



First Session, 40th Parliament

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)

SELECT STANDING COMMITTEE ON

**FINANCE AND
GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

Surrey

Monday, September 23, 2013

Issue No. 4

DAN ASHTON, MLA, CHAIR

ISSN 1499-416X (Print)

ISSN 1499-4178 (Online)

**SELECT STANDING COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

Surrey

Monday, September 23, 2013

- Chair:* * Dan Ashton (Penticton BC Liberal)
- Deputy Chair:* * Mike Farnworth (Port Coquitlam NDP)
- Members:*
- * Mable Elmore (Vancouver-Kensington NDP)
 - * Eric Foster (Vernon-Monashee BC Liberal)
 - * Scott Hamilton (Delta North BC Liberal)
 - * Gary Holman (Saanich North and the Islands NDP)
 - * Marvin Hunt (Surrey-Panorama BC Liberal)
 - * Lana Popham (Saanich South NDP)
 - * Jackie Tegart (Fraser-Nicola BC Liberal)
 - John Yap (Richmond-Steveston BC Liberal)
- * denotes member present*
- Clerk:* Susan Sourial
- Committee Staff:* Stephanie Raymond (Administrative Assistant)
-

- Witnesses:*
- Jon Bell (President, B.C. Association of Farmers Markets)
 - Iain Black (President and CEO, Vancouver Board of Trade)
 - Chris Blair
 - Mariane Bourcheix-Laporte (Pacific Association of Artist Run Centres)
 - Brent Calvert (Blue Ribbon North Shore, Squamish-Whistler Corridor
Community Group; Capilano University)
 - Joanne Curry (Simon Fraser University)
 - Bob Davis (Kwantlen Faculty Association)
 - Gillian Dearle (Kwantlen Faculty Association)
 - Bob D'Eith (Executive Director, Music B.C. Industry Association)
 - Pat Dyer (New Westminister Teachers Union)
 - Colin Ewart (Rick Hansen Foundation)
 - David Field (B.C. Citizens for Green Energy)
 - Myles Galvin (Blue Ribbon North Shore, Squamish-Whistler Corridor
Community Group)
 - Dr. Mychael Gleeson
 - Frances Hernandorena (New Westminister Teachers Union)
 - Anita Huberman (CEO, Surrey Board of Trade)
 - Lawrie Johns (Executive Director, Basketball B.C.)
 - Mike Klassen (Canadian Federation of Independent Business)
 - Yves Laforest (New Westminister Teachers Union)
 - Karin Litzcke
 - Bruce McCloy (New Westminister Teachers Union)
 - Manley McLachlan (President, B.C. Construction Association)
 - Allison McNeill (Basketball B.C.)
 - Jim Mann (Director, Alzheimer Society of B.C.)

Katie Marocchi (Chairperson, Canadian Federation of Students–British Columbia)
Lori Mathison (Vancouver Board of Trade)
Rebecca Morris (Alzheimer Society of B.C.)
Grant Osborne (President, New Westminster Teachers Union)
Andrew Petter (President and Vice-Chancellor, Simon Fraser University)
Chris Pettingill (Blue Ribbon North Shore, Squamish-Whistler Corridor Community Group; Chair, Squamish Chamber of Commerce)
Elizabeth Quinn (Executive Director, B.C. Association of Farmers Markets)
Margaret Reynolds (Executive Director, Association of Book Publishers of British Columbia)
Dragana Sacco (New Westminster Teachers Union)
Liz Shorten (Canadian Media Production Association, B.C. Producers Branch)
James Stewart (President, Downtown Surrey Business Improvement Association)
Nimmi Takkar (Students Union of Vancouver Community College)
Robin Tavender
Terri Van Steinburg (President, Kwantlen Faculty Association)

CONTENTS

Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services

Monday, September 23, 2013

	Page
Presentations	87
J. Stewart	
G. Dearle	
T. Van Steinburg	
B. Davis	
B. Calvert	
C. Pettingill	
M. Galvin	
L. Johns	
A. McNeill	
G. Osborne	
F. Hernandorena	
D. Sacco	
B. McCloy	
Y. Laforest	
P. Dyer	
J. Mann	
R. Morris	
M. McLachlan	
K. Marocchi	
A. Huberman	
C. Ewart	
M. Gleeson	
M. Reynolds	
B. D'Eith	
L. Shorten	
E. Quinn	
J. Bell	
N. Takkar	
C. Blair	
A. Petter	
R. Tavender	
M. Bourcheix-Laporte	
D. Field	
K. Litzcke	
I. Black	
L. Mathison	
M. Klassen	

MINUTES

SELECT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES



Monday, September 23, 2013

9:00 a.m.

Guildford C Room, Sheraton Vancouver Guildford Hotel

15269 – 104th Avenue, Surrey, B.C.

Present: Dan Ashton, MLA (Chair); Mike Farnworth, MLA (Deputy Chair); Mable Elmore, MLA; Eric Foster, MLA; Scott Hamilton, MLA; Gary Holman, MLA; Marvin Hunt, MLA; Lana Popham, MLA; Jackie Tegart, MLA

Unavoidably Absent: John Yap, MLA

1. The Chair called the Committee to order at 9:19 a.m.
2. Opening remarks by Dan Ashton, MLA, Chair.
3. The following witness appeared before the Committee and answered questions:
 - 1) Downtown Surrey Business Improvement Association James Stewart
4. The Committee recessed from 9:31 a.m. to 9:43 a.m.
5. The following witnesses appeared before the Committee and answered questions:
 - 2) Kwantlen Faculty Association Gillian Dearle
Terri Van Steinburg
Bob Davis
 - 3) "Blue Ribbon" North Shore, Squamish-Whistler
Corridor Community Group Brent Calvert
Chris Pettingill
Myles Galvin
 - 4) Basketball BC Lawrie Johns
Allison McNeill
 - 5) New Westminster Teachers' Union Grant Osborne
Yves Laforest
Frances Hernandorena
Dragana Sacco
Bruce McCloy
Pat Dyer
 - 6) Alzheimer Society of British Columbia Jim Mann
Rebecca Morris
 - 7) British Columbia Construction Association Manley McLachlan
6. The Committee recessed from 11:18 a.m. to 11:24 a.m.
7. The following witnesses appeared before the Committee and answered questions:
 - 8) Canadian Federation of Students, British Columbia Katie Marocchi
 - 9) Surrey Board of Trade Anita Huberman
8. The Committee recessed from 11:48 a.m. to 11:53 a.m.

9. The following witness appeared before the Committee and answered questions:
10) Rick Hansen Foundation; Rick Hansen Institute Colin Ewart
10. The Committee recessed from 12:08 p.m. to 1:16 p.m.
11. The following witnesses appeared before the Committee and answered questions:
11) Dr. Mychael Gleeson
12) Association of Book Publishers of British Columbia Margaret Reynolds
Music BC Industry Association Bob D'Eith
Canadian Media Production Association - BC Producers' Branch Liz Shorten
12. The Committee recessed from 1:47 p.m. to 1:48 p.m.
13. The following witnesses appeared before the Committee and answered questions:
13) BC Association of Farmers' Markets Jon Bell
Elizabeth Quinn
14) Students' Union of Vancouver Community College Nimmi Takkar
15) Chris Blair
16) Simon Fraser University Andrew Petter
Joanne Curry
17) Robin Tavender
18) Pacific Association of Artist Run Centres (PAARC) Mariane Bourcheix-Laporte
14. The Committee recessed from 3:02 p.m. to 3:28 p.m.
15. The following witnesses appeared before the Committee and answered questions:
19) B.C. Citizens for Green Energy David Field
20) Karin Litzcke
21) Vancouver Board of Trade Iain Black
Lori Mathison
16. The Committee recessed from 4:15 p.m. to 4:24 p.m.
17. The following witness appeared before the Committee and answered questions:
22) Canadian Federation of Independent Business Mike Klassen
18. The Committee adjourned to the call of the Chair at 4:42 p.m.

Dan Ashton, MLA
Chair

Susan Sourial
Committee Clerk

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2013

The committee met at 9:19 a.m.

[D. Ashton in the chair.]

D. Ashton (Chair): Good morning, everyone. We're the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services. This is an all-party parliamentary committee of the Legislative Assembly whose mandate includes conducting annual public consultations on the upcoming provincial budget.

We would like to welcome everybody in attendance and on air today. Thank you for taking the time to attend. We really do appreciate your participation in this important process.

Every year the Minister of Finance releases a budget consultation paper. The paper contains the fiscal and economic forecasts and the key issues that need to be addressed in next year's budget.

Once the consultation paper has been released, this committee is required to hold provincewide public consultations. All British Columbians are invited to provide input on the budget.

[0920]

Following the consultations, the committee releases a report of the consultations along with recommendations for the upcoming budget. This report must be presented to the Legislative Assembly no later than November 15.

The consultation methods. There are several ways for British Columbians to participate. This public hearing is one of 17 scheduled to take place in communities throughout the province. All British Columbians are invited to be present or to attend the hearings. We have also scheduled video conferencing sessions for five additional communities. British Columbians can also participate in the consultation by sending a written submission, video file, letter or fax.

Information on the consultations, including instructions on how to make a submission, is available at our website, which is www.leg.bc.ca/budgetconsultations. The deadline for submissions is Wednesday, October 16. All the public input we receive is carefully considered.

At today's meeting each presenter may speak for up to ten minutes. An additional five minutes is allotted for questions from committee members. Time permitting, we may also have an open-mike session at the end of the hearing. Five minutes are allotted for each presentation. If you would like to register for an open-mike, please check with the staff at the information table.

Today's meeting is a public hearing. It will be recorded and transcribed by Hansard Services. A copy of this transcript, along with the minutes, will be printed and will be made available at the committee's website. A live audio webcast is also broadcast through the website.

The committee is also on Facebook and Twitter. On

Facebook you'll find us underneath the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, and on Twitter we are at twitter.com/BCFinanceComm.

I would now ask the members of the committee to introduce themselves. I'll start with Gary.

G. Holman: Gary Holman, MLA, Saanich North and the Islands.

M. Elmore: Mable Elmore, MLA, Vancouver-Kensington.

M. Farnworth (Deputy Chair): Mike Farnworth, MLA, Port Coquitlam.

E. Foster: Eric Foster, MLA, Vernon-Monashee.

S. Hamilton: Scott Hamilton, MLA, Delta North.

M. Hunt: Marvin Hunt, MLA, Surrey-Panorama.

J. Tegart: Jackie Tegart, MLA, Fraser-Nicola.

D. Ashton (Chair): Good morning, everyone. My name is Dan Ashton. I'm the MLA for Penticton. I'll be chairing the proceedings and working very closely with Vice-Chair Mike Farnworth and all the committee representatives and staff to ensure that what is said today is forwarded to the government for proper consideration.

Also joining us today from the parliamentary committees office are some very hard-working and dedicated individuals — our Clerk, Susan Sourial; and Stephanie Raymond, who is staffing the registration desk. Michael Baer, Jean Medland and Ian Battle are also here on behalf of Hansard Services.

Sir, good morning and welcome. James, thank you. The floor is yours. Just to repeat it, ten minutes for the presentation and five minutes for questions, and we're pretty strict on the timing.

Presentations

J. Stewart: I don't think you'll have any concern with that.

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Thank for giving me the opportunity to address the committee. My name is James Stewart. I'm here in my capacity as president of the Downtown Surrey Business Improvement Association. In the context of what I have to say, I think it's also germane that I am the chair of the SFU Surrey community advisory committee. I am also a businessman. I'm a lawyer who has practised in Surrey for 33 years, and that's the context within which my presentation is given.

I'll start with a bit of background and then get directly to the point as to why we're here. The Surrey Business

Improvement Association operates in Surrey city centre. It's comprised of about 1,100 businesses and property owners representing a property tax base of just over \$12 million.

We're part of a community — and I'm sure you'll hear this much today — of almost 500,000 people in Surrey, the fastest-growing region in British Columbia and currently Canada's 12th-largest city. It's projected frequently that it will surpass Vancouver in population base within the next decade. There are over 1,000 new residents joining the city per month.

It's important for my presentation that a third of that population is under the age of 19. We have British Columbia's largest school district and one of the very few that continues to grow.

There is a lot of effort being given to position downtown Surrey as the regional urban hub south of the Fraser. The Downtown Surrey Business Improvement Association's mission is to facilitate business improvement, community economic development, business revitalization and the enhancement of the downtown core of the city of Surrey.

[0925]

A very important part of that downtown core is the world-class Simon Fraser University Surrey campus. SFU was recently named Canada's number one comprehensive university. SFU has demonstrated its commitment to participate actively in the economic and social development in the communities where it belongs and, in particular, in the community of Surrey.

