into primary care networks.
130. Alleviate strain on the health system by finding or accrediting alternative practitioners, such as pharmacists, physician assistants, midwives, foreign trained health care professionals, and mental health practitioners.
131. Review mechanisms to improve the recruitment, credentialing, and retention of foreign trained family physicians.
132. Increase supports for health care professionals to encourage retention; this could include on-site child care, reviewing the pay structure and providing improved benefits
133. Provide subsidized access to education and bridging programs to help health care professionals enhance their skillsets to allow them to work to their fullest potential.
134. Standardize the scope of practice for nurses across the province so they are not administratively constrained from providing health care, particularly in remote areas.
135. Examine the payment model and administrative structure for family doctors with a view to identify opportunities to incentivize physicians to work in British Columbia.

Rural and Remote Health Care

136. Build an effective health care system in rural areas complimented by more residencies in northern hospitals.
137. Improve access to health care in rural and remote communities, including by funding digital health care, exploring the use of physician assistants to extend hospital hours, increasing access to midwives, providing incentives to attract health care practitioners to these communities, and increasing seats and loan forgiveness for students.

Hospice and Palliative Care

138. Increase funding and adopt a provincial approach to providing culturally respectful grief and bereavement supports to build capacity for community hospices across the province.
139. Support newborns, children, and youth with life-threatening illnesses by amending the Ministry of Health's Palliative and End-of-Life Care Policy to include those aged 19 and under, who are presently excluded from the policy's scope.

Medical Coverage

140. Implement a funding strategy that covers the cost of modern prosthetics and orthotics, including the costs associated with emergency repairs, and ensure that BC adults with disabilities or physical impairments can access orthotic coverage after their 19th birthday.
141. Add coverage of the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test to the Medical Services Plan for asymptomatic individuals, when ordered by a physician.
142. Review access to the Medical Services Plan for refugees and migrant workers to ensure that the model is available in a timely way and fair to both employees and employers.

Mental Health and Addictions

143. Increase access to long-term counselling for children and youth who experience all types of abuse-induced trauma.
144. Develop targeted measured outcomes in mental health; and a plan to improve mental health and address addictions, the plan can include education to increase awareness, reduce barriers and stigma while also increasing access to counselling and treatment.
145. Identify and fund programming for identity-based counselling and mental health support services that are intersectional, culturally safe and LGBTQ2SAI+-focused.

Primary Care

146. Conduct an immediate review of primary care (including walk-in clinics, urgent and primary care centres, family doctors, and community care centres) to determine how the existing system can more effectively serve the community, increase access to longitudinal care, identify and resolve issues, and identify opportunities to improve navigation for the public.

Biomedical Sciences

147. Support more BC-based medical research to identify solutions for tomorrow.
148. Establish a comprehensive and coordinated BC life sciences and biomanufacturing strategy to build BC's biomanufacturing and vaccine supply chain.
149. Encourage the federal government to accelerate its efforts in making various antiviral therapies available to fight COVID-19.

HOUSING

Affordable and Social Housing

150. Incentivize the private sector to be innovative and creative in addressing the low housing stock.
151. Increase resources for the Residential Tenancy Branch to ensure that people who are in danger of losing their housing are experiencing an equitable, just, consistent, and timely process that is fair for both tenants and landlords.
152. Support the role of BC Housing in funding and building public non-market housing.
153. Develop and fund an Indigenous housing strategy.

Complex Care

154. Accelerate the construction of complex care housing sites across the province and ensure full supports are provided for those who need them and adequate support is provided for surrounding neighbourhoods.

Homelessness

155. Prioritize investments and programs for those experiencing homelessness to help reduce their risk of being evicted and increase access to stabilized housing.
156. Provide funding to ensure that young people leaving foster care have access to affordable housing.
157. Provide more financial support to overnight and daytime drop-in centres for individuals experiencing homelessness.

Strata

158. Explore options to improve financial stability, risk management, and insurance pricing for strata councils.

K-12 EDUCATION

Capital Funding

- 159. Re-examine capital funding with a view to being proactive and responsive to anticipated growth and local needs as well as recognizing the increased maintenance costs as schools age.
- 160. Review policies regarding portables, recognizing the challenges created by the fact that portables are funded from operating budgets.

Child Care and Early Childhood Development

- 161. Increase the Childcare Operating Fund daily rate per child to recognize inflationary pressures.
- 162. Ensure child care is accessible for those who do not hold regular working hours.
- 163. Act urgently to recruit and retain early childhood educators in BC's child care system, including by allowing equivalency credits and providing paid practicums and tuition subsidies for early childhood educators, and by funding more child care spaces.

Operational Funding

- 164. Increase funding for K-12 education in recognition of increased operational costs and unique regional needs.
- 165. Improve funding and resources for new curriculum initiatives.
- 166. Consider factors that affect equity of opportunity for students in school districts that serve rural and remote communities, especially as it relates to transportation, operations, recruitment, and retention.

Recruitment and Retention

- 167. Explore measures to recruit and retain teachers, including by providing incentives, especially for teachers in rural and remote communities.

Students with Support Needs

- 168. Increase funding and supports for students with unique learning and development needs with earmarked funding for early identification and intervention.

- 169. Conduct an audit of the education of K-12 students with support needs to find ways to better support students and optimize resources.
- 170. Make pre-kindergarten wellness checks all-encompassing, including by integrating checklists to inform parents of further screening needs.
- 171. Utilize education assistants to help address the challenges of providing before and after school care.

Vulnerable Students

- 172. Collect data on current school food programs to inform a coordinated strategy, share best practices, and identify the greatest need.
- 173. Support the expansion of school meal programs to provide healthy, local, and culturally sensitive food to students.
- 174. Increase funding for mental health supports in K-12 schools.
- 175. Provide additional funding to support the significant educational needs of refugee and newcomer students.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND JUSTICE

Access to Justice and Legal Aid

- 176. Increase ongoing annual funding for legal aid services and access to justice, including for family law and child protection matters, and examine the income thresholds for eligibility.
- 177. Provide stable and adequate funding and supports to child and youth advocacy centres across the province.

Correctional Services

- 178. Ensure proper resourcing and supports to deal with prolific offenders challenges.

Cannabis and Tobacco

- 179. Fund additional resources and enforcement to address the distribution of contraband tobacco and illicit cannabis.

Court Services

- 180. Increase funding to improve access to the courts and justice system, including by identifying opportunities to improve efficiencies; to enhance the skills and knowledge

of court staff in all communities to support a modernized court administration system; and to complete the digital transformation and modernization of the court system.

181. Establish robust data collection and disclosure infrastructure within the justice system, including Court Services, BC Corrections, and administrative tribunals.

Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Assault

182. Provide funding and support, including mental health supports, for survivors of brain injury resulting from intimate partner violence.
183. Conduct a system-wide audit of how the province is dealing with gender-based violence and sexual assault to ensure supports are appropriate and adequate.
184. Create a provincial sexual assault policy, working with data and insights obtained from police and hospitals, to ensure appropriate response in all sexual assault cases across BC.
185. Develop and fund intersectional and culturally sensitive gender-based violence awareness and prevention programs in K-12 schools.
186. Develop and fund intersectional and culturally-sensitive gender-based violence awareness and prevention programs, as well as response and support services in post-secondary institutions.
187. Partner with community organizations to develop and fund intersectional and culturally sensitive gender-based violence awareness and prevention programs.
188. Provide funding for transition housing and expand the Homelessness Prevention Program to all eligible transitional housing programs across the province to prevent homelessness and increase safety for women and children leaving violence, with emphasis on paying attention to child care needs.

