



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

Honourable John Horgan, MLA  
Premier of British Columbia  
West Annex  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC  
V8V 1X4

May 11, 2020

Dear Premier:

On behalf of the BC Liberal Official Opposition, I am writing further to our letter of May 5, 2020 on the reopening of the British Columbia economy.

Last week, you outlined a broad plan that would allow different components of the economy to reopen, while continuing the efforts of Dr. Henry to protect all residents from the health impacts of COVID-19. We fully support the need to maintain public health and safe workplaces, while also restoring economic activity.

However, since your announcement opposition MLAs offices have received a multitude of inquiries and concerns related to the exact procedure and cost to reopen in ways that protects workers and customers at the same time.

Businesses report conflicting information coming from WorkSafeBC, local health authorities and from provincial officials – they are desperately looking for clarity so they can begin the work of rebuilding our economy.

In addition, members of the public and businesses are having great difficulty sourcing and affording safety measures and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

The Official Opposition is, therefore, calling on your government to take the following immediate actions to support both businesses and workers:

- Provide greater clarity on the rules for reopening businesses of all types;
- Provide and advertise a single source for those seeking information on re-opening, instead of expecting them to visit multiple sites with conflicting information;
- Create a central information hub for B.C. small business to find PPE that meets WorkSafeBC standards, with clear prices stated to prevent price gouging;
- Give refunds to employers from the WorkSafeBC surplus for their costs of PPE – up to a maximum of 30% of the premiums they have paid, since WorkSafeBC will see reduced claims in 2020; and

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- Match the actions of other provinces and the Federal government to ensure that the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) supports employees directly by offering a retroactive rebate or credit on the WorkSafeBC premiums and payroll taxes being applied to these wages.

Now is the time to take advantage of WorkSafeBC's significant surplus to keep workers safe and avoid further compensation claims as we navigate through B.C.'s economic recovery. Maintaining healthy and safe workplaces is critical to restoring economic activity while keeping workers as safe as possible.

I should also note that I was pleased to hear that the finance minister is considering our suggestions to provide immediate relief to British Columbians through a tax holiday on Provincial Sales Tax, hotel tax and Employers' Health Tax.

We urge you to move quickly on providing this relief so that British Columbians can get back on their feet, as we all work together to defeat the virus.

Now is the time to be bold and brave.

Sincerely,

Andrew Wilkinson, Q.C., MLA  
Leader of the Official Opposition