The Downtown Surrey Business Improvement Association's request, in the context of this committee, is that the committee note our support and endorsement for the B.C. government to recommit to the memorandum of understanding that was signed by SFU and the province on March 10, 2006, the essence of which was to double the size of SFU Surrey from 2,500 FTEs, full-time-equivalents, to 5,000 student FTEs by 2015. There are currently about 3,137 FTEs at the university.

The success of SFU in offering programs in areas of high labour market demand and having a major role in the economic and social development of Surrey has been demonstrated over and over again in the past decade. SFU actively engages the community to determine what the various components of the community need in terms of education, and it directs its energies towards providing those services and those programs. They do emphasize an innovative approach. I draw your attention to a couple of things.

They have a mechatronics program at Surrey, which, if you're like me, you'd never heard of before. It's an engineering program, but rather than giving degrees in specific areas — electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, and so on — it looks at problem-solving. What do you need to know to build a car that works? You need to know something about all the different areas of engineer-

ing. Mechatronics directs students towards that problem-solving innovation capability, rather than isolating them in particular areas, which is the traditional case.

SFU Surrey also actively participates with the city in their green energy programs, working towards creating a green energy engineering degree program at SFU, working with institutions such as Powertech and the city.

They're also working in cooperation with Fraser Health and Surrey Memorial Hospital and the city. They've created a Chair in Multimodal Technology for Healthcare Innovations. Again, it sounds like science fiction to me, but what it really is, is looking at ways in which technology can be directed towards innovating health care delivery. Health care is, of course, an ongoing and frequent concern for all of us. They've created a chair with Ryan D'Arcy, who is a world-class, world-recognized authority in this particular area.

Simon Fraser University's establishment in 2002 has helped to define Surrey's city centre and fuel new growth. I can tell you, from personal observation of having worked in Surrey city centre for over three decades, that the introduction of the university and the young life that came with it has really made a difference in the sense of community.

In addition to meeting future labour markets, the city centre businesses believe that the growth of Surrey's campus would act as a catalyst for economic development and would be an excellent investment for a downtown core. As I referred to earlier, the expansion of engineering and health programs and research will draw other research and community partners into the area, and that's already happening. Industries are making inquiries, through the Downtown Surrey Business Improvement Association, about relocating to Surrey from all over the world because of the nature of the cooperative arrangements they're making for engineering and health care.

It will also create support for local industries and new companies which will be provided with access to the student entrepreneurs, to graduate faculty expertise in areas of high market demand. The region will benefit from spinoff companies created by those faculty and students. Overall, this creates a win for education and a win for business, which in turn benefits all the communities south of the Fraser.

Surrey as a community is proud to have one of Canada's top-ranking comprehensive research universities in our centre. I'd like to read a brief paragraph from the MOU that was signed in 2006. This is a four-page document. I'm reading only a paragraph, as it relates to community.

"The Ministry of Advanced Education and SFU recognize the important role of a research university in providing an intellectual and creative resource for local industry and community organizations.

[0930]

"Located in the centre of B.C.'s fastest-growing city, SFU Surrey, through mechanisms such as the Surrey Community Advisory

Council, will work with stakeholder organizations on key urban growth and revitalization issues such as transportation, crime and safety, and immigration. SFU Surrey will also build and facilitate linkages between cultural communities and international organizations and respond to community needs with continuing education programming."

The reason I read that is to reiterate SFU's and the Downtown Surrey Business Improvement Association's endorsement of that idea and also to say that since 2006 SFU has been actively engaged in that process.

In summary, you will have many demands for spending the dollars and suggestions as to where. Supporting the university supports our youth. It supports our future. It supports the creation of jobs in new and innovative areas, not trying to rebuild old things or fix broken areas but trying new areas. It creates new revenue sources. It addresses an increased quality of living, not just by way of creating jobs but from the benefit to the general population, the investment in the young minds, in students that are participating in a university.

Those are my comments.

D. Ashton (Chair): James, thank you very much for being concise on that. Any questions coming forward?

Well, sir, thank you. Will you be presenting a hard copy?

J. Stewart: I'd like to say I'd know for sure. Not today, but we will generate it.

D. Ashton (Chair): Okay. Have a good day, and thank you for showing up.

We'll take a short recess until we get the next delegation coming in.

The committee recessed from 9:31 a.m. to 9:43 a.m.

[D. Ashton in the chair.]

D. Ashton (Chair): Good morning. We have the Kwantlen Faculty Association. Welcome this morning. We have ten minutes for the presentation and five minutes for questions from the committee, if required.

Whoever is to start, thank you for coming.

G. Dearle: Good morning. Thank you for the invitation to speak to you and comment on the priorities of the 2014 provincial budget. My name is Gillian Dearle, and I am a vice-president with the Kwantlen Faculty Association. In addition to representing the KFA, I'm an instructor at Kwantlen, where I've taught for a decade in the English department.

With me this morning are Terri Van Steinburg, president of the KFA, and Bob Davis, vice-president, negotiations.

Kwantlen Polytechnic University operates at four different campuses located in Surrey, Richmond, Cloverdale

and Langley. The faculty complement at all four campuses is approximately 1,000 strong, and our enrolment base is about 18,000 full- and part-time students. We are glad the committee came to Surrey to gather input.

South of the Fraser is a growing, diverse part of the Lower Mainland. Surrey itself is projected to be the largest municipality in the Lower Mainland in the next 20 years, a projection that has significant implications for a broad range of public services and infrastructure. Post-secondary education will be key to much of that growth, so it's important that the provincial budget priorities are aligned with the needs of the region.

Let me begin by giving you a brief overview of Kwantlen. Our institution was established by the B.C. government in 1981. It was first a community college, then a university college and now a polytechnic university.

[0945]

Kwantlen plays an important role as a public, open-access post-secondary institution in the South Fraser area, west of Abbotsford. Given my earlier point about the current and projected growth in this region, the increase in the number of eligible students in our area has been and will continue to be significant. Not surprisingly, many of our programs and classes have wait-lists.

Kwantlen offers bachelor's degrees, associate degrees, diplomas, certificates, citations, developmental education and trades training. We do all of this by offering over 135 programs. We also provide services to help students with their studies. Our student population is drawn largely from communities located south of the Fraser, but they also come from other areas around the Lower Mainland and from outside of B.C. and Canada.

As a polytechnic university, a critical objective of our institution is to provide students with a broad range of post-secondary education options. We offer degrees and diplomas in arts, sciences, horticulture, design, community and health studies and business. On our Cloverdale campus we also offer an extensive trades-training program which works closely with local and provincial employers. We offer an adult special education program and English-as-a-second-language programs.

Our adult basic education program and developmental education program provide people with the opportunity to upgrade their skills, complete high school education, or secure the necessary prerequisites to enter new programs or improve their career options.

Let me just comment for a moment on the important work that Kwantlen does in developmental education. What public policy decision-makers often overlook is that not everyone follows the traditional path of graduating from high school and moving on to complete a post-secondary education.

For a variety of reasons, some students don't graduate from high school. Others graduate but find that later in life, when they want to upgrade or change careers, they

haven't got the necessary high school prerequisites. As a society, we can't afford to ignore these students, especially in a province with skills shortages. We need to take proactive steps to provide an effective access point for these students. Kwantlen must continue to build that capacity now and in the future.

Developmental education is embedded in Kwantlen's mandate, which is to provide comprehensive learning opportunities. It's a mandate that has both social and economic dimensions. On the social side, we believe post-secondary education needs to be accessible to as many citizens as possible. Improving that access means adapting programs as much as possible so that we reduce the number of barriers that individuals may face when they decide to enrol in our institution. In addition, we must assist those students to succeed through practical retention strategies.

On the economic side, we know that over three-quarters of all new jobs will require some form of post-secondary training. Citizens who have post-secondary education to access good family-supporting jobs contribute to the well-being of their communities and province.

If you look at core funding for post-secondary institutions in B.C., our operating grants from the Ministry of Advanced Education, you see that on a per-student basis, those grants have been in decline over the last 12 years. When you factor in the impact of inflation, the trend line drops even more. During this time Kwantlen became a special-purpose teaching university with no change in funding. This created ongoing funding pressures to do more with the same funding.

For Kwantlen, the frustration cuts two ways. For students who attend Kwantlen, the funding crunch means they are paying a much heftier level of tuition, both absolutely and relatively. Today's students pay close to a third of the cost of their education. For any members of this committee who attended a B.C. post-secondary institution decades ago, that comparable number was closer to 15 percent.

Today's students are increasingly turning to part-time work to help shoulder the cost of their education. As educators, we see students in classrooms who juggle the demands of part- or even full-time work with the demands of school. We also see students who are taking longer to complete their programs, because when you juggle work and study demands, you invariably are unable to enrol full-time.

[0950]

The other impact of underfunding is that access to programs and courses suffers. Quite simply, the demand in our region is exceeding what the province invests here when it comes to post-secondary education.

The most important point we would like to share with you today is the issue of post-secondary funding inequality for students and citizens served by the Kwantlen region. The Kwantlen region has 20 percent of the popu-

lation of B.C. and only 10 percent of the funding dollars for regional institutions, and only 11.5 percent of the FTE or full-time equivalency.

Kwantlen is funded for ten FTEs per thousand population, and this is the lowest of all regional institutions in the province. The University of the Fraser Valley, for example, is funded for 22.8 FTEs per thousand. It is time that the Kwantlen region's post-secondary funding enables our institution to properly serve the citizens of this region. The current imbalance in post-secondary funding disadvantages the citizens of our catchment area, which includes the fastest-growing city in the country.

Another frustration we have at Kwantlen, and this is a direct result of a policy change made over a decade ago, is that while we have seen pressures in terms of capacity and access, we have also seen an increase in administration. Between 2001 and 2012 the total number of excluded administrative positions increased from 58 to 123, a 213 percent increase. Over the same period administrative salaries increased from \$3.4 million to \$11.1 million.

The connection to the policy change is that in 2002 the provincial government moved away from a targeted program funding to a system of block funding designed to give local administrators more latitude in terms of how they ran their institutions. We have long held that that change led to the growth in administration, and we call for a review of this situation.

The Premier has said that the jobs strategy is a key priority for B.C., and we agree that B.C. would benefit enormously from a well-thought-out strategy. We know that more targeted investments in post-secondary education would make this strategy successful.

Our faculty association has also stressed the need to have B.C.'s current system of trades training overhauled. The Industry Training Authority has never met the expectations that were part of its launch in 2003. Completion rates have failed to meet key targets, despite an increase in the ITA's budget.

The recent announcement that Jessica McDonald has been appointed to review the ITA is a positive sign, in our view. Our hope at this point is that her review takes a more comprehensive approach, one that incorporates the many concerns that public post-secondary institutions have with the ITA, keeping in mind that those institutions deliver over 90 percent of the trades and apprenticeship programs in B.C.

We would like to conclude by emphasizing some priorities that we hope form part of your report. Affordability of post-secondary education needs to be addressed. Reviving the student grant program should be a priority in 2014. The 2014 budget needs to reverse the trend in real per-student operating grants.

Most importantly, the government needs to look at a new funding formula for post-secondary institutions, a formula that will not only guard against the impact of inflation but also recognizes the unique cost pressures that

institutions like Kwantlen Polytechnic University face in providing access to public post-secondary learning in their community.

We will take any questions that you might have.

D. Ashton (Chair): Great. Thank you.

M. Farnworth (Deputy Chair): I wonder if you could enlighten me a bit more on the issue of the FTEs in the funding, where you compared Kwantlen to Fraser Valley University. What's the reason for that? Is it based on a demographic around wage structure of instructors, for example? Types of programs offered? What's the reason for the differential?

G. Dearle: I suspect we would like to know. We have the same question. All we know is that there is this funding differential and that it's disadvantaging this region.

M. Farnworth (Deputy Chair): Now, is it also a differential within...? So it's obviously a differential within the region. How does it compare to other regions?

G. Dearle: Well, it's basically provincewide. These figures are provincewide.

[0955]

These particular numbers.... The ten FTEs per thousand funding is for the college regions. SFU Burnaby and UNBC are not included in that.

T. Van Steinburg: If I can just add that it's been a historic problem. It dates back to when we were Kwantlen College, so it's been an ongoing issue that has never been rectified. In terms of salaries, all of the colleges and new teaching universities, with the exception of Thompson Rivers, are on the salary scale that is provincial policy. So all the salary scales are the same.

M. Elmore: Thanks for your presentation. Can you talk a little bit about your adult basic education and your ESL programs? What's the participation in that? Are there wait-lists? In the context of the pressures and access for students into programs, what's your experience?

G. Dearle: I think one of the areas that is facing trouble is the number of programs available. While there are wait-lists for certain programs, the ways in which the programs are offered on different campuses have also changed. Providing the necessary funding would allow more of the programs to be offered.