Ground Disturbance

189. Create a cross-ministerial task force to examine the beneficial impacts of prescribing a ground disturbance program for all underground disturbance in British Columbia.

Natural Disasters and Emergency Preparedness

190. Invest in and upgrade Emergency Management BC, including necessary technical upgrades.
191. Provide more resources for responding to natural disasters and emergencies, and create a modern strategy that includes public education, investments in climate change resiliency, and proactive response.
192. Commit new funding for flood and wildfire risk mapping, improving land-use planning and community resilience, and building back better following a disaster
193. Include animals, particularly livestock, in emergency planning and response.

Emergency Response and Communications

194. Provide funding for the leasing of a dedicated rescue helicopter to Air Rescue One Heli Winch Society and funding for staffing and capacity of the Air Rescue One Heli Winch Society for year-round rescue services.
195. Implement a provincial wireless call-answer levy, similar to those that exist in other provinces, to ensure equitable funding for 911 dispatch services in the province and create a taskforce inclusive of all emergency services providers to determine how to best integrate mental health supports into emergency response through a fourth option for 911.

Restorative Justice

196. Recognize restorative justice as an essential service by providing adequate and stable funding, and by increasing system-wide awareness.

Sex Work

197. Provide increased funding for frontline organizations across BC that deliver peer-led and person-centered programming for sex workers.
198. Provide funding toward the provincial bad date and aggressor reporting system, which is being developed.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Children and Youth in Care

199. Improve and increase supports for children and youth in care, including by facilitating the jurisdictional transition

of child welfare to Indigenous communities, and improving supports to kinship caregivers.

Children and Youth with Support Needs

- 200. Ensure any changes to services for children and youth with support needs are fully funded to provide appropriate resources and eliminate waitlists.
- 201. Address recruitment challenges for occupations that support early intervention, such as speech language pathologists and occupational therapists, by increasing seats in these areas at post-secondary institutions.

Community Social Services, Not for Profit Sector, and Social Policy

- 202. Provide increased, predictable, multi-year funding to the community social services sector, including administrative funding and supports to address compensation challenges.
- 203. Expand social service delivery and the continuum of care to improve response to mental health, addictions, and other complex social issues.
- 204. Provide funding for community-based seniors' centres and senior serving organizations.

Income and Disability Assistance

- 205. Review the eligibility and administration of income and disability assistance, including earning exemptions policies and thresholds, with a view to reducing barriers to work, providing flexibility, and ensuring that the most vulnerable have access to all necessary supports and medical needs.

TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT

Active Transportation

- 206. Increase investments in active transportation and safe active transportation infrastructure in partnership with municipal governments and community-based organizations, with particular attention to the distinct needs of rural, remote, and Indigenous communities.
- 207. Enhance oversight of active transportation infrastructure with a view to improving safety for British Columbians.

Transportation Infrastructure

- 208. Take a whole-of-system look at BC transportation to build a sustainable and green transportation network that is reinforced to be climate resilient.
- 209. Ensure BC's infrastructure is flexible, safe, and includes appropriate redundancies to ensure that people and goods can remain connected even in times of emergency.

Aviation Industry

- 210. Maintain BC's sustainable aviation fuel leadership by creating a multi-agency task force that mirrors the complexity of this emerging market and that represents aviation, clean fuel, innovation, and investment expertise.
- 211. Support building aviation cargo capacity and reliability.

Public Transportation

- 212. Fund BC Bus North and expand service frequency on all four BC Bus North routes; couple this expanded service with enhanced safety features such as well-lit and safe bus-stops and a requirement that BC Bus North provide a free, safe ride to every woman and girl walking or hitchhiking on the Highway of Tears.
- 213. Increase investments in a province-wide public transit plan to ensure accessible, affordable public transportation options are available across the province, with a view to addressing gaps in regional services, and enhancing support for high traffic corridors like the Okanagan and North Shore.
- 214. Invest in decarbonizing BC's fleet, increasing accessible transportation options such as handyDART, and addressing the needs of small, rural, remote, and Indigenous communities.

Roads and Highways

- 215. Empower local area managers in rural BC with the financial resources they need to prioritize road maintenance.
- 216. Increase funding for wildlife connectivity through highway crossings and fencing to make the transportation system safer for wildlife and humans alike.



APPENDIX A: SURVEY RESULTS

QUESTION 1

The cost of living is rising nationally as a result of global challenges linked to Russia's attack on Ukraine and the continuing impacts of COVID-19. What further actions do you think the province should take to support people facing challenges from the rising cost of living? The Committee heard from 816 survey respondents, who provided over 1400 recommendations to address the rising cost of living.

Fiscal and Regulatory Policy

More than 400 survey responses highlighted the need to change fiscal and tax policy to address the rising costs of living. Within this theme, the call for a reduction or elimination of taxes on gasoline was the most prominent suggestion with respondents emphasizing the impact of the additional cost incurred by these taxes. Many respondents suggested reducing or stabilizing prices on essential consumer goods through regulation and price controls. Respondents also supported changes to the taxation system through increased taxation on corporations and wealthy individuals and reduced taxes for those with lower incomes. Finally, a few respondents suggested an increase in the minimum wage to support the rising cost of living.

Housing

Housing was the second most common theme, appearing in 285 responses. Survey respondents spoke to the need for an increase in the supply and availability of affordable housing options. Suggested actions to achieve this ranged from increasing the affordable housing stock to the subsidization of housing. Some respondents also recommended changes to rental regulations to improve rental housing costs, advocating for the implementation of rental price caps and controls, rental rebates, and reinstating a temporary rental payment suspension. Survey participants spoke to the development and rezoning processes to allow for more housing development and suggested various ownership restrictions to reduce the commodification of housing.

Child Care and Social Services

Recommendations related to social services were present in nearly 200 responses. With rising costs, calls to increase the income and disability assistance rates for those on fixed incomes were prominent. Respondents also endorsed various forms of income supplements to address living expenses, most commonly the implementation of a universal basic income. Improving the cost of childcare was another common request, with many references to increasing the availability of the \$10-a-day childcare program.

Economic Development

Economic development, particularly agriculture and food security, was the next most common theme, appearing in over 100 responses. In the face of potential supply shortages and supply chain disruptions, respondents highlighted the importance of local agriculture and food security to combat rising food costs. Respondents proposed additional support for local farmers and BC's agriculture industry to reduce reliance on imports and lower costs. Respondents also advocated for increased awareness and opportunities for small scale urban farming and personal or community gardening to strengthen food security. Many individuals also recommended supporting local businesses and economies to help address rising costs.

Environment

Suggestions related to the environment appeared in nearly as many responses as economic development with respondents focused on two related areas. They advocated for the redirecting of subsidies for fossil fuel industries to government services to

address the rising cost of living. Similarly, respondents recommended an accelerated transition from fossil fuels toward renewable energies and economies. Individuals also called for the protection of old growth forests from logging.

Transportation

Just under 100 suggestions were made related to transportation. Transportation orientated respondents identified two main actions to improve public transit-the elimination or reduction of fees and the expansion of transit routes, hours, and modes. Some individuals suggested rebates to promote active transportation alongside recommended improvements to active transportation infrastructure.

QUESTION 2

What actions do you think the province should take to improve your and your family's quality of life? The Committee heard from 828 respondents, who provided over 1,748 recommendations to improve the quality of life of British Columbians.

Health

More than 400 recommendations were made to improve the health care system. Respondents spoke to the issue of health care access, with almost two thirds of all health care related survey responses citing calls to increase health care spending to recruit and retain more medical professionals to reduce wait times. Many of those calls referred to the need for more family doctors and walk-in clinic availability.

Respondents also spoke of the need to improve mental health services along with improved services and treatment for those struggling with addiction. Many referenced the ongoing opioid crisis and called for more treatment facilities and rehabilitation services.

Environment

Responses related to the environment were nearly as common as healthcare with over 400 recommendations. Many respondents suggested investment to support and increase environmental protection. Over 100 respondents recommended stopping all old growth logging in the province and protecting ancient forest areas. Respondents also suggested replacing old growth logging practices with sustainable logging practices and/or retraining workers.

Within this theme, the second most popular response was for stronger action against climate change, with many recommendations to stop support for the fossil fuel industry, end oil and gas subsidies, and invest in clean and renewable energy.

Fiscal and Regulatory Policy

Fiscal and regulatory policy was the third most cited topic to improve British Columbians' quality of life, appearing in nearly 200 responses. Half of the responses citing this topic were related to budgetary and taxation policy with broad support for lowering the tax burden on lower income individuals, while increasing taxes on corporations and the wealthy. A small portion of respondents made calls to reduce government spending and improve the efficiency of public spending.

Many respondents referred to the increasing cost of living and inflation rate, with many identifying food and gas prices as significant burdens and recommended eliminating carbon and fuel taxes to decrease prices. Other suggestions included increasing wages and creating high paying jobs. A small group of respondents advocated for a universal basic income.

Housing

Housing was the fourth most common area of focus with over 150 recommendations. One third of housing related responses called for action to address the lack of affordable housing. Suggestions to achieve this included rent controls, freezes, or caps. Many respondents recommended increased development and relaxing or changing zoning bylaws to accelerate development of affordable housing units. A similar number of responses suggested increasing ownership restrictions by limiting the number of homes an individual or family is allowed to own and banning both foreign and corporate real estate ownership of homes.

Support for rental housing was the second most common topic amongst housing related responses with individuals highlighting rapidly rising and unaffordable rental prices and recommending price controls.

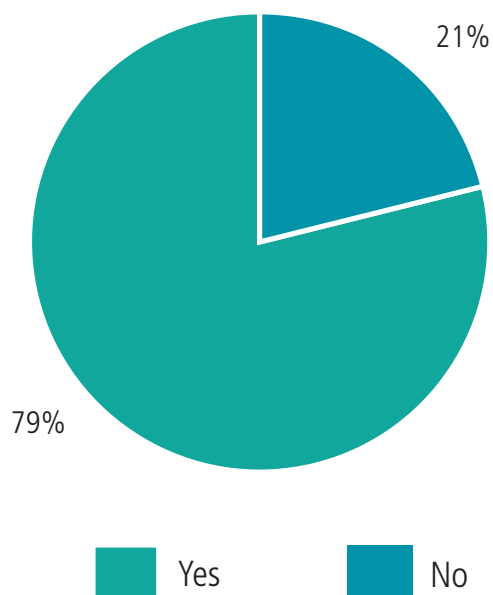
Child Care and Social Services

Another common theme featured in approximately 100 responses was social services, with many respondents expressing support for the \$10-a-day child care program and calling for accelerating and expanding the program to increase access across the province and decrease waitlists. A significant number of responses focused on autism funding, with discontent for the new hub model of service being implemented for children with support needs. Respondents expressed overwhelming support for individualized funding for children with autism compared to the new support system.

Many respondents discussed the need to increase persons with disability funding to better match the current cost and standard of living. Similar calls were made by a smaller portion of respondents to increase financial support for seniors. Investments were suggested to supplement those on fixed incomes and to invest in social and community services to support seniors to stay in their homes and communities.

QUESTION 3

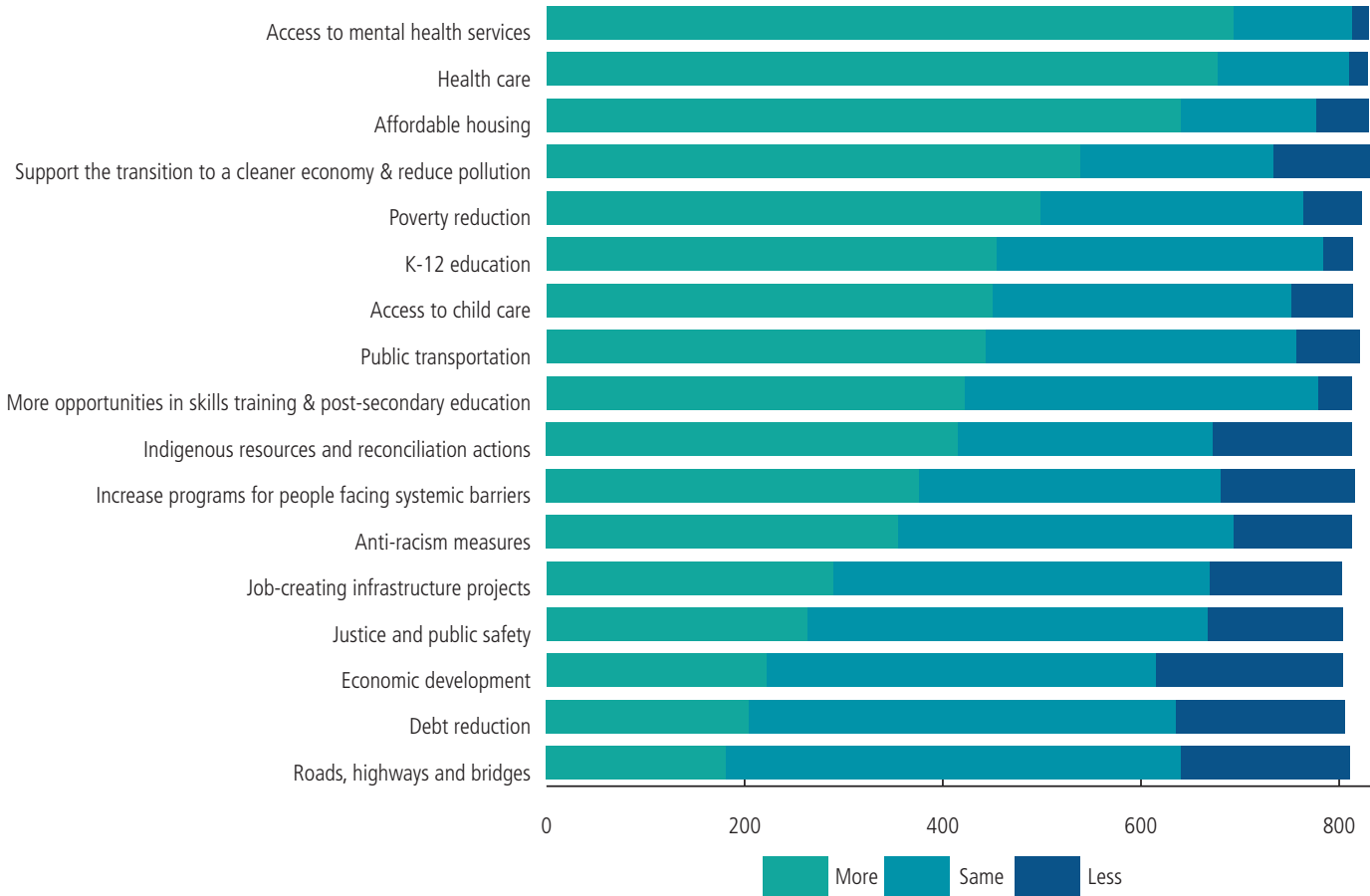
Would you be interested in seeing more funding for actions that address climate change and help proactively prevent climate disasters? (846 responses)