In terms of the wait-lists — Terri?

T. Van Steinburg: In terms of wait-lists, I think one of the concerns in the ELST area is the funding is being a little.... What's the word?

G. Dearle: Changed?

T. Van Steinburg: Yeah. There's a proposal to possibly change that funding. Apparently, the provincial government is not going to fund ELST anymore. The feds have changed their funding formula, and now institutions that offer ELST are going to have to make a proposal for that funding. So there's a little bit of a worry there about ELST programming — that public post-secondary institutions have to compete with private institutions for that funding. That's a bit of a worry.

It's a huge, huge need, but particularly in our area of Richmond and Surrey. We have a lot of new Canadians and immigrants that need ELST training. So that's a bit of a worry for us and for our faculty, and students as well.

D. Ashton (Chair): Our next delegation is here, and we're pushing the times.

M. Hunt: When we're talking about the discrepancies in funding between the universities.... Last week we were listening to.... I forget how they described themselves now, their official title, but it was another faculty group only representing what they called research universities. Now, I notice that you called yourself and you described yourself as special purpose universities. Is that the official title for what these are? So that's the distinction between research and special purpose?

T. Van Steinburg: It's in the amendments to the University Act. We're called special purpose teaching university.

M. Hunt: Versus research?

T. Van Steinburg: Versus research-intensive university.

M. Hunt: Okay. What can they do that you can't?

T. Van Steinburg: Well, they get funded for research, and we don't.

M. Hunt: So do you do research, or you just...?

T. Van Steinburg: Yes we do — absolutely.

G. Dearle: Which is another component to the fact that funding didn't change when we became a polytechnic university. Suddenly our mandate has expanded. We're offering more degrees, but we're doing more with the same funding that we had.

B. Davis: If I may. I think the section of the act talks about research being conducted as funds permit, so we do have an active research group within our faculty, but it's not specific like the regular universities.

D. Ashton (Chair): And to wind up — Gary.

G. Holman: Thanks very much for your presentation. I was interested in your comment about the relationship between block funding and the growth of administration. Can you explain why you think that happens? And is block funding something that applies to all universities, post-secondary education?

[1000]

G. Dearle: The block funding is a change in practice that I think affects, certainly, the special purpose teaching universities and colleges — possibly as well the research-intensive universities. But what that change in funding practice does is prevent important programs or key programs from receiving targeted funding and instead gives the flexibility to the institutions to determine where to spend the dollars they receive from the provincial government.

G. Holman: Which, on the face of it, doesn't sound like a bad thing, but you were connecting that to the increase and the doubling of administration over the past decade.

G. Dearle: Because of that flexibility. So if the targeted funding had been directed specifically to a mandate in two certain areas, such as English language studies or adult basic education, if that is no longer targeted in that envelope funding, it becomes the discretion of the institution to funnel that where it sees fit.

As an institution changes in nature or priorities, it has the ability to make that direction. So we would like a review of that practice.

G. Holman: So in fact, a choice has been made in your particular case to increase administration versus funding other things.

D. Ashton (Chair): Okay. Lana, to wrap up, please. I'm sorry. We have everybody building up. We've got a long day.

L. Popham: My question is around the funding again. So do I understand that the limitations on research would be limited to Kwantlen's ability to go out and find private funding to continue certain research?

T. Van Steinburg: It's not just private funding. It's federal grants, like SSHRC, NSERC and those kinds of things. But those are very competitive, and it takes a lot of time. Our faculty still teach a full course load, which is what we call eight. That's eight courses. That's a full course load. So to find the time to do all the additional work and apply for grants and things like that... It's very time consuming is what I'm trying to say. Most of them

that do it, do it off the side of their desk.

D. Ashton (Chair): Thanks, folks. We sure appreciate it. Do you have a hard copy or not?

G. Dearle: We do, yes.

D. Ashton (Chair): Okay. You'll submit it. Thank you. Have a great day.

Do we have Capilano here? Please come forward. Thank you.

Good morning. Welcome to the committee. The lay of the land is ten minutes for the presentation, five minutes for the questions, and we're going to keep you on that. Thank you.

B. Calvert: Okay. We'll move fast.

D. Ashton (Chair): Perfect. Thank you.

B. Calvert: All right. Good morning, and thank you for the opportunity to speak with your committee.

By way of introduction, I want to take a moment to describe and introduce the initiative that I'm here representing. My name is Brent Calvert. I'm an instructor at Capilano University. I teach in a program called interactive design. But I'm here today as part of a community-based initiative that has brought together community voices from the North Shore as well as the Squamish-Whistler corridor, voices that have a common concern about the loss of post-secondary programs in our communities.

Beside me this morning is Chris Pettingill. He's the chair of the Squamish Chamber of Commerce and a director of Inside Edge, the Sea to Sky's knowledge-based industry association that has over 200 members. Also joining us is Myles Galvin, a graduating Capilano business student and budding entrepreneur.

Other notable committee members that aren't able to be here today include Mike McGraw, a North Vancouver district school trustee and owner of an interactive design studio on the North Shore; Parker Busswood, another Capilano graduate and a former student member to the university board and a technology start-up evangelist; as well as Cyri Jones, an entrepreneur who's active on the North Shore in community issues.

What has brought our group together was a decision made by the administration at Capilano University and then approved by the university's board of governors to cut close to \$3 million worth of programs and courses at Capilano. The stated rationale for the cuts was an operating deficit at the university.

Our group has taken issue with the proposed cuts for several reasons. The decision to make cuts was done in great haste with little or no real consultation with faculty, students and, most importantly, the community that

Capilano University is supposed to serve.

When we look more closely at the financials of the university, it was apparent that while an operating deficit had emerged in the last fiscal year, over the last five years there has been a steady growth of administrative positions at the university.

[1005]

In fact, we compared the cost of administration in 2009 with the cost in 2012. The increase amounted to about \$1.3 million, which as it turns out, is the same number that Capilano University cited as their operating deficit that required program closures and cuts in various departments across the three Capilano campuses.

We appreciate that our concerns about the program cuts at Capilano and how those decisions were made are not the direct interest of your committee. But we are well aware that one reason why our university and many other post-secondary institutions around the province are having similar concerns is because provincial operating grants are not keeping pace with the underlying need for post-secondary education access across the province.

When measured on a per-student basis and adjusted for the impact of inflation, provincial operating grants to post-secondary institutions have fallen by more than 10 percent since 2001. For Capilano, the situation is even more complicated because when we became a university in 2008, no change was made to our per-student funding formula to reflect the change from a college to a university.

The other four institutions that were made special purpose teaching universities were all receiving university college funding levels, a funding level that is higher. The net effect for Capilano is that even though we made the transition to a full-fledged university, we are still funded at a community college level. That puts major constraints on our institution.

So our appeal to this committee is that the 2014 provincial budget includes measures that begin to address the funding pressures in our public post-secondary institutions. Included in these measures should be a thorough review of the funding formula for all public institutions.

The very specific problem we have at Capilano parallels concerns that smaller, rural post-secondary institutions have when it comes to funding. We know many of these smaller colleges face much higher operating costs than is the case for larger metropolitan institutions. A review of the funding formula would go a long way to addressing those systemic inequities.

More generally, we think B.C. needs to make significant new investments in post-secondary investments which should make that education more accessible and affordable. We know that 75 percent of all the new jobs in our province will require some form of post-secondary education. We know that currently only 65 percent of the B.C. workforce has that level of education. Closing the gap through greater investments must be a major priority.

I know when the debate over program cuts at Capilano first emerged this spring, some argued that the cuts were necessary and that administrators should be given a freer hand at rationalizing program offerings and ensuring that the surviving programs were more aligned to job prospects. There are two problems with this.

The first is a practical one. When administrators make unilateral decisions to change and/or cut programs, they run the risk of doing so without having a good grasp of how important certain courses and programs are.

The program I manage at Capilano, interactive design, consistently achieved an 80 percent job placement rate within six months of program graduation, getting students directly into well-paying web and mobile design and development careers in the growing Vancouver digital industry.

Unfortunately for us, my program area is subject to frozen tuition rates, which, while being attractive to applicants, is not attractive to university administrators who are more and more dependent on increasing tuition as a way to financially manage their institutions.

Current tuition caps apply only to established programs, leading administrators into workarounds of tuition caps, which typically involve taking established programs, reconfiguring them and repackaging them into so-called new course offerings that are then exempt from the publicly advertised tuition caps.

That's a bad call for students seeking very affordable and career-relevant programming, a bad call for employers needing new hires with in-demand digital skills and a bad call by the institution that should be building strong community connections. The workaround is wasteful and creates great inequities in who can afford post-secondary programs. These issues can only be addressed by changing policy on tuition caps and reviewing and improving the funding support from the province.

The second problem with the programming cuts and course redesign we see at Capilano and other institutions is that they work from a premise that doesn't recognize the iterative or diverse ways in which learning happens. Today students move around a lot academically and institutionally. The more we can facilitate that movement, the better able we are, both as institutions and a province, to attract, retain and propel students towards the learning objectives that they have.

C. Pettingill: I'm sure some of you are probably wondering why the chamber of commerce is here. The reality is that affordable and accessible education is something that's really important to business. Technology is having a bigger and bigger impact on our lives, our businesses and our economy.

[1010]

At the same time, the rate of technological change is growing exponentially, and businesses that want to stay competitive need employees that are skilled in up-to-date

technologies and processes. I'm not just talking about high-tech computer stuff. This is LNG; this is mining and all the industries that B.C. is really depending on for our future.

Leveraging current technologies is not just about business profitability either. It's also about safety and reducing our environmental footprint. There may well be a self-sustaining business model that supports additional four-year, high-tuition programming at some B.C. schools, but we can't let our shorter, more affordable diploma programs be displaced by such things.

Business directly and indirectly provides a significant amount of provincial education funding. If we want to maximize the growth of our economy, we need to ensure that those funds are spent in ways that provide business with the labour force that it needs. This means ensuring that we don't lose the shorter, more accessible, skills-focused programming that gives employees the knowledge that they need quickly and affordably.

Shorter, more affordable programs aren't just important to meet today's skill requirements. They're important to make sure that we have an agile workforce. As technologies change ever-more rapidly, jobs will become obsolete much more quickly than in the past. We need to make sure that we have an education system in place that supports efficient and economical adaptation to new jobs requiring new skills.

Very quickly, I'd like to touch on the ABE program, or adult basic education, which was cut in Squamish. This is a little different than the sorts of programs I was just referring to. It's often leveraged by people at a turning point in their lives. Going back to finish high school is very challenging for these individuals, and travelling to North Vancouver is often not a financial possibility for these people.

I'm not an expert on the stats, but my understanding is that finishing high school strongly correlates to positive individual and community outcomes. In Squamish we have a lot of service sector businesses that struggle to find qualified, reliable employees, and programs like the ABE program can help a lot with this sort of thing. There have been some suggestions that the K-to-12 system could take over, but that has a lot of challenges for the particular sorts of learners in these programs, and we would like to keep low barriers for these people.

D. Ashton (Chair): Actually, you're cutting into your question period, because I have to cut you off at 15, okay? So go ahead, but just so you know.

A Voice: That's fine.
Go ahead, Myles.

M. Galvin: Let me just say, in closing, that the experience we've gone through at Capilano University has had one unforeseen benefit. It has galvanized a community

partnership between some unlikely allies. The chamber of commerce, local school trustees, student organizations and faculty are all on the same page when it comes to wanting a stronger voice in how our administrators plan and direct our institution, and we all share a common view about the value and importance of post-secondary education.

Hopefully, through presentations like this, we can influence the priority-setting that the Minister of Finance does in preparing and tabling the 2014 provincial budget. We'll look forward to your report, and we'll be pleased to answer any questions.

D. Ashton (Chair): Wonderful. Thank you, gentlemen. I'm sorry to be hard on you, but it's just the facts of life for these....

A Voice: That's fair.

D. Ashton (Chair): Questions.

G. Holman: Thanks for your presentation. I'm interested in the comments — and from the previous presenters as well — about the course selection and how those decisions are made within post-secondary institutions. Does that come down to administrators? And just the other.... Forgive my ignorance, but there are some courses for which tuition fees have been capped and others that haven't. Again, somebody makes that decision. Just if you could explain how that works.

B. Calvert: Sure. In 2004 the government at the time brought in a 2 percent tuition cap, so all programs that were in existence at that time were subject to only having their price go up by 2 percent annually. So the work-around that's taking place at post-secondary institutions is that those programs are being targeted and closed, and a new program offering is created, which kills the brand, kills the momentum, kills the build in the marketplace and....

G. Holman: And — sorry — the new programs are not subject to the cap?

B. Calvert: That's right. So quite often we see tuition jumping from \$3,500 a year to over \$15,000, and that's creating huge problems.

The other part is we're not quite sure.... Administration is saying that, in some regards, the government is deciding which type of programs are going to be delivered at what types of institutions. Again, we don't have clarity on that. That would be something that would be very helpful for the public to know.

[1015]

M. Elmore: Thanks for your presentation. Can you

sum up your three main recommendations that you have for our committee?

B. Calvert: Sure. A very direct first piece is to look at post-secondary funding. We believe the operating grant has not kept pace with the costs.

The second is to review or completely remove the tuition cap, because it is being gamed, and the public is not really aware of that game.

The third point would be to facilitate and broker improved relations between the post-secondary institutions and their communities, because right now the consultation that's being passed as consultation is not consultation.

M. Elmore: In terms of the consultation between the public and institutions facilitated by the Ministry of Education?

B. Calvert: Yeah, through some.... The Campus 2020 plan lays out our community groups that should be consulted with, and it would be great to have government's voice and participation in making sure that that is happening.

D. Ashton (Chair): Any other questions?

Perfect. On time. Thank you very much. Do you have a hard copy for us?

B. Calvert: Yeah. We'll distribute them.

D. Ashton (Chair): Okay. Wonderful. Thanks, gentlemen.

Is Basketball B.C. next?

Good morning, Allison and Lawrie. Thank you for coming. Ten minutes for the presentation, five for questions. Please, if you'll start, that'd be great.

L. Johns: Good morning. Thank you, first of all, for having us here.

A quick introduction. My name's Lawrie Johns. I'm executive director of Basketball B.C. I've been with that organization since 2000. My claim to fame is that I've been in amateur sport for about 40 years, either as an athlete, coach or administrator. I have two sons who have gone through our sports system in British Columbia, from T-ball to, fortunately, the Olympics.

More importantly, I have with me Allison McNeill, who is much more well known than I am. Allison has just retired as the senior women's national coach and took our Canadian team to London in the past Olympics and finished in the top eight — against, I guess, all odds.

More importantly, what you may or may not know about Allison is that most of her life is really teaching youth coaches how to coach our sport. She has done hundreds and hundreds of youth-coaching clinics and

continues to. In fact, since she's "retired" from the senior women's national team, she'll be doing more and more of that. Although she's best known for the senior women's national team and for her tremendous experience at SFU and Oregon, really, her greatest contribution is to our youth coaches.

Given that, I want Allison to say a few words, because the investment that the government makes in sport doesn't go anywhere unless we have good coaches and a safe and healthy environment for the kids, whatever level we're talking about. I'd like Allison to maybe comment a little bit on that, because that's where most of our resources go.

A. McNeill: Thank you very much. It's nice to be able to have a voice for kids and for youth coaches.

One of the things.... I think that unless you've had a child in youth sport, unless you've coached, sometimes that seems so far away, that no one really understands what's going on there.

If we're talking about the increase in obesity in our children and more kids spending time in front of a screen, which isn't all bad, I guess — also, we've eliminated PE specialists in most elementary schools and almost all, I think, public schools — then I think it falls on the youth coach. That's who it falls on. It falls on the community coach. If we ignore that and pretend that it doesn't fall on the youth coach, then I think that we're putting our head in the sand.

What I've really enjoyed about working with Basketball B.C. is that I've been able to go out to communities near and far — pretty much, if you name a community, I've probably been there — to do a youth coaches clinic and work with youth coaches.

Also, though I do basketball, I'm really trying to stress to youth coaches that these kids are our future. If they're not our most important investment, then what is? I have a hard time believing there's something else.

I really think kids.... I always talk about how the greatest influences in my life were my parents and then my coaches. I actually spent more time with my coaches than my parents. I was in the gym with them all the time. So that's kind of the thing that I think has become so apparent.

[1020]

We've gotten some great funding to be able to go out and work with our coaches all across B.C., especially in some of the smaller communities, and I think those people are giving back. They're helping to raise our kids.

We talk about: "It takes an entire village." Well, I think that's what youth sport is about. It takes an entire village. Those kids are involved in all kinds of things, where coaches are helping them to learn not only basketball skills but life skills.

When I work with coaches, I talk about.... Okay, I'd love them to stay in our sport — because, obviously, I'm

passionate about basketball — but I'd like them to be in any sport.

Though this is an American statistic, I think it's the same in Canada. I think it's 78 percent of kids in youth sport quit at age 13 and never go back. I think that's sad — very, very sad. So what I'd like to see is that more kids have a great youth sporting experience.

A child's experience is only as good as the coach. That's just the way it is. I had phenomenal coaches. That's why I stayed in sport and why I stayed in coaching. I think it's great that I've been able to travel around the country — especially, obviously, in B.C. — and work with youth coaches.

And Lawrie, it's not hundreds of clinics. It's thousands. Just saying.

L. Johns: Maybe I'll just do a very quick recap of the sport system — I'm sure you all know it — just as a kind of a highlight. It's in an ever-changing mode in our province — and in all provinces, for that matter.

The sport branch within the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development. That's where the funding from the government comes from — through that department, through the sport branch, to a relatively new organization called ViaSport.

ViaSport is a non-member organization. After the overall policy is set by the sport branch, they set the strategy for us in the PSO world. Those of us in the PSO world.... As you'll see in the little handout, there are over 60 of us. Then we do the programs to try and match that strategy and that policy.

More recently, at the sport branch level, they've been mostly involved with things like B.C. Games, Canada Games, Western Canada Games and, certainly, on the government side, involved with school curriculum in terms of what happens in the phys ed classrooms or any elementary school classrooms.

Provincial sport organizations like ours — and we hope we can speak for them all — design and implement programs. All PSOs are non-profit. All PSOs are registered societies. They all have boards of directors. They all have an accounting and a reporting structure that we think is very important.

There are about 63 PSOs in British Columbia at this moment — 100,000 volunteer coaches in all of the sports, not just basketball; over 500,000 participants, ages three to 83. That's the new term that we use. Over 500,000 parents and volunteers are involved at some level of amateur sport.

In 2009 there was a StatsCan report that noted there's significant deterioration in muscle strength of children and youth since 1981, so in approximately 20-some-odd years. Children now, we know, are taller. They're heavier, they're fatter, and they're weaker. All measures of adiposity or obesity have significantly increased since 1981.

Research in not just sport seems to predict that

those factors will lead to more non-communicable diseases in our society, increased health care costs and loss of productivity for inactive people. So our job in the sport system is to make sure that we have safe, good, age-appropriate programs that can help kids become active. We do believe that once kids are active and once they pass that magic age of 12 or 13, they'll remain active in their adult life.

Our challenge is to have accessible programs; equality for both genders; affordable — affordable particularly in terms of facility costs, which are rising by the day; and that the programs are supported by research.

You will hear sport people talk about something called the Canadian Sport for Life, which is a model that all provincial governments and the federal government have adopted as a model curriculum for the way we design our programs. CS4L.ca explains it in great detail.

It also means you're going to have trained, qualified coaches. I'll go back to my introduction, in that that's where most of our resources go, in terms of having people like Allison go across the province to train coaches in terms of NCCP, national coaching certification program, or other types of programs.

[1025]

In our sport, as in most team sports, coaches are not paid. They're volunteers. They're moms and dads and uncles and aunts and older brothers and older sisters. It's those people that we train to try and keep in the sport system, and it's a challenge.

D. Ashton (Chair): Lawrie, two minutes left.

L. Johns: Thank you. It won't take that, I don't think.

Our challenges at the PSO level, at the sport level — similar challenges, anyway. There's more and more of a demand from parents now than there ever has been.

When I was kid age, which goes back quite a few years, the hockey bag on a back shoulder, down a back alley to an outdoor hockey rink.... I was born in Saskatchewan. You made up your own hockey game. You go to the rink, to the basketball court or to the baseball diamond, and you pick teams. That doesn't exist anymore.

Parents demand, rightly or wrongly, organized sport. Some of it's safety. Some of it is a whole bunch of things. Some of it is dreams to go to NCAA scholarships or CIS scholarships or the Olympics or whatever.

We have to design those programs that can fit that, that are in a safe environment for the kids and that, again I want to stress, are age-appropriate. We do not take basketball, the five-man, five-woman game, lay it on the kids and say: "Let's plan a ten-foot basket, and let's play with a size 7 ball." We have to modify the games, and you'll see that in all sports. But that's fairly new.

I guess our biggest challenge is to make sure that.... There's lots of competition for the sport dollar, for the recreational dollar. You'll see ads for academies and clubs

and a whole bunch of different things out there. All we say to the parents is to make sure to ask: "Are they well supported and well researched, and are they trained coaches?"

Lastly, we have to say something about basketball. We have a program called Steve Nash youth basketball. We have over 7,000 kids from K-to-6 in that program, a thousand volunteer coaches that, thank goodness, people like Allison train. We partner with the First Nations, with Special Olympics, with Wheelchair Basketball, with KidSport, which is fundraising. With the province of B.C.'s assistance, we have also been able to leverage the government of Canada to put money into participation programs.

Lastly, I'd just say to the government and to the governments in the past that consistent multi-year funding is absolutely crucial to our sport, to the sport system. It's very difficult, although we're very thankful for the funding we do get. Approximately 20 percent of our budget is government funding. That's Basketball B.C., and I think that would be less than most sports. So consistent, multi-year funding is the thing we would really impress upon this committee that is important as we move forward.

D. Ashton (Chair): Thanks, Lawrie. You ate up about three minutes of your question period, so we've got time for two minutes of questions.

Any questions?

G. Holman: Are you asking for additional funding or just more consistency in the funding over time?

L. Johns: I don't think anyone would ever say no to additional funding.

G. Holman: A very naive question.

L. Johns: But I think the number one ask would be consistent funding on a timely basis. That example would be.... We're in a fiscal year, like you are, from April 1 to end of March. We find out our funding in August, September. It's a little difficult to budget when you're already halfway through your year. If you had multi-year funding, it would help a lot.

M. Farnworth (Deputy Chair): Very quickly. Could you just, I guess, address very briefly.... I mean, there's the funding issue, but then there's also the public policy role that government can play.

I came here from Port Coquitlam today. I watched as the little — I'll be polite — kids waddled to the car and were then driven literally 400 metres, at most, by their parents and dropped off in front of the school. The traffic jams that you see....

When we went to school, we walked. Any idea of suggesting to our parents that we get driven to school would

have probably just.... They would have stared in disbelief, and we would never have even thought to ask.

I think the issue that you raised around the lack of activity in schools and the health costs that that is raising, and will raise over the long term, is phenomenal. Not necessarily money but public policy priority in getting kids more active and getting parents to understand the need for their kids to be more active — would you see that as an important role for government?

A. McNeill: I agree 100 percent. I think one of the things is that when I go out and educate coaches, those coaches are parents. So I'm really doing parent education, and I don't know where else they're getting that. I don't.

They look stunned when I say things to them like: "They have to be active. They can't sit on the couch for nine hours straight and do a half-hour of activity. That's not enough."

Even our policy in schools of the daily activity.... I forget what it's called. That is a little walk around the school sometimes. Really? That's not going to do it. They have to be more active.

[1030]

I think you're right. We can get the parents by training coaches, because they're generally coaching them — and not all. But that's one way. Yeah, I agree with that. A policy change would be nice.

M. Farnworth (Deputy Chair): I can do a rant on it, because I find it really, really frustrating and am extremely concerned about what is not happening in terms of kids and activities.

A. McNeill: Yeah. And I feel sorry for the kids, because obviously — you know this — there's all this research out there that the more active you are physically, the more active your brain is. Well, that's kind of important.

D. Ashton (Chair): Thank you, folks, very much. Thank you for your presentation. Have a good day.

Well, good morning. We have the New Westminster Teachers Union. Please come forward. Thank you very much for coming this morning. Ten minutes for the presentation, five minutes for questions, and I will hold you to it. Welcome, everyone.

G. Osborne: Well, we practised, and we were just under 11, so we'll try and speed it up.

D. Ashton (Chair): Okay. Perfect.

G. Osborne: Good morning, and thank you committee members and staff for allowing us to present to you this morning. My name is Grant Osborne. I'm the president of the New Westminster Teachers Union. I'm here with Yves, Frances, Pat, Dragana and another Pat.

We'd like to speak to you this morning regarding the financing of public education, the challenges we've faced and are continuing to face and our desire to see an adequately funded public education system.

First of all, a reference point for you as to who we are and where we're from. New Westminster is a mid-sized local provincially and a small local in Metro of about 6,000 students. We have 370 full-time-equivalent teaching positions in 19 schools and programs.