QUESTION 4

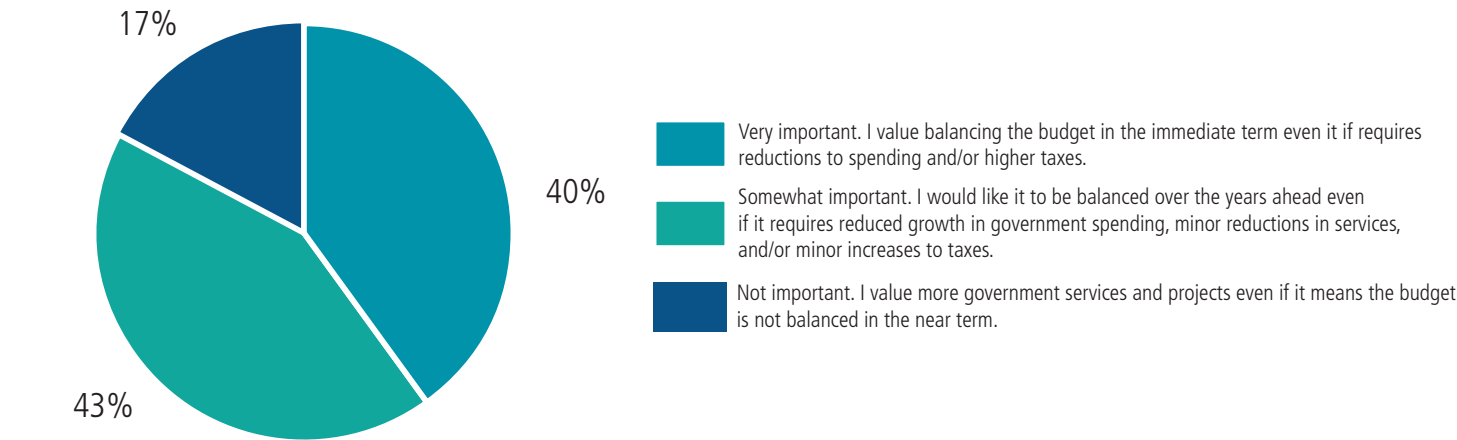
Which areas do you think should receive more, the same or less funding? (833 responses)

282 respondents wrote in other categories for this question. They advocated for more environmental protection specifically for old growth forests, with a smaller number requesting more climate change mitigation. Other respondents called for more support for neurodivergent individuals, those with disabilities, and seniors. Less frequent responses included improvements to healthcare and called for a halt to the Royal BC Museum renovation.



QUESTION 5

How important is it to you to have a balanced budget? (848 responses)



APPENDIX B: PRESENTATIONS

- Abbott Diabetes Care - Freestyle Libre, Glenda Phillips (14-Jun-22, Virtual)
- Aboriginal Housing Management Association, Nizar Laarif (13-Jun-22, Virtual)
- AccessBC Campaign for free prescription contraception, Jessica Jimmo (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)
- Action for Reform of Residential Care (ARRC) BC, Penny MacCourt (13-Jun-22, Virtual)
- Advanced Biofuels Canada, Ian Thomson (15-Jun-22, Vancouver)
- Air Rescue One Heli Winch Society, Jeremy Vandekerkhove (22-Jun-22, Vernon)
- Alliance of BC Students, Aryanna Chartrand (15-Jun-22, Vancouver)
- Alma Mater Society, Erin Co (15-Jun-22, Virtual)
- Ambulance Paramedics of BC, Dave Deines (13-Jun-22, Virtual)
- Appraisal Institute of Canada, B.C. Association, Edwina Nearhood (13-Jun-22, Virtual)
- Archway Community Services, Rod Santiago (14-Jun-22, Virtual)
- Archway Society for Domestic Peace, Micki Materi (22-Jun-22, Vernon)
- Artist in Residence Studio Program (AIRS), Maggie Milne Martens (15-Jun-22, Vancouver)
- Association for Mineral Exploration, Kendra Johnston (14-Jun-22, Virtual)
- Association of BC Public Library Directors, Leigh Anne Palmer (7-Jun-22, Virtual)
- AutismBC, Julia Boyle (13-Jun-22, Virtual)
- Autistics United Canada - BC Chapter, Vivian Ly (13-Jun-22, Virtual)
- B.C. Anesthesiologists' Society, Roland Orfaly (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)
- B.C. Federation of Students, Tashia Kootenayoo (15-Jun-22, Vancouver)
- Ballet Victoria, Paul Destrooper (6-Jun-22, Victoria)
- BC Agriculture Council, Danielle Synotte (22-Jun-22, Vernon)
- BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation, Pat Tonn (14-Jun-22, Virtual)
- BC Alliance for Arts and Culture, Rainbow Robert (7-Jun-22, Virtual)
- BC Alliance for Healthy Living, Rita Koutsodimos (13-Jun-22, Virtual)
- BC Assembly of First Nations, Terry Teegee (20-Jun-22, Virtual)
- BC Association for Child Development and Intervention, Jason Gordon (22-Jun-22, Vernon)
- BC Autism Advocacy, Elena Lawson (13-Jun-22, Virtual)
- BC Bereavement Helpline, Jessica Lowe (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)
- BC Bioenergy Network, Scott Stanners (14-Jun-22, Virtual)
- BC Building Trades, Brynn Bourke (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)
- BC Care Providers Association, Mike Klassen (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)
- BC Cattlemen's Association, Kevin Boon (22-Jun-22, Vernon)
- BC Centre for Women in the Trades, Karen Dearlove (15-Jun-22, Vancouver)
- BC CEO Network, Karyn Santiago (8-Jun-22, Virtual)
- BC Chapter of the Coalition for Healthy School Food, Samantha Gambling (6-Jun-22, Victoria)
- BC Chiropractic Association, Dr. Jabeen Jussa (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)
- BC Complex Kids Society, Brenda Lenahan (8-Jun-22, Virtual)
- BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils, Paula Fowler (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)
- BC Cycling Coalition, Michael Koski (8-Jun-22, Virtual)
- BC Dairy Association, Jeremy Dunn (15-Jun-22, Vancouver)
- BC Dental Association, Dr. Anita Gartner (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)
- BC Employment Standards Coalition, Pamela Charron (14-Jun-22, Virtual)
- BC Federation of Labour, Laird Cronk (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)
- BC Freshwater Legacy Initiative, Tim Morris (8-Jun-22, Virtual)
- BC Fruit Growers' Association, Glen Lucas (22-Jun-22, Vernon)
- BC Health Coalition, Ayendri Riddell (13-Jun-22, Virtual)
- BC Hospice Palliative Care Association, Pablita Thomas (13-Jun-22, Virtual)
- BC Libraries Cooperative, Kevin Millsip (7-Jun-22, Virtual)
- BC Library Trustee Association, Jerrilyn Kirk (7-Jun-22, Virtual)
- BC Lung Foundation, Chris Lam (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)
- BC Museums Association, Ryan Hunt (6-Jun-22, Victoria)
- BC Network of Child and Youth Advocacy Centres, Brooke McLardy (22-Jun-22, Vernon)
- BC Non-Profit Housing Association, Jill Atkey (13-Jun-22, Virtual)
- BC People First Society, Margaux Wosk (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)
- BC Poverty Reduction Coalition, Rowan Burdge (8-Jun-22, Virtual)
- BC Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association, Darren Danyluk (15-Jun-22, Vancouver)
- BC Psychological Association, Dr. Erika Penner (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)
- BC Real Estate Association, Trevor Hargreaves (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)
- BC Road Builders & Heavy Construction Association, Kelly Scott (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)
- BC Rural Health Network, Paul Adams (14-Jun-22, Virtual)
- BC Schizophrenia Society, Faydra Aldridge (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)
- BC School Trustees Association, Carolyn Broady (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)
- BC Seafood Alliance, Christina Burrige (13-Jun-22, Virtual)
- BC Snowmobile Federation, Donegal Wilson (14-Jun-22, Virtual)

BC Society of Transition Houses, Amy FitzGerald (15-Jun-22, Vancouver)

BC Stone Sand and Gravel Association, Derek Holmes (14-Jun-22, Virtual)

BC Sustainable Energy Association, Tom Hackney (6-Jun-22, Victoria)

BC Teachers' Federation, Teri Mooring (15-Jun-22, Vancouver)

BC Tech, Jill Tipping (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)

BC Ultimate Society, Brian Gisel (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)

BC Wildlife Federation, Chuck Zuckerman (8-Jun-22, Virtual)

BC Wildlife Federation, Region 5 - Cariboo-Chilcotin, Michael Fowler (21-Jun-22, Williams Lake)

BCBlind Sports and Recreation Association, Jane Blaine (7-Jun-22, Virtual)

BCEdAccess Society, Tracy Humphreys (7-Jun-22, Virtual)

BCIT Student Association, Stewart McGillivray (20-Jun-22, Virtual)

Better Transit Alliance of Greater Victoria, Eric Doherty (8-Jun-22, Virtual)

Big Brothers Big Sisters, Corina Carroll (8-Jun-22, Virtual)

Board of Education, School District 59, Peace River South, Chad Anderson (14-Jun-22, Virtual)

Board of Education, School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast), Maria Hampvent (7-Jun-22, Virtual)

Board Voice Society of BC, Jody Paterson (8-Jun-22, Virtual)

Brain Injury Alliance, Carol Paetkau (14-Jun-22, Virtual)

Breakfast Club of Canada, Ryan Baker (7-Jun-22, Virtual)

British Columbia Association for Behaviour Analysis, Dr. Miriam Elfert (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)

British Columbia Coalition for Forestry Reform, Taryn Skalbania (22-Jun-22, Vernon)

British Columbia Hotel Association, Ingrid Jarrett (15-Jun-22, Vancouver)

British Columbia Library Association, Rina Hadziev (7-Jun-22, Virtual)

Building Owners and Manager's Association of BC (BOMA BC), Damian Stathonikos (15-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Burnaby Board of Trade, Paul Holden (15-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Burnaby Neighbourhood House Society, Antonia Beck (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Camosun College ELC, second year class, Enid Elliot (6-Jun-22, Victoria)

Camosun College Faculty Association, Lynelle Yutani (7-Jun-22, Virtual)

Campbell, Donna, Donna Campbell (21-Jun-22, Williams Lake)

Canadian Addiction Treatment Centres, Matthew Grifa (13-Jun-22, Virtual)

Canadian Association for Disability and Oral Health, Joan Rush (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Canadian Association of Medical Radiation Technologists, BC Division, Sarah Erdelyi (6-Jun-22, Victoria)

Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists BC Chapter, Tanya Fawkes (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, Geoffrey Morrison (6-Jun-22, Victoria)

Canadian Association of Physician Assistants, Marina Banister (13-Jun-22, Virtual)

Canadian Bar Association BC Branch, Aleem Bharmal (8-Jun-22, Virtual)

Canadian Cancer Society, Kelly Wilson Cull (13-Jun-22, Virtual)

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, BC Office, Alexander Hemingway (14-Jun-22, Virtual)

Canadian Geothermal Energy Association, Alison Thompson (21-Jun-22, Terrace)

Canadian Media Producers Association, BC Branch, Tracey Friesen (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division, Jonathan Morris (13-Jun-22, Virtual)

Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society - BC, Brynna Kagawa-Visentin (8-Jun-22, Virtual)

Canuck Place Children's Hospice Society, Denise Praill (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Canucks Autism Network, Britt Andersen (15-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable, Linda Geggie (6-Jun-22, Victoria)

Cariboo Cattlemen's Association, Jordan Grier (21-Jun-22, Virtual)

Cariboo Mining Association, Rick Wittnet (21-Jun-22, Williams Lake)

Central Okanagan Public Schools, Julia Fraser (22-Jun-22, Vernon)

Child Advocacy Centre of Kelowna, Ginny Becker (22-Jun-22, Vernon)

City of Prince George, Lyn Hall (20-Jun-22, Virtual)

City of Vancouver, Grace Cheng (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC, Sharon Gregson (14-Jun-22, Virtual)

College of the Rockies Faculty Association, Leslie Molnar (20-Jun-22, Virtual)

Community Connections Society of SouthEast BC, Gary Eisele (20-Jun-22, Virtual)

Community Legal Assistance Society, Jacqui Mendes (14-Jun-22, Virtual)

Comox Valley District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC), Shannon Aldinger (20-Jun-22, Virtual)

Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC (CUFA BC), Dr. Daniel Laitsch (7-Jun-22, Virtual)

Co-operative Housing Federation of BC, Thom Armstrong (13-Jun-22, Virtual)

Council of Canadian Innovators, Tessa Seager (6-Jun-22, Victoria)

Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC, Leslie Gaudette (15-Jun-22, Virtual)

Cowichan Watershed Board, Jill Thompson (6-Jun-22, Victoria)

Crisis Centre of BC, Stacy Ashton (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Cumberland Community Forest Society, Meaghan Cursons (20-Jun-22, Virtual)

CUPE 728, Tammy Murphy (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)

CUPE B.C., Trevor Davies (15-Jun-22, Vancouver)

CUPE Fraser Valley District Council, Tony Rebelo (14-Jun-22, Virtual)

CUPE Kootenay District Council, Michelle Bennett (20-Jun-22, Virtual)

CUPE Local 1004, Dennis Donnelly (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)

CUPE Metropolitan Vancouver District Council, Sarah Bjorknas (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)

CUPE Okanagan Mainline District Council, Adam Jensen (14-Jun-22, Virtual)

CUPE Vancouver Island District Council, Greg Melnechuk (6-Jun-22, Victoria)

Davidowicz, Nathan, Nathan Davidowicz (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Deaf & Hard of Hearing Education - Council of Service Providers, Dr. Joe McLaughlin (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)

DigiBC, Loc Dao (6-Jun-22, Victoria)

Digital Supercluster, Sue Paish (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Disability Alliance BC, Helaine Boyd (8-Jun-22, Virtual)

Disability Without Poverty, Kate Fish (8-Jun-22, Virtual)

Down Syndrome Resource Foundation, Wayne Leslie (8-Jun-22, Virtual)

Downtown Victoria Business Association, Jeff Bray (6-Jun-22, Victoria)

D-Wave Systems Inc., Allison Schwartz (14-Jun-22, Virtual)

Dyslexia BC, Cathy McMillan (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)

E-Comm 9-1-1, Jasmine Bradley (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Ecotrust Canada, Dylan Heerema (20-Jun-22, Virtual)

Elders Council for Parks in BC, Colin Campbell (8-Jun-22, Virtual)

Eliza's Village, Floyd Wickie (21-Jun-22, Terrace)

Emergency Communications Professionals of BC, Carrie James (6-Jun-22, Victoria)

Evans, Dennis, Dennis Evans (20-Jun-22, Virtual)

Fairness for Children Raised by Relatives, Shari Monsma (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Family Councils of BC, Kim Slater (13-Jun-22, Virtual)

Family Services of Greater Vancouver, Maria Howard (15-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Farmland Advantage, David Zehnder (13-Jun-22, Virtual)