For its size, New Westminster has a wide variety of learning opportunities. On top of our regular K-to-12 system, which also offers French immersion, Montessori and an International Baccalaureate program, we have three alternate programs for at-risk youth, two adult learning centres, on-line courses through our virtual school and a home learners program both in New Westminster and on Bowen Island.

The teaching staff of New West are extremely proud of the educational opportunities offered to a wide variety of learners. However, we're also extremely anxious about maintaining the quality of delivery now and into the future.

The reality is that a decade of underfunding has caught up with us and hit us hard. Numbers are stark. B.C. students are funded at \$1,000 less per year than the Canadian national average, and the teacher-student ratio in B.C. is the worst in the country.

It's long been touted that B.C. schools are receiving the highest-ever funding. However, highest funding ever has not met highest-ever costs, many of them downloaded by government and ministry.

In New Westminster we've struggled for the last decade, and this past year we hit the wall; \$4.4 million has been cut from our district budget to meet the mandated balanced budget, and we had 62 full-time positions — teachers, support staff and administrators — cut from our ranks. That's a loss of 8 percent of our workforce in one year.

The result has been devastating. This year New Westminster's schools are expected to operate on 10 percent of the supplies budget they had from previous years. Teachers routinely pay for school supplies out of their own pocket and are struggling this year with a dilemma. Do they reach into their own wallets and try to cover the shortfall, or do they operate with what they've been given and point to the \$33.95 allocated per student for the entire school year and throw their hands up in frustration?

Schools are now the front-line institutions for not only delivering the K-to-12 curriculum but also for dealing with childhood poverty, identification and support for mental health issues, supporting the settlement of immigrant families and trying to support the myriad of children who attend public schools and any and all of the issues that they may bring with them.

Teachers are now ad hoc counsellors, nutritionists, multicultural workers, legal advocates, triage nurses and

caregivers. And what little supports they've had to fulfil these roles, as well as their primary role of teaching to diverse learners, have been further eroded. How many adoptive schools would there be before things change?

But teachers are fiercely protective of their students, and they've asked us to come here and share their stories and to advocate for them and, most importantly, their students. So I'd like to share some of their thoughts.

Frances?

F. Hernandorena: Then and now. Then: I have taught music K-to-7 in a portable in an inner-city school for 22 years. In that setting I was able to hold choir practices before school a couple of days a week. I was also able to leave instruments set up in my room. The room was spacious, and the children were able to move freely during creative movement time and singing games.

Now, this year, due to increased enrolment, a dearth of funds for a replacement portable and lack of any other viable space, I've lost my attached portable and am now sharing with a daycare. Due to the constraints of shared space, my instruments are kept in cupboards in the room. I have no access to the room to set up instruments before or after school, as the space is used by the daycare.

[1035]

My large pitched instruments are in excess of 20 pounds or more. Each one of the bass xylophone replacements is in excess of \$1,500. I have four of them. I also have nine bass bars that, depending on their size, cost between \$300 and \$400 apiece. These instruments have to be moved in and out of these cupboards on a daily basis. In addition, I have several smaller pitched instruments which are used within my program.

The process of constantly having to move instruments is time-consuming and adds to their wear, tear and potential damage. Over the years thousands of dollars have been spent to acquire these instruments, and there is no money in the budget to replace or repair them.

In addition, it is a matter of fitting the instruments into the available space for storage. Their access is secondary. The process of getting these instruments in and out is both arduous and time-consuming, taking away from valuable teaching time.

To accommodate the needs of both a daycare and a music room, it is necessary to move carpets and tables before the teaching day can begin. Some days the daycare dishwasher is running while I'm attempting to teach. Further, the amount of furniture and items used by the daycare limits the space that I can use during singing games and the movement component in my music program.

The daycare/music room is across the hall from the gym where, again due to space restraints, the elementary band program is offered on the stage during gym classes. In addition, in the hallway outside my room special needs children use equipment such as trampolines. This

results in additional noise.

You can imagine that noise concerns and distractions for my students are a major consideration. I think you would agree this is not a viable learning environment, and the children deserve better.

D. Sacco: We asked: "What did you used to have that you don't have today?"

"I don't have current math textbooks." "I have 21 socials textbooks for 55 kids. We do not have the money to update the dreadfully outdated textbooks." "I do not have SEA support." "I have five identified students, going on six, and only one SEA, who is unable, as I am, to meet the challenges and needs of the children."

"I have no funding for arts supplies, math resources or class novels or anything needed to provide quality education." "Our school has had to close down portions of the playground because there are not enough people to supervise. This is the result of our school losing many special education assistants." And lastly: "Apparently, there will be a time sometime this year when there will be no more paper. We're hoarding some now so that we can continue printing report cards."

B. McCloy: We asked teachers: "What do you need?"

Some of what they said: "I need funds for field trips and to purchase math textbooks." "As a resource teacher, I need resources for struggling learners." "As a resource teacher, I need time to work one on one or in small groups with struggling learners. Difficult to do with resource positions cut so drastically." "I think it's a shame that because of staff cuts, some classes don't have access to the library, computer lab and PE blocks they deserve." "I've never had a computer provided in my classroom. I need to bring my own laptop to work." "Without the Scholastic Book Fairs, we wouldn't be able to stock our library." "The only mouse still working in my classroom is the one that occasionally runs across the floor."

D. Ashton (Chair): Bruce, thanks for that. Dragana, thanks. I'm sorry. I just needed to get your names in. We are broadcasting live. So when you do speak, if you could use your name also. Thank you.

Y. Laforest: My name is Yves Laforest. I am a teacher. Under the theme of what worries me, these are some of the things my peers had to say:

"I worry about the future of education and it becoming a model of the American school system." "As a resource teacher, I'm worried about the lack of resources and staff support for struggling learners." "I'm worried about class sizes, and I'm worried about the number of students with special needs in each class." "I'm worried that I have a student who actually cannot write or read at all in grade 5. I don't know how I'm going to support him by myself."

"I'm worried about counselling support for students

that has been slashed to a shockingly low level. It seems to amount to triage. Who will deal with the students who are in crisis during the school day? Who will recognize a self-harmer? Who will implement the anti-bullying and sex abuse prevention programs?"

"I worry about the few children in my class who need some early intervention, and I can't give it to them because I'm pulled in 20 different ways." "I'm worried about fewer opportunities for students." "I worry that I will burn out because I'm trying to compensate for a system that is completely underfunded."

P. Dyer: We asked: "What keeps you going?"

Some of the responses were: "My passion for teaching and the students." "The kids keep me going and the hope that things may get better." "Support from other teachers and also the students." "The kids keep me going. That's what gets me up in the morning, and that's why I teach." "My students. I continue to have amazing classes." "My staff — the amazing teachers that I work with who bring their best each day." Finally: "What keeps me going is the gleam in my students' eyes, support from my peers as well as encouraging parents. I have a great group of parents."

[1040]

F. Hernandorena: Here are some suggestions about... We asked: "What did you have to pick up in order to take care of your children, your students?" This is what they have said: "I've already spent over \$100 for my classroom, and it's not even October. I had to purchase books, math workbooks and art supplies." "Because of a lack of resources and support, I have two dozen kids who are really struggling after school. What matters to me is they receive the help and the education they deserve." "I already spent about \$500 a year out of my own pocket for my classroom, and now myself and my colleagues are wondering if we need to buy our own paper to teach effectively."

G. Osborne: To sum it up, the teacher wrote:

"Our government is hoping to roll out an education plan that includes technology and offers individualized instruction for every student. Teachers agree with this. The government wants the majority of our students to meet expectations in reading, writing and math with grades 4 and 7 levels. Teachers agree with this.

"The reality is that these visions are not being funded. Laptops, iPads, computers, educational-learning websites all cost a great deal of money. Our school is not able to afford paper to photocopy work for students, let alone these luxury items.

"Extra support for struggling readers and writers and young mathematicians takes an extra support worker in the classroom or access to in-house support programs. This takes extra money.

"Let's encourage government to fund their vision and ours with the necessary funding rather than dealing with kids who aren't coping in high school because what they needed in their younger years was deemed not to be within the budget.

"Kids are our future. That statement should be validated with financial support from our government rather than telling school boards that they need to reallocate their resources. There are no

more resources to reallocate.

"The government needs to fully fund public education so we can provide every child with what they need to be a successful adult."

We're teachers from New Westminster. We could be from any one of the other 59 school districts. We're the teachers who've shared in this presentation. This is but a fraction of what we received of the concerns about systemic underfunding.

We're doing our very best, and we ask you to fund the system to meet our children's needs.

D. Ashton (Chair): Thank you. Perfect. Five minutes. You hit it.

S. Hamilton: Thank you for the presentation. It's a fairly common lament that we've been hearing. It's not falling on deaf ears either.

The question I have for you with regard to your school district: do you suffer in New Westminster...? A lot of other districts are suffering from declining enrolment. Is it stable? Is it increasing? What are your enrolment numbers like?

G. Osborne: It's stable and slightly increasing.

S. Hamilton: Slightly increasing.

G. Osborne: Slightly increasing this year — correct.

S. Hamilton: So now there are more families moving into New Westminster?

G. Osborne: More families. We also have a very, very high population of special needs students because of the level of support we've traditionally provided. There are some very stark realities facing special needs parents this year.

D. Ashton (Chair): Any other questions?

Just before you go, one question. How does a child get from one to five without being able to read? It's somebody's comment, so I'm just asking for....

G. Osborne: It's a comment that.... It could be any number of issues that they're dealing with in terms of a learning disability and the level of support. One of the things, also, is getting these children adequately tested, having district psychologists that are overburdened, having very difficult hoops to jump through in terms of getting identification, getting IEP plans set up.

Very often they will not test very young children, so this is a fairly common problem. It doesn't mean that we're not intervening. It doesn't mean that we're not trying to provide support. The problem is that the teachers and the support staff are just stretched so thin.

D. Sacco: If I may add. I am a former resource teacher in the district myself. I taught K-to-3 and K-to-5 resource for many, many years.

Even though there are psychometric tests available globally for the assessment of such learning disabilities and potential learning difficulties, it has been a trend in our district to, again, decline the administration of such tests until a later and later — or defer them, perhaps, is a better word — time in the child's early childhood education career.

Children that may have been tested early on in their primary years are being deferred to a later time, to such a point that many parents, in frustration, opt for private testing, which is, again, a huge cost borne by the families.

D. Ashton (Chair): Folks, thank you for your presentation. Thank you very much for coming in today.

[1045]

Alzheimer Society of British Columbia. Good morning. So ten minutes for presentation and five for questions. We'll hold you to it. Welcome, Jim and Rebecca.

J. Mann: Thank you, Mr. Chair and committee members. My name is Jim Mann. I'm a volunteer board member of the Alzheimer Society of B.C., living here in Surrey. I am also living with Alzheimer's and have been since my diagnosis in 2007.

With me here today is Rebecca Morris, advocacy analyst with the society. I should mention that Larry Okotinsky, the society's interim CEO, is in Toronto, and our director, Barbara Lindsay, whom many of you know, is in Terrace.

We appreciate once again the opportunity to participate in these prebudget consultations, and I am especially pleased to see some familiar faces at the table.

It is most fitting that we appear before you today, as this follows Saturday, September 21, World Alzheimer's Day. As the Ministry of Health press release noted: "There are more than 70,000 British Columbians currently living with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia, and almost 10,000 of those individuals are under the age of 65." For the record, for the next eight days I am still one of the 10,000.

Most of us understand dementia to be an old person's disease. True, age is the biggest risk factor. After 65 the risk doubles every five years. Baby boomers are entering their years of greatest risk, and we're all living longer. But dementia is also affecting more and more Canadians in their 40s and 50s, even in their 30s. I was 58 when I was diagnosed.

What the release didn't acknowledge was that dementia is probably the most feared of all chronic diseases. But for those diagnosed, their caregivers — most often spouses — and families and friends, the Alzheimer Society is a godsend, offering support groups, programs and other services, and our 19 resource centres around

the province are on-the-ground saviours for many.

For me personally, the society was there when I needed information about dementia when my mother was diagnosed. When I received my own diagnosis of Alzheimer's, my wife and I both were helped with information, support and education. The diagnosis for both my mother and I preceded the society's program First Link, which is supported financially by the government. For that, we sincerely thank members of this committee for your ongoing support and confirmation of the effectiveness and need for this program.

Mr. Chair, I won't ask committee members to raise their hands if they have a partner, parent or family member with Alzheimer's disease or dementia. Nor will I ask if they know someone who is caring for a family member or friend with dementia. But I am confident that if I did, all hands would be raised.

I was in Toronto Friday for an Economic Club of Canada lunch, at which the Alzheimer Society of Canada CEO spoke. When she asked those questions, all 100 people in the room raised their hands. That's the impact of this disease on families, friends and co-workers.