Federation of Mountain Clubs of British Columbia, Monika Bittel (8-Jun-22, Virtual)

Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC, Brent Calvert (7-Jun-22, Virtual)

FortisBC, Doug Slater (15-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Fresh Roots, Alexa Pitoulis (7-Jun-22, Virtual)

Friends of Rails to Trails Vancouver Island, Alastair Craighead (8-Jun-22, Virtual)

Futurpreneur, Andrea Welling (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)

GCT Global Container Terminals, Marko Dekovic (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Genome BC, Quinn Newcomb (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Geoscience BC Society, Gavin Dirom (14-Jun-22, Virtual)

Graduate Student Societies of British Columbia, Violeta Fabiani (15-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Greater Vancouver Board of Trade, Bridgitte Anderson (13-Jun-22, Virtual)

Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce, Robin Cardew (13-Jun-22, Virtual)

Greater Victoria Alliance for Literacy, Janine Hannis (6-Jun-22, Victoria)

Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce, Bruce Williams (13-Jun-22, Virtual)

Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness, Janine Theobald (6-Jun-22, Victoria)

Habitat For Humanity Mid-Vancouver Island, Jeff Krafta (13-Jun-22, Virtual)

Health Sciences Association of BC, Kane Tse (13-Jun-22, Virtual)

Heart & Stroke Foundation, Jeff Sommers (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Hollyburn Community Services Society, Joy Hayden (8-Jun-22, Virtual)

Hospice Society of the Columbia Valley, Michele Neider (13-Jun-22, Virtual)

Hospital Employees' Union, Meena Brisard (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Hydra Energy Canada Corp, Laura Guzman (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Inclusion BC, Karla Verschoor (8-Jun-22, Virtual)

Insurance Bureau of Canada, Aaron Sutherland (6-Jun-22, Victoria)

Invasive Species Council of BC, Gail Wallin (21-Jun-22, Williams Lake)

Irving, Bill, Bill Irving (6-Jun-22, Victoria)

Ishtar Women's Resource Society, Meredith Klemmensen (15-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Islands Wellness Society, Bonnie Olson (14-Jun-22, Virtual)

Jelly Digital Marketing, Darian Kovacs (20-Jun-22, Virtual)

Juan de Fuca Performance Arts Centre Society, David Stocks (7-Jun-22, Virtual)

Kalum Community School Society, Karla Lindstrom (21-Jun-22, Terrace)

Kamloops Symphony Society, Daniel Mills (7-Jun-22, Virtual)

Kelowna Chamber of Commerce, Dan Rogers (22-Jun-22, Vernon)

KidSport BC, Katelynn Ramage (7-Jun-22, Virtual)

Kwantlen Student Association (KSA), Diamond Obara (7-Jun-22, Virtual)

Langley Teachers' Association, Ellen Bornowsky (7-Jun-22, Virtual)

Law Society of British Columbia, Lisa Hamilton, QC (8-Jun-22, Virtual)

Lift Community Services of qathet Society, Jessica Colasanto (14-Jun-22, Virtual)

Living in Community, Halena Seiferling (14-Jun-22, Virtual)

Living Lakes Canada, Kat Hartwig (8-Jun-22, Virtual)

Lockrey, Cynthia, Cynthia Lockrey (7-Jun-22, Virtual)

LUSH Valley Food Action Society and Comox Valley Food Policy Council, Maurita Prato (20-Jun-22, Virtual)

Mainland Speech Language Pathology Inc., Chelsey Chichak (8-Jun-22, Virtual)

MakeWay, Shannon McGinty (20-Jun-22, Virtual)

Manufacturing Safety Alliance of BC, Lisa McGuire (14-Jun-22, Virtual)

Métis Nation BC, Colette Trudeau (15-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Metro Vancouver, Dean Rear (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Midwives Association of British Columbia, Bernice Budz (13-Jun-22, Virtual)

Mining Association of BC, Michael Goehring (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Motion, Randy Baerg (6-Jun-22, Victoria)

Motion Picture Production Industry Association, Gemma Martini (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)

National Coalition Against Contraband Tobacco, Rick Barnum (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)

National Elevator and Escalator Association, Christian von Donat (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)

National Police Federation, Brian Sauvé (14-Jun-22, Virtual)

Nechako Watershed Roundtable, Kim Menounos (20-Jun-22, Virtual)

Neighbourhood Pharmacy Association of Canada, Sheli Dattani (20-Jun-22, Virtual)

New Car Dealers of BC, Blair Qualey (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)

North Island College Faculty Association, Erin McConomy (20-Jun-22, Virtual)

North Island-Coast Development Initiative Trust, Island Coastal Economic Trust, Brodie Guy (20-Jun-22, Virtual)

North Shore Community Services, Murray Mollard (14-Jun-22, Virtual)

Northern Confluence Initiative, Nikki Skuce (8-Jun-22, Virtual)

Northern First Nations Alliance Health & Wellness Committee, Manon Joice (21-Jun-22, Terrace)

Nourish Cowichan Society, Fatima Da Silva (6-Jun-22, Victoria)

Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society, Ian Graham (22-Jun-22, Vernon)

Outdoor Recreation Council of BC, Louise Pedersen (22-Jun-22, Vernon)

Pacific Legal Education and Outreach Society, Martha Rans (15-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Parent Support Services Society of BC, Cassandra Strain (14-Jun-22, Virtual)

Peace River North Teachers' Association, Michele Wiebe (14-Jun-22, Virtual)

Peace River South Teachers' Association, Elaine Fitzpatrick (14-Jun-22, Virtual)

Performing Arts & Live Events Labour Coalition of BC, Dusty Kelly (7-Jun-22, Virtual)

Phoenix Society, Keir Macdonald (14-Jun-22, Virtual)

Physiotherapy Association of BC, Christine Bradstock (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Prince Rupert Port Authority, Ken Veldman (21-Jun-22, Terrace)

Professional Employees Association, Melissa Moroz (6-Jun-22, Victoria)

Prosthetics and Orthotists Association of BC (POABC), Yvonne Jeffreys (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Public Health Association of BC, Gord Miller (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)

QMUNITY, Kole Lawrence (15-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Quesnel Cattlemen's Association, Sage Gordon (21-Jun-22, Williams Lake)

Rainbow Refugee, Dr. Sharalyn Jordan (15-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver, Harriet Permut (13-Jun-22, Virtual)

Regional District of East Kootenay, Rob Gay (20-Jun-22, Virtual)

Research Universities' Council of BC, Max Blouw (6-Jun-22, Victoria)

Retail Council of Canada, Avery Bruenjes (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Royal Roads University, Dr. Philip Steenkamp (7-Jun-22, Virtual)

RUNVAN, Eric Chene (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)

School District 41, Burnaby, Jen Mezei (7-Jun-22, Virtual)

School District 60, Peace River North, Helen Gilbert (14-Jun-22, Virtual)

School District 71, Comox Valley, Tonia Frawley (20-Jun-22, Virtual)

School District No. 38, Richmond, Sandra Nixon (15-Jun-22, Vancouver)

School District No. 43 (Coquitlam), Michael Thomas (7-Jun-22, Virtual)

School District No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay), Chris Johns (20-Jun-22, Virtual)

School District No.57 (Prince George), Tim Bennett (20-Jun-22, Virtual)

Science World, Tracy Redies (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)

SelfDesign Learning Foundation, Amber Papou (14-Jun-22, Virtual)

Seniors Services Society of BC, Alison Silgado (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Shuswap Food Action Society, Serena Caner (22-Jun-22, Vernon)

Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS), Eshana Baran (7-Jun-22, Virtual)

Smith, Forrest, Forrest Smith (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)

SONS - Save Our Northern Seniors, Margaret Little (20-Jun-22, Virtual)

South Cariboo Chamber of Commerce, Donna Barnett (21-Jun-22, Williams Lake)

Speech and Hearing BC, Becca Yu (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Sport BC, Rob Newman (7-Jun-22, Virtual)

Sto:lo Service Agency - Qwi:qwelstom Wellness, Alisha Peters (8-Jun-22, Virtual)

Supporting Survivors of Abuse and Brain Injury through Research (SOAR), Paul van Donkelaar (22-Jun-22, Vernon)

Surfrider Foundation Canada, Lucas Harris (6-Jun-22, Victoria)

Surrey Board of Trade, Anita Huberman (13-Jun-22, Virtual)

Surrey Women's Centre, Shahnaz Rahman (8-Jun-22, Virtual)

The Association of Book Publishers of BC, Matea Kulic (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)

The Centre for Child Development, Gerard Bremault (15-Jun-22, Vancouver)

The Exploration Place Museum + Science Centre, Tracy Calogheros (20-Jun-22, Virtual)

The Federation of Community Social Services of BC, Rick FitzZaland (6-Jun-22, Victoria)

The Prince George Sexual Assault Centre, Kendra Kurisu (8-Jun-22, Virtual)

The Realistic Success Recovery Society, Susan Sanderson (15-Jun-22, Vancouver)

The Treehouse Child & Youth Advocacy Centre, Leah Zille (15-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Thompson Rivers University, Brett Fairbairn (7-Jun-22, Virtual)

Thompson Rivers University Students' Union, Leif Douglass (14-Jun-22, Virtual)

Tourism Industry Association of BC, Walt Judas (16-Jun-22, Vancouver)

Trails Society of British Columbia, Ciel Sander (8-Jun-22, Virtual)

TRIUMF, Dr. Nigel Smith (14-Jun-22, Virtual)

UBC Medicine Political Advocacy Committee, Sandra Smiley (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)

UBC Okanagan, Lesley Cormack (22-Jun-22, Vernon)
 United Fishermen & Allied Workers' Union, Emily Orr (13-Jun-22, Virtual)
 United Way British Columbia, Kristi Rintoul (22-Jun-22, Vernon)
 University of Victoria, Kevin Hall (7-Jun-22, Virtual)
 UVic Students' Society, Izzy Adachi (7-Jun-22, Virtual)
 Vancouver Airport Authority (YVR), Trevor Boudreau (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)
 Vancouver Foundation, Kevin McCort (8-Jun-22, Virtual)
 Vancouver Island Federation of Hospices, Gretchen Hartley (13-Jun-22, Virtual)
 Vancouver Island Region Restorative Justice Association, Richard Tarnoff (8-Jun-22, Virtual)
 Vancouver Island University Faculty Association, Gara Priesse (7-Jun-22, Virtual)
 Vancouver Island University Students Union, Sarah Segal (20-Jun-22, Virtual)
 VantageOne Credit Union, Glenn Benischek (22-Jun-22, Vernon)
 VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation, Angela Chapman (15-Jun-22, Vancouver)
 Victoria Community Health Co-operative, (Anna) Vanessa Hammond (6-Jun-22, Victoria)
 Victoria Disability Resource Centre, Gina Martin (6-Jun-22, Victoria)
 Victoria Hospice, Sarah Beihse (6-Jun-22, Victoria)
 Victoria Sexual Assault Centre, Elijah Zimmerman (8-Jun-22, Virtual)
 Victoria Women's Transition House Society, Maurine Karagianis (6-Jun-22, Victoria)
 Watershed Watch Salmon Society, Lina Azeez (8-Jun-22, Virtual)
 Watersheds BC, Zita Botelho (6-Jun-22, Victoria)
 WAVAW Rape Crisis Centre, Emily Oswald (8-Jun-22, Virtual)
 Wells-Barkerville Parent Advisory Council, Dawn Leroy (20-Jun-22, Virtual)
 West Coast Environmental Law, Michael Bissonnette (15-Jun-22, Vancouver)
 West Coast LEAF, Humera Jabir (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)
 Western Canada Theatre, Evan Klassen (14-Jun-22, Virtual)
 Wildsight, Randal Macnair (20-Jun-22, Virtual)
 Women in Film and Television Vancouver, Eli Morris (15-Jun-22, Virtual)
 Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative, Nadine Reynolds (8-Jun-22, Virtual)
 YMCAs of B.C., Heidi Worthington (15-Jun-22, Vancouver)
 Young & T1, Ramya Hosak (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)
 Youth Climate Corps, Ben Simoni (20-Jun-22, Virtual)
 YWCA Metro Vancouver, Erin Seeley (17-Jun-22, Vancouver)

APPENDIX C: WRITTEN AND VIDEO SUBMISSIONS

411 Seniors Centre Society
AbbVie Canada
Christine Abrams
AdvantageBC
Timothy Agg
Alzheimer Society of B.C.
Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1724
Wendy Amos
AMSSA
Ancient Forest Alliance
Ancient forest alliance
Judith Anderson
Rachel Anderson
Anti-Violence Project
Armstrong Fluid Technology
ARPA Canada
Arrowmaker Advisory & Accounting
Arthritis Society
Association of Fundraising Professionals
Greater Vancouver Chapter
Judith Atkin
Tunya Audain
Melinda Auerbach
B.C. Association of Community Health
Centres
B.C. General Employees' Union (BCGEU)
Backpack Buddies
tyler bacon
Laurie Barr
Joe Barrett
Basketball BC
Battered Women's Support Services
Patti Bauer
BC Association of Institutes and Universities
BC Colleges
BC Common Ground Alliance
BC Construction Association
BC Federation of Retired Union Members
BC Hockey
BC Humanist Association
BC Hydro Ratepayers Assn
BC Lodging and Campgrounds Association
BC Sport Cheer
BC Urban Mayors' Caucus
BC Watershed Security Coalition

BC Women's Health Foundation
BCTA
Lindzey Beal
Rachel Beckley
Bentall Green Oak
Barbara Berger
BGC Canada
Michael Binnie
Bruce Blondin
Andrea Bocskei
Bokashi Living
Andrea Bollen
Lois Bouchard
Allehea Bowen
Jane Bowers
Victor Brice
Liam Briggs
British Columbia Amateur Athletics
Association (BC Athletics)
British Columbia Co-operative Association
British Columbia Notaries Association
British Columbia Society for the Prevention
of Cruelty to Animals
Adrienne Brown
Alex Brown
Elizabeth Bruch
Roger Bryenton
Lisa Bryson
Business Council of British Columbia
Caledonia Ramblers Hing Club
John Campbell
Pieter Camps
Canada West Wushu Association
Canadian Federation of Independent
Business
Canadian Federation of University Women,
BC Council
Canadian Freshwater Alliance
Canadian Life and Health Insurance
Association
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society - BC
Chapter
Canco
Capilano Students' Union
Patricia Carl

Hannah Carpendale
Cedars at Cobble Hill
CEFA
Center for Lung Health
Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation
(CERA)
Eric Chapman
CHBA BC
Child Abuse Prevention and Counselling
Society of Greater Victoria
Child Development Centre of Prince George
and District Association
Chilliwack Learning Society
Filip Christiaanse
Dar Churcher
City of Kelowna
Sara Clarke
Clayoquot Biosphere Trust
Greg Coler
College of the Rockies
Collingwood Neighbourhood House
Marian Collns
Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness
Comox Valley Head Injury Society
Conseil culturel et artistique francophone CB
Convenience Industry Council of Canada
Co-operators
Coquitlam Public Library Board
James Cotter
Covenant House Vancouver
CPABC
Crestview Strategies
David Cuddy
CUPE Local 1936
CUPE Northern Area District Council
Curl BC
Cycling British Columbia
Daneva Dansby
Guy Dauncey
Kristy Davies
Simon de Weerd
Jane Devonshire
Diabetes Canada
jimena Diaz Jirash
Christian Dietrich

Dignidad Migrante Society
 Kelly Dodds
 Douglas College Students Union
 Down Syndrome Society of British Columbia
 Bronwyn Dunbar
 David Eadie
 Allen Eaves
 Kieran Egan
 Electric Mobility Canada
 Elk River Alliance
 Emily Carr Students' Union
 Emily Carr University
 Emily Carr University Faculty Association
 Emily Carr University of Art and Design
 Enbridge
 Enterprise Rent-A-Car
 Equal Pay BC
 Juliann Evans
 Fernie Trails Alliance
 Finning International
 First Call Child and Youth Advocacy Society
 First Nations Fisheries Society dba as the
 First Nations Fisheries Council of British
 Columbia (FNFC)
 For Our Kids
 Fraser Valley Brain Injury Association
 Paulette French
 Susan Gage
 Ian Gartshore
 General Fusion
 Gilead Sciences Canada Inc.
 Global Automakers of Canada
 Lori Goldman
 Stefania Gorgopa
 Souie Gorup
 Hayden Gould
 Chelsea Graham
 Darlene Graham
 Kendra Graham
 Deborah Granegger-Thomas
 Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce
 Advinder Greywall
 Nicholas Gropp
 Guide Outfitters Association of British
 Columbia (GOABC)
 Mona Hagenbring
 Michael Ham
 Gordon Handford
 Brent Hannon
 Callum Haslam
 Sarah Haywood anderson
 Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association of
 Canada

Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning
 Institute of Canada (HRAI)
 Kelley Hevessy
 Ellen Hiebert
 Gary Hilton
 Horse Council BC
 Disa Hovatta
 Nan Hsieh
 Elin Hua
 HUB Cycling
 IBM Canada Ltd
 Imperial Tobacco Canada Limited
 Kelley Inden
 Innergex Renewable Energy Inc.
 Innovative Medicines Canada
 Institute for Public Education British
 Columbia
 Invasive Species Council of Metro Vancouver
 Roz Isaac
 Steven Jones
 Avery Joy
 JTI-Macdonald Corp.
 Ruth Kamnitzer
 Trisha Kaplan
 Jeanne Keith-Ferris
 Andrea Kennedy
 Kindred
 Georgina Kirkman
 Kitimat Valley Housing Society
 Susanna Klassen
 Bob Klimek
 Rob Knight
 Garrett Knights
 Kootenay Boundary Patient Advisory
 Committee & Community
 KORE
 Jamie Kozak
 Kwantlen Polytechnic University
 Peter Labanic
 Kri Laurya
 Shannon Leadbeater
 Sharman Learie
 Colleen Leary
 Peter Leckie
 Let's Ride: Make Public Transit BC Wide
 Sheila Lewis
 Paul Liggett
 Virgene Link-New
 Margaret Little
 Charlene Lo
 Ron Long
 Karima Lotayef
 Lower Columbia CHC Network Working
 Group

Braydon Mackenzie
 Tara Mahoney
 Naomi Marko
 Jane Marr
 Myrna Martin
 Alessandra Martinez
 Teri McGrath
 Phil McIntyre-Paul
 Lizbeth McJannett
 Ali McTavish
 ME|FM Society of BC
 Teresa Meding
 Stephanie Meinke
 Merck Canada Inc.
 Anne Miles
 Jennie Milligan
 Jon Mills
 Diana Monks
 Teagan Moore
 Moresports
 MOSAIC
 Mountaineer Campground and RV Park
 MoveUP
 MS Society of Canada
 John Mullane
 Jodi Murphy
 Louise Myrmo
 Nadsilnich Lake Community Association
 Nature United
 Lindsay Navarro
 Brenda Nelson
 Jennifer Newby
 Next Gen Men
 Nightingale Elementary PAC (Vancouver)
 North Okanagan Cycling Society
 North Peace Rural Roads
 North Wind Wellness Centre Society
 Marlise Nussbaumer
 Jericho O'Connell
 Okanagan Basin Water Board
 Rebecca Olson
 Options for Sexual Health
 Organizing for Change
 Parents 4 Climate
 Parkland
 Peachland Watershed
 Peachland Watershed Protection Alliance
 Diane Pearce
 Peloton
 Pemberton Wildlife Association
 Penticton & District Community Arts Council
 Sylvie Perreault
 Gwyneth Pickering
 PointsBet Canada

Rodney Polden
 POLIS Water Sustainability Project
 Prachi Popat
 Powell River Public Library
 Prisoners' Legal Services
 Pro-Claim Group
 ProMOTION Plus
 Provincial Park Status for Duncan Lake
 Ancient Cedars
 PWPA
 Della Ratcliffe
 Trevor Reeves
 Ross Reid
 Bridget Reidy
 Resource Municipalities Coalition
 Resource Works
 Restaurants Canada
 Richmond FarmWatch
 Rivershed Society of BC
 Roche Canada
 Rafael Rodrigues
 Rosebud Watershed Protection Group
 Jacqueline Rudd
 Rural Islands Economic Partnership Society
 Anna Russell
 School District No. 42 (Maple Ridge-Pitt
 Meadows)
 School Food Shift coalition
 Drew Schumacher
 Sea to Sky Invasive Species Council
 Shuswap Hut and Trail Alliance Society
 Shuswap Watershed Council (c/o Fraser Basin
 Council Society)
 Kirsten Silfvenius
 Simon Fraser University
 Jennifer Skelton
 Jan Slakov
 Theresa Smith
 Daniel Soares
 Society for the Protection and Care of
 Seniors, Trail, B.C.
 Brenda Sopow
 South Fraser Community Rail Society
 Sport BC - Kidsport
 Sport Medicine Council of British Columbia
 (SportMedBC)
 J.P. Squire
 Standing Water Nation
 Kristin Street
 Students' Union Okanagan of UBC
 Angela Sturko
 Robin Suchy
 Summit Trail Makers Society
 Rafe` Sunshine

Surrey Public Library Board
 Ann Sutherland
 Claude Tani
 Janice Taylor
 Kevin Taylor
 Teck Resources Limited
 Thompson Nicola Invasive Plant
 Management Committee
 Virginia Thompson
 Julie Thomson
 Rebecca Todd
 Sam Torrance
 Transition Kamloops
 Trelawny Consulting Group Ltd.
 University of British Columbia
 Joyce Cassandra Uy
 Dan van Stolk
 Vancouver Aboriginal Health Society
 Vancouver School Board
 Vantage Point
 Maria Varem
 VCCFA (Vancouver Community College
 Faculty Association)
 Jack Verburg
 Victoria Golden Rods and Reels
 Volleyball BC
 Lindsey Von Bloedau
 Brian Voth
 Shawn Vulliez
 Wagner Hills Farm Society
 Philip Walkinshaw
 Shoshanah Waxman
 Jane Welton
 West Vancouver Memorial Library
 Amy Wheeler
 Alexander White
 Wildcoast Ecological Society
 Peter Willis
 Wine Growers British Columbia
 Lilly Woodbury
 Worker Solidarity Network
 Darren Zal
 Kristina Zalite
 Zihan Zhao