Earlier this year a report was published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* showing that Alzheimer's is the most expensive malady in the U.S., exceeding that for heart disease and cancer. That's where our partnership comes in with the First Link program. In fact, the government's 2012 document *Dementia Action Plan for British Columbia* specifically recommended the expansion of First Link.

It's an early intervention program connecting individuals and families affected by Alzheimer's or other dementias with services and support soon after a diagnosis is given. Obviously, the individual and family members will be shocked with the diagnosis, but a lifeline would be given to them immediately. "May I give your name and contact information to the Alzheimer Society for follow-up?"

[1050]

A formal referral from physicians and health care providers to the Alzheimer Society leads to a proactive initial contact and then ongoing contact every three to six months, ensuring that families receive information and tips on planning and moving forward with this disease.

Research indicates that families affected by dementia cope better with the disease and utilize health care resources more effectively when they are informed about the dementia journey. First Link supports the Ministry of Health initiatives, and our written submission provides the specifics.

Suffice it to say, primary care physicians value our resource, with referrals over three years increasing from 1 percent to 10 percent. Assessment clinics, specialists, home and community care and mental health all are making referrals in significant numbers. As noted in our submission: "Our health care system, our communities

and our workplaces are not yet ready to manage the impact of dementia. However, by making the right decisions now to continue funding for First Link and for dementia health care improvement, we will have an impact beyond the initial resources and effort."

We therefore ask the committee to ensure all communities across British Columbia have early access to our society's programs and services with funding of \$2.7 million. Retaining funding at \$1 million annually ensures at a minimum that First Link continues in the five communities it serves.

I would like to add one piece of clarification, Mr. Chair, which in fact shows the commitment to and effectiveness of First Link. We speak of five communities operating through the current \$1 million ministry funding. However, it is important to note there are actually eight programs operating — an additional one in Victoria and two sites in Vancouver. The Vancouver Island coastal health authorities have seen the community and personal impact of First Link and, with their own funds, have expanded the local program. That, I think, is evidence our program is working effectively in and for the community.

Our other recommendation to the committee is for continued funding for our provincial government's strategic approach to improving dementia care, strengthening the ability of families to provide care and to increase the capacity of communities to be inclusive of people with dementia and their families.

R. Morris: I spent about a year and a half as a First Link coordinator with the North Fraser regional office. Today I would like to bring just a small story to you to illustrate what the First Link program looks like for the families that we work with.

Sheryl is a person who is providing care for her mother, Patricia, who now lives in Sheryl's basement. Patricia was in the early stages of the disease when I met her in the spring of 2012, but over the last little while she's had to give up driving, and she needs more help with day-to-day tasks. When Sheryl and her mom came through the First Link process, they were referred by the physician, and they were contacted by me three to four weeks after Patricia was diagnosed.

When families like the Persoons come to us, what they're really needing is a toolkit of information in order to make this journey as smooth as possible. They need information on services, information on how to communicate or understand reactive behaviour. They need personal planning tips — so, for example, information on tax credits. They also need emotional support.

At the time that Sheryl and Patricia first came to us, their needs were really focused on early-stage services. But there will be a time when Sheryl is in contact with that resource centre and what she really needs is information on long-term care. Through First Link we're able to work with specialists, nurses, case managers and other

health care professionals to provide the best possible support for families facing this life-changing disease.

Sheryl and Patricia are now very involved with the society. They attend Minds in Motion, our social and exercise program. They have come to various educational programs, and Sheryl has recently joined a support group. In fact, Sheryl says that First Link has been instrumental to her ability to cope, and it was only because of her doctor that she was introduced to the society.

[1055]

Independent evaluation tells us that Sheryl and Patricia's story is the same as so many others. This program connects people with the society earlier, and it keeps them connected. In fact, those referred through the First Link program come to the society 11 to 12 months earlier. For Patricia, that made a huge difference. She was able to learn about her disease, and she was able to put legal and financial plans in place for the future. If Patricia came to us just a year later, she probably wouldn't have had that opportunity. I am saying that, being able to witness this family's journey.

With that, Mr. Chair and members, I thank you on behalf of the Alzheimer Society for giving us a few minutes to participate in this consultation process.

D. Ashton (Chair): Thanks, Rebecca. Thanks, Jim.

M. Hunt: There are two numbers that have been used throughout here, and I'm just not quite understanding. One minute you're talking about \$2.7 million annually, and the next minute you're talking about \$1 million for First Link. Is that \$1 million in the \$2.7 million, or is that in addition to the \$2.7 million?

J. Mann: That's a part of...

M. Hunt: It's included in the \$2.7 million.

R. Morris: Currently we're receiving.... Over the last four years we've received \$1 million to provide our First Link program. What the society really feels we need is that \$2.7 million so that we can make sure that everybody in the province of British Columbia has access to this program.

For example, right now individuals who are living in your constituency, Mr. Hunt, don't have access to the First Link program, whereas somebody who is living in Mr. Farnworth's constituency....

M. Hunt: Hold it a second. The smaller communities get more than the big ones. Is that what we're saying?

R. Morris: It all depends on the area.

J. Mann: In a lot of cases it was the health authorities who actually identified the location of the establishment

of the First Link program in the community.

M. Farnworth (Deputy Chair): Thank you, Jim and Rebecca. It's good to see you again.

One of the questions that I would like to ask.... It actually follows up a bit on what Marvin has just mentioned. That is expanding the program to reach the population of British Columbia. Right now we do have it on the north side of the Fraser, in Port Coquitlam. But in Surrey we don't.

Could you just outline a little bit? For example, would you be able to do much more outreach and provision of services to people in the multicultural community, which clearly would impact Surrey, for example, and parts of Vancouver and the needs in those particular areas? Information around dementia and Alzheimer's isn't just confined to one part of the province but right....

So the \$2.7 million would help in that particular direction, wouldn't it?

J. Mann: It would help. Would it solve the problem? No. But it would help, and part of that help would be through, hopefully, the employment process — acquiring additional staff.

One of the challenges that the society does have is actually trying to catch up to the multicultural needs. We do have a Chinese resource centre, but we also recognize that is sort of the beginning. But no. In the case of Surrey, as your example, there would need to be a bigger multicultural outreach. That's what we would endeavour to do.

S. Hamilton: Very quickly, maybe you can help some confusion of mine. You're drawing a distinction, north of the Fraser and south of the Fraser. Are you actually funded through the health district, or is your funding coming directly from the provincial government?

R. Morris: From the Ministry of Health, with the exception of a couple of small pockets of money that we receive, as Jim was mentioning, to run our Vancouver proper and our Vancouver Island programs, as well as our North Shore–Sunshine Coast program.

S. Hamilton: That helps clarify it. Thank you very much.

[1100]

J. Mann: I just wanted to say that the test for First Link was actually done in VIHA. It proved so successful that in fact there is one location in every health authority, except that VIHA saw the benefit and said: "Well, we are going to put more of our own funds to it." Likewise in Vancouver.

R. Morris: I would like to mention that that money is not annualized, so there is no promise of continuation.

D. Ashton (Chair): Rebecca and Jim, thank you very much for your presentation.

British Columbia Construction Association. Good morning, sir. Ten minutes for a presentation and five.... I'm sorry. I just have to keep mentioning it. Welcome.

M. McLachlan: Well, thank you once again. We always look forward to the opportunity to address this committee. I note some familiar faces to me, in the ten years that I've been making this presentation, and also some new ones.

Let me just take a real quick moment and introduce who I represent, that being the British Columbia Construction Association. We represent over 2,000 construction employers active in all areas of construction across the province. We have an integrated membership relationship with four regional associations: BCCA-North out of Prince George and beyond; Vancouver Island; Vancouver mainland — sort of Hope to the coast; and the Southern Interior Construction Association.

Our membership is an inclusive membership. We are not a labour relations organization, so we don't deal in any of those types of issues. Our members actually.... If you were to ask how many unionized members, we have a representative proportion of unionized members as there are in the construction industry. Roughly 30 percent of our members work under collective agreements. The balance are what are commonly referred to as open-shop contractors. We focus on issues that are of great importance, we believe, to the industry in general.

It's clear to us, and not just because this is the kind of work we do, that construction continues to be a fundamental sector of B.C.'s economy. There's a little slogan that we've adopted that says, quite simply: "Nothing happens until something gets built." You can probably reference that the best if you look at the effort that's going into the development of an LNG industry here. Quite frankly, nothing will happen there until one of those plants actually gets built.

It's important that the needs of the industry are addressed. At times we have been up to 7.8 percent of the gross domestic product here in the province, and we are one of the more significant employers across the whole spectrum of industries.

I'm not going to spend a great deal of time on issues that we've put in front of this panel before. The return to the PST is still problematic. We've included an awful lot of material in this package, including some of the advice we provided to our members around the transition.

Let me just leave you with one thought on PST. The current structure around instructions to contractors for the collection and remittance of PST in a construction environment — which is complex, to say the least — is, we believe, problematic.

The focus appears to be, or is, on leaving the interpretation up to the PST auditors. Now, I don't know if any of

you have been through a PST audit, but you don't want that to happen. In the absence of good, strong, clear and concise regulation, I think we'd all be happy, but that doesn't exist.

There's one particular area that's problematic, and that is an area that was addressed in the 2007 report on PST that then Minister Thorpe completed, and it has to do with the tax on labour on non-real property. That is nebulous to determine. You're probably thinking: "What's non-real property?" That's a challenge. So we have concerns around that area, and I'll leave that in the package for you to deal with.

We have had ongoing issues with public sector procurement. I want to acknowledge this government's commitment to working with the construction industry to create what's now called the deputy minister's industry infrastructure forum. This was announced in January of this past year.

[1105]

This forum will address the need for the industry in B.C. to work directly with senior staff in the capital ministries to create some real dialogue between public agencies and the industry to determine the underlying cause of continuing public sector procurement issues.

One of the objectives of this new forum is to address the reworking of the capital asset management framework. That framework was put in place in 2002 and contains four principles that we align ourselves with completely: fairness, openness and transparency; competition; allocation and management of risk; and value for money and protection of the public interest. In the last few years that capital asset management framework has been in the process of being rewritten, and we're anticipating the work of the deputy minister-industry forum to move that process along.

Now, we've been communicating with the provincial government regarding construction procurement issues since the capital asset management framework was introduced. I've attached a document.... There are actually two documents that are attached. One is a position paper that we issued in January of last year that's just titled *Fair and Transparent*. It was published in January. And the Vancouver Island Construction Association, one of our integrated members, published this past summer a paper described as debunking the myths of bundling. I'll leave that with you for your consideration as well.

We also want to commend government on the recent development of a special project titled "Doing Business with Government." George Farkas, from within the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training is leading that up.

The primary issue that I wanted to bring to this table today relates to developing the workforce of the future. We believe that the availability of skilled workers is the single biggest issue for the economy of British Columbia — full stop. We no longer have a pending labour short-

age; it's here now.

You know, if you just do the math, there's lots of material out there. BuildForce Canada, which is the former Construction Sector Council, publishes an annual report called *Construction Looking Forward*. It indicates that our industry here will see some 38,400 retirees in the next five years. You add in the sum total of all of the major projects, which comes in the neighbourhood of \$250 billion in major projects, and add in the over 30,000 new jobs that will be required to complete those projects.

You just have to do the math. We have a skills shortage.

Now, we think that there are a number of things that have to take place to avoid some of the issues, particularly around LNG, that we're seeing happening in Australia right now within their industry — where they went full bore, put seven projects together at one time. They actually acknowledged it: they ignored the labour issue, the availability of skilled workers. A lot of their projects now are teetering on economic viability, with the cost of labour driving those costs up.

We've attached a stats pack here that highlights the issue in a significant way. The line at the bottom says: "If you're looking for a sign, this is it." And I think it's something that we need to turn our attention to in a significant way, including looking not so much for new dollars for skills training, but looking at how we're currently allocating those dollars for skills training.

For instance, I think we need to rethink how we do high school education, to reinstate trades training. Now, we recognize that by refurbishing shop classes and introducing introductory trades training as core curriculum, it has a financial cost. I can tell you that industry, certainly the B.C. Construction Association and the current Construction Foundation that we've just over the last year set up, are turning our attention to assisting with the refurbishing of those classes. But the government really needs to reallocate financial resources within the post-secondary education system.

Very quickly, why are we training more teachers than we can employ, when we knowingly graduate 2,600 or so teachers for 800 jobs? If you look at the stats pack, you'll see where the dollars for young people can be garnered in the industry.

We recognize the need for a review. We've included our paper, called *Culture Shift: Planning for the Future of Trades Training and Apprenticeship in British Columbia*. It's certainly our considered opinion on what the trades training system should look like. Most importantly, we believe it's an industry issue. This is not a labour relations issue. If we don't get those people in place, very likely we will have a significant challenge on our hands in actually building the infrastructure we need, let alone in creating new industries here in the province. I'll stop there.

[1110]

D. Ashton (Chair): Manley, thanks. I appreciate it.

Any questions?

A Voice: He's given us the thickest package to read.

D. Ashton (Chair): Yeah, it's good.

M. McLachlan: We were going to make it a really big font, but it just makes it thicker and more intimidating.

E. Foster: Manley, thank you very much. I'm interested in your comment about the industry people being involved in refurbishing shops and so on, having spent 15 years in the education business. I taught forestry, but we spent half our time in the mechanics shop working on iron and stuff. Have you approached any of the school districts with this idea?

M. McLachlan: We are currently working within the Ministry of Education, where they have a new director of transition from education to trades. So this is early days in that initiative, but I think we've connected with the right folks.

Is somebody going to ask me about temporary foreign workers? I'd really like somebody to do that.

E. Foster: If I might, with one more comment on that... I think it's important that you really push that. In the time I've spent in school I found that the academic end of things sort of rules the roost. So I encourage you to really push hard with that because it's a great initiative.

M. McLachlan: We'll keep pushing on that. You know, there is an issue around someone with a trades background having to have a teaching certificate in order to teach the stuff they learned in the trades. So there are lots of adjustments that we think need to be made.

M. Farnworth (Deputy Chair): Two questions. One is around the issue of temporary foreign workers and the role — it looks like an increasing role — that they are playing in the construction of projects, which many people are concerned about because they're looking at the kids not being able to get a job. My own niece, for example, just left this province and went to Fort McMurray, and good luck to her.

The other question is what do you think one of the big challenges is in getting more young people interested in trades and skilled trades training?

M. McLachlan: We believe in... We've experienced the need to have an intermediary involved in building that relationship. So we've been offering the skilled-trades employment program in this province now for seven years. We placed, coordinated and assisted... By the end of this year we'll have well over 8,000 people that we've assisted in getting work in the industry.

It requires coordination between the individual and the employer to mitigate the risk involved for both parties — to start a new job in the industry or to start someone that's brand new, particularly someone from a different culture. Your niece should get a hold of our organization, because we'll find a place for her here in B.C.

Now, were you going to ask me about temporary foreign workers?

M. Farnworth (Deputy Chair): Yeah, that was the issue. That was my first question.

M. McLachlan: Okay. So I think that we all require a bit of a mind shift here. I honestly think that one of the most popular coffee chains in this country has done the construction industry a great disservice in their use of temporary foreign workers. If you take out the low skilled — the temporary foreign workers that the coffee chains bring in — and concentrate on the skilled workers, the industrial tradespeople who work across the globe, that we're going to require to complete these facilities, we'd have a different look at it.

We have 38,000-plus people about to retire. When those individuals leave, the productivity of the company drops and the companies' ability to hire entry-level people disappears. So we're tracking.... Right now we believe that if we bring a 35-year-old Irish tradesman in to replace that retiree, productivity stays the same, and we see an opening for as many as two apprentices and up to four or five entry-level positions. That's how we're going to get the young Canadians involved in our major projects here.

It's almost counterintuitive when you think about bringing somebody in from offshore, but the reality is that we're losing our skilled tradespeople. If you talk clearly with the building trades, they know that they're losing their senior guys. So we're going to need to bring people in to augment capacity to accommodate the entry-level jobs that young Canadians aren't going to have good access to.

E. Foster: I know that one of the challenges that I've heard from employers about the apprenticeship programs and so on.... The challenge is that they take on an apprentice, and it's been whatever number of years — certainly, a lot of time and a lot of money invested in them — and the minute they've got a Red Seal in their hand, they're gone.

[1115]

I guess the question is: how do we deal with that? Does the industry have any kind of a plan that...? I don't know, but maybe you pay into a pool, and if you steal somebody, you've got to buy it. I don't know, but it's a huge challenge.

M. McLachlan: You've described one of the dynamics in the industry that makes it very difficult. We're start-

ing to move more in the direction of saying, frankly, that employers need to take accountability and responsibility for their own future. Government is not going to solve the apprenticeship shortage. Industry is going to play a huge role.

The fact is that only 27 percent of employers in this country, let alone British Columbia, employ apprentices. It may be for those reasons. I don't know. But to me that's shameful. We all need to start looking at human resources as what they are. They're human. This is not about inventory. It's not about treating your staff as if they're a commodity. Perhaps the extreme shortage will be cause for a number of employers to take a different approach, and you're going to need to invest over the long term.

There are lots of reasons why somebody may go to your competition or may go to Fort McMurray. Dollars are usually one of them. If we can keep the employers working through good, sound investment decisions and good procurement practices, it will also lead to, I think, longer-term employment of folks to get them through the system.

D. Ashton (Chair): We don't have anybody here. We're out of time, but....
Jackie.

J. Tegart: Just a comment. It's great to see the partnerships happening, but as a community leader, I think communities also have a role to play in keeping our young people at home. There's lots of opportunity once you've got your papers.

I live in a community that has Highland Valley Copper. My husband apprenticed there, all my family apprenticed there, and we all live in the Ashcroft–Cache Creek area because we like the lifestyle. So how do we partner up with community, industry and these young people to say: "We value you to stay here"?

We're seeing it in our social fabric of community: the loss of the two-week-in, two-week-out young people and what that means to communities. So I think the third pillar of that partnership is community leadership.

M. McLachlan: I wouldn't disagree with that. The way I've been describing it is that we're now all starting to learn the words to the song. Nobody has kind of figured out the tune yet. I think, again, because of what we're going to be facing here in the next short while, we need to.... We'll get to the music sooner or later.

Again, I'd just refer you to this stat pack. When you read through it... You know, I was startled — 40 percent hourly wage of a construction worker over and above someone working in retail. Now, I'm not saying this is easy work, right? I mean, it does take a particular recognition that you're going to work in the rain and you're going to work with your hands. But the system needs to generate more interest in the trades from an earlier stage

than what we have currently.

I'm just past the 60 threshold. I remember our shop classes, where we were introduced to working with your hands and those types of things. We know that the shop classes, basically, have been dropped, or if there are shop classes, they're being trained on equipment that doesn't exist in the workforce any longer.

D. Ashton (Chair): Manley, thank you very much. Greatly appreciate it.

We don't have the next folks here. Can we take a five-minute recess? Would that be okay? Thank you.

The committee recessed from 11:18 a.m. to 11:24 a.m.

[D. Ashton in the chair.]

D. Ashton (Chair): Good morning, Katie. Thank you very much for coming. Welcome. A presentation for ten minutes and probably five minutes of questions or up to five minutes of questions — please start.

K. Marocchi: Perfect. Good morning. Before I begin, I'd like to acknowledge that today this hearing is taking place on Coast Salish traditional territory.

[1125]

My name is Katie Marocchi. I'm the chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students—British Columbia. Our organization represents students from 15 public post-secondary institutions in B.C., drawn from every region of the province. The federation's mandate is to advocate for a high-quality, publicly funded and accessible post-secondary education system that is affordable for all citizens regardless of their family income.

In recent years we have seen a structural shift in the way in which our institutions are funded. The students' share of the cost of post-secondary education has increased while core funding to our institutions and availability of financial aid have decreased. As a result, our members have directed that our organization prioritize seeking government measures to reduce student debt.

Students continue to identify the following priorities for improving access and quality of education in British Columbia: (1) a reduction of tuition fees to 2001 levels adjusted for inflation; (2) the establishment of an up-front, needs-based provincial grant student program; (3) the elimination of interest rates on B.C. student loans; (4) the restoration of operating funding to universities and colleges to 2001 levels, accounting for inflation; (5) maintenance of government's commitment to keep adult basic education free; and (6) the reorganization of the ITA governance structure and funding comprehensive trades education and capital equipment upgrades.

The federation will be providing the committee with detailed support for the recommendations today in our written submission. At this time I will expand on our

recommendations to paint a broad picture of the current position of the post-secondary system in B.C., starting with the reduction of tuition fees.

Tuition fees are the biggest portion of student cost to education. In B.C. tuition fees have steadily increased over the last decade from \$1,727 in 1990 to an average of \$5,029 this year. This translates to a 300 percent increase over the course of just one generation.

This shift in policy means that students today are being asked to pay a much higher proportion of the cost of college and university education than ever before. Recent studies reveal the effect of high tuition fees on post-secondary education for students from low- to middle-income backgrounds. Statistics Canada reports that students from low-income families are less than half as likely to participate in university than those from high-income families.

Similarly, research at the University of California, UCLA found that for every \$1,000 increase to tuition fees, enrolment rates dropped by 15 percent. The study demonstrates that the decrease in enrolment was composed almost exclusively from minority and low-income students. What this translates to is a narrowing demographic of British Columbians who can access post-secondary education, leaving low- and middle-income families last in line.

It is clear, then, that there are two detrimental effects to B.C.'s tuition fee levels. The first is that fees are a barrier to participation for families from low-income backgrounds at a time when new jobs require some post-secondary education. The second: for many of those who are still able to access education, fees have caused student debt to skyrocket higher than ever before. That is why students are recommending a reduction in tuition fees to 2001 levels in order to reverse the waning domestic enrolment at B.C. post-secondary institutions and to provide much-needed relief to students struggling to pay the rising cost of higher education.

The most equitable way to finance a widely accessible system is through a progressive income tax, where affluent Canadians pay a higher percentage in their income tax than lower-income Canadians. Reducing tuition fees must be part of a larger strategy to ensure broad access to post-secondary education in B.C., a strategy that must also include provision for adequate institutional funding and student financial assistance, which leads me to my next point.

The second recommendation students are putting forward is re-establishing an up-front, needs-based grants program. After meeting with reps from the Canadian Federation of Students, the federal government has acknowledged the burden of student debt across the country and implemented the Canada student grants program in recent years.

In contrast, B.C. has the lowest level of non-repayable financial aid in the country. Financial aid should be used

to help those who cannot afford post-secondary education to enter the system and attain a degree or diploma needed to support themselves and their families. If aid was distributed properly, students will be able to leave university and college without massive debt and be able to pay into tomorrow's education system through taxes.

Today average student debt for British Columbians is \$37,000 upon completion of a four-year degree, over \$10,000 above the national average and awarding B.C. the prize for highest student debt in the country. Student debt should not be taken lightly by government, and consideration should be given to the adverse impacts on ballooning student debt that it has on the economy.

[1130]

For the first time in history an entire generation will attempt to enter the workforce with unprecedented levels of debt and will undoubtedly delay purchasing homes, starting families and investing in business ventures.

Student debt is not just a financial issue. It has a negative impact on academic completion as well as program enrolment. UBC researcher Lori McElroy found that students with little or no debt were more than twice as likely to finish their degree than students with high levels of debt. Completion rates for students with under \$1,000 of debt was 71 percent. The completion rate for those with over \$10,000 of debt was a dismal 34 percent.

British Columbia is dead last among the provinces when it comes to the provision of non-repayable financial aid. Less than 12 percent of financial aid is in the form of grants. A combination of record-high tuition and a lack of non-repayable financial aid is unequivocally the cause for a B.C. student debt crisis. B.C. was once a leading province in assisting students. The B.C. government has an opportunity to reverse this trend by establishing a needs-based grant program.

Continuing the discussion on financial aid, I will now move on to the issue of student loans. While student loans may get students who otherwise couldn't afford the high costs of education through the door, it does nothing to combat student debt. A majority of post-secondary students in B.C. cannot afford to pay their tuition up front. Those who are forced to borrow to finance their education end up paying substantially more than those who can.

Looking closer at this inequality, we see that B.C. students in particular are being charged interest at prime plus 2.5 percent on their student loans — higher than anywhere else in the country — meaning a student who can afford to pay their tuition up front pays no interest to government, but a low-income student who needs a loan will pay thousands of dollars in interest.

The revenue from student loan interest to the provincial government is \$30 million. Given the inherent inequality created by student loan interest charges and the relatively minor cost of eliminating them, eliminating interest is an obvious and affordable policy mechanism

to reduce student debt levels in B.C.

I would now like to speak to the federation's fourth recommendation: institutional funding. The committee will likely hear from B.C.'s colleges, universities and institutes during this process, and their message will surely outline the need for increased funding to our institutions. On the topic of core funding, we agree that there needs to be substantial increases if our institutions are going to continue to provide high-quality education that competes globally.

Though the B.C. government should be commended for the investments in capital projects and for funding initiatives like institutional aboriginal service plans, these positives have occurred under an environment of shrinking operational budgets at our colleges and universities. In fact, since 2001, students have seen a gradual erosion of college and university funding on a per-student basis, leading to program cuts, deferred maintenance, liabilities, reduced services and increased ancillary fees — amongst other problems.

Despite the disproportional cuts to services and maintenance, we have seen growing cuts to university and college programs in recent years, with new programs introduced on a cost recovery model. To combat these trends, students are seeking a return to 2001 per-student funding levels adjusted for inflation.

Linked both to core funding and tuition fees is the province's commitment to keeping adult basic education free. Whether as a direct result of shrinking funding to institutions or another way to generate revenue, students are raising concerns about the maintenance of this policy.

In 2002 the B.C. government allowed post-secondary institutions to charge tuition fees to adults who have certified high school graduation. Under pressure from students the decision was wisely reversed. Since that time, operating budgets for B.C. colleges and universities have been more or less frozen, making it difficult for institutions to maintain free ABE offerings. In response, some institutions, like Thompson Rivers University and Capilano University, have limited ABE enrolment or reclassified high school credits as university transfer courses to charge tuition. In many cases adult basic education can be the only bridge to obtaining a higher education for British Columbians.

Ultimately, all of our recommendations are focused on providing adequate funding to our post-secondary system, with the understanding that investment in public education brings massive economic returns and better secures the future of our province.

Before we raise the issue of personal benefit argument on post-secondary education, I must also emphasize that students well recognize the benefit. We believe it's not a question of whether students pay for their education but a question of when. Those higher incomes as a result of post-secondary education should and do pay in their share through the progressive taxation system when

they so can afford.

D. Ashton (Chair): If you want to wrap it up, Katie. I think there are going to be some questions on this, and you're over the ten. Okay?

[1135]

K. Marocchi: Perfect. My next was just thanking the committee for the opportunity. So thank you for your time today.

D. Ashton (Chair): Thanks, Katie.

M. Farnworth (Deputy Chair): Just one quick question. When you say "needs-based grants," what does that mean? And how do you define "needs-based"?

K. Marocchi: It's based on income, and it's based on essentially the student proving whether or not they can afford the high price of tuition. Often it's based on family income. The whole idea of financial aid is to ensure that if you have the grades to go to post-secondary education, you should be able to despite the household income that you've been born into.

M. Elmore: Thanks, Katie. You made the case — and I think we've heard as well — that this generation of students is facing the highest cost for attending post-secondary institutions. Is it correct that — did I catch it? — B.C. has the highest student debt level, it has the highest interest on student loans, and it also has the lowest level of student financial aid?

K. Marocchi: Correct.

M. Elmore: My question is in terms of.... You mentioned that those cumulative effects have a negative impact in terms of the completion rate for students successfully graduating. Can you talk about that a little bit more?

K. Marocchi: For sure. Well, the research shows that for every \$1,000 increase to tuition fees, we see a decline in completion rates. Myself, personal experience — many of my friends discontinued their studies altogether.

Often what we see today is that there are no longer any full-time students; they're all part-time students, often working two or three jobs while simultaneously going to school, not to mention those who are also single parents trying to juggle all of those life commitments as well. So what it means to a student today is much different than what it looked like for the previous generation.

G. Holman: Mable asked my question. I hadn't heard that statistic before about the correlation between completion rates and debt. Very interesting.

D. Ashton (Chair): Katie, thank you very much for the presentation.

K. Marocchi: No problem. Thank you so much.

D. Ashton (Chair): Great. Will we receive a hard copy of yours, or not?

K. Marocchi: You will, and a written submission, as well, with an expansion on what we talked about.

D. Ashton (Chair): Thank you. Have a good day. Surrey Board of Trade. Good morning, Anita.

A. Huberman: Good morning. Thanks so much for allowing me to present today, members of the standing committee. I'm Anita Huberman, CEO of the Surrey Board of Trade.

D. Ashton (Chair): Just before you get started, ten minutes for the presentation and five for questions. Okay?

A. Huberman: Okay. Thank you.

The Surrey Board of Trade is one of the largest boards of trade in the province, representing 3,600 business contacts in and around Surrey. In terms of population, Surrey is Canada's 12th-largest city, the 35th-largest city in North America, and is expected to surpass Vancouver's population in just a decade. The South Fraser region is now home to over 940,000 residents, over 19 percent of B.C.'s population.

A major part of the forecasted increase of B.C.'s population is due to immigration. Among all Canadian cities, Surrey has the fastest-growing number of foreign-born persons over the last five years, increasing by 31 percent between 2001 and 2006. The rapid and sustained growth of Surrey and the South Fraser region is very unique in British Columbia, and it brings with it a number of problems with respect to education, transportation and health services, which I will address in just a moment from a business and economic perspective.

The Surrey Board of Trade has a longstanding philosophy that the government should seek a balanced budget as well as to seek to lower taxes and stimulate the economy wherever possible. The recent economic news of the re-establishment of Moody's triple-A credit rating is very good news indeed for the business community and for B.C.'s economy, and we congratulate the B.C. government on this.

The Surrey Board of Trade also applauds a number of achievements which will bolster the city and region — school funding for Surrey; the approaching completion of the South Fraser perimeter road; the Port Mann Bridge; Highway 1 improvements well into the valley; in addition, the ER and critical care tower at Surrey Memorial Hospital.

[1140]

At the same time, we must underscore that these much-appreciated investments occurred in the face of exceptional disparities still existing in Surrey and south of the Fraser compared with the rest of Metro Vancouver.

In the area of education, the money that was committed to build a school in Surrey was still only 40 percent of the amount required to service the largest school population in the province — over 71,000, which is 27 percent of the student population of the Metro Vancouver region, excluding Langley and Maple Ridge–Pitt Meadows.

To put it simply, within the next five years one in three B.C. students graduating from high school will be from the Surrey school district. In a study released this past year, we demonstrated that to bring the funding for post-secondary education in this area to a comparable level with the rest of the system, we will need to see a tripling — yes, a tripling — of funding for Kwantlen Polytechnic University.

Right now Kwantlen and Simon Fraser University together can only offer 12.7 post-secondary spaces for every 100 people in the 18-to-24-year age range in our region. The rest of B.C. receives almost four times that level of access, with 48.7 spaces for every 100 young adults.

In a 2006 memorandum of understanding with the B.C. government, there was a commitment to double the number of seats from 2,500 to 5,000 by 2015. This date is rapidly approaching, yet we have seen no increase in the numbers leading to the fulfilment of this goal.

We urge you as the Ministry of Finance and the standing committee to suggest implementations for additional funding. But we must also point out to our government that it is your responsibility as our elected representatives to provide at least equal funding to this region, the source of the lion's share of our province's future workforce. This workforce must be properly prepared to undertake the challenge if we are to grow our economy.

I must point out that creative solutions should be a priority around education funding — that is, to link industry needs to skill shortages to curriculum development. That is urgently needed also. For example, the LNG industry and the manufacturing industry — why should these local industries source workers from around the world when our own can be trained locally in these high-quality, high-paying jobs?

In the area of health care, improvements to Surrey Memorial Hospital and the development of the Pattison centre have been wonderful, but it is still far short of what this region deserves and requires compared to the rest of the region.

Early research on our part indicates that despite there being a million people in Surrey and south of the Fraser, per-capita funding for Fraser Health is still 50 percent below funding levels of the rest of the province. Where have we heard that before?

It's time the city was treated as the metro econom-

ic centre that it is — no longer the bedroom burb for Vancouver. It's time that you, as our B.C. government — mindful of balancing the budget, we know — developed an accelerated program to address these unacceptable regional shortfalls.

In addition to the issues I just mentioned, the Surrey Board of Trade continues to advocate on a wide variety of issues which impact our business community as well as the citizens of this city. I've brought along several copies of our advocacy report, which is in your folders.

A couple of other areas I wanted to highlight are transportation. As we just noted, we have much to be thankful for, but because of the growth, particularly of the entire Lower Mainland, many of the cities south of the Fraser still suffer from a serious imbalance of transit services. We note the initiation of the B-line service along 104th and King George Boulevard and express our thanks to TransLink.

We are concerned with the quality of the result of conducting a referendum to determine an issue as critical as transit services. However, we will work to see that it is as effective as it can be.

The Surrey Board of Trade continues to strongly advocate for a comprehensive and fair road-pricing policy for the Lower Mainland and perhaps the whole of the province, which will allow for the equitable funding for transportation infrastructure and transit services.

[1145]

With respect to taxation, specifically the PST, we find one of the most worrisome situations is that B.C. is at the top of the provincial list of marginal effective tax rates in Canada. We acknowledge that in a tougher fiscal environment, the solution to create a better economy is not achieved through increasing taxes — in particular, requiring businesses to pay sales tax on the tools and equipment necessary to grow business. Hold back on the tax, and the increased economy will return and more to the government in the end. It's much more sustainable because it will encourage new investment in our economy.

We look forward to seeing the recommendations of the B.C. government's expert panel on tax on administrative improvements to the PST. Apart from the PST, we commend you to the ongoing review of all small business taxes that can be streamlined, reducing red tape.

And, in an area synonymous with taxes, the announced increases in B.C. Hydro rates are of very great concern to business. This represents an increase in operating costs. It's time to act to resolve the issue of continuing to buy power at prices way above market rates.

In terms of public spending, the Surrey Board of Trade is seriously concerned over the level of public spending, as evidenced in some of our governmental departments and public enterprises. We've seen readjustments of levels of remuneration at ICBC, but the most troubling example of such spending is in the B.C. ferry corporation, with respect to the cost of governance and other costs.

We expect to see improvement in spending. Money not spent could be used to address the operational shortfalls we've just referred to in health care, education, transportation.

Now, at this point I say we are very pleased with the announcement, the most recent announcement, to move ahead with the desperately needed replacement of the Massey Tunnel. This is another project that exemplifies the way we could benefit from moneys not spent on expensive electricity or in the Crowns.

We understand and appreciate the increasingly difficult times facing the government in the next 12 months and assure you that we are prepared to work with you to find solutions. We offer our assistance as a business organization to work with you, and we'll be visiting Victoria, with your different ministries, to also extend our hand.

D. Ashton (Chair): Perfect, Anita. Thank you. Questions of Anita? Any questions?

Well, thank you very much for the presentation. Thank you for the hard copies. It'll give us something to read. I appreciate the input that you've given. It is recorded, and it is being broadcast live also.

A. Huberman: Thank you very much. Have a good day.

D. Ashton (Chair): Have a good day. See you later. A quick recess until the next delegation comes.

The committee recessed from 11:48 a.m. to 11:53 a.m.

[D. Ashton in the chair.]

D. Ashton (Chair): Colin, welcome to the committee. Presentations are ten minutes, five minutes for questions. We await your presentation.

C. Ewart: Good morning. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Colin Ewart. I'm with the Rick Hansen Foundation.

What I'd like to do in my short time with you is to cover the following: the challenges that spinal cord injury presents to the B.C. health care system, significant progress achieved over the past 25 years, the role that government has played in those successes and, lastly, what is possible in the coming years through further partnership.

As for my last point, I want to stress that many of the solutions we have achieved or are working on will have broader application beyond spinal cord injury — those that are bedridden, for example, those with other neurological conditions and those with mobility issues.

Finally, I hope to communicate the pride we feel and the benefits you receive as a result of B.C.'s global leadership in our field of research and care, which is very similar to the global leadership position B.C. has in cancer,

HIV and genome research.

To begin, I'm here to speak about the unsustainable costs of spinal cord injury — SCI — in British Columbia, which are often hidden yet profound, and outline what we need from government to sharply reduce these costs for the benefit of the injured, their communities and government.

Traumatic spinal cord injury is sudden, traumatic injury to the spine, typically from a motor vehicle accident, fall or violence. The physical and social consequences are absolutely catastrophic.

[1155]

In addition to drastic changes in physical function, independence, employment, health and community participation, people with these injuries suffer from secondary complications for the rest of their lives, such as pressure sores, frequent bladder infections, chronic pain and, indeed, heart disease, which is often the No. 1 killer of people with spinal injuries, causing multiple hospital visits, lost productivity and low quality of life.

A third of traumatic spinal cord injuries occur during traffic accidents caused by distracted or dangerous driving, speeding or driving under the influence. In addition to the profound personal costs, the consequences of these traffic offences lead to enormous provincial health care costs.

The current estimated number of individuals in Canada with traumatic spinal cord injury is 44,000. Just as a point, there's actually about three times that number of people with spinal cord issues, but they're a result of non-traumatic sources, such as cancers to the spine, etc. In B.C. more than 6,100 people live with such injuries, typically growing by about 200 people per year.

Each injury, on average, costs the B.C. health care system \$2¼ million over the person's lifetime. That's a new health care mortgage of over \$350 million annually. Secondary complications alone result in close to 2,000 hospital readmissions per year in B.C., costing \$35 million annually.

Our work is a huge part of the solution to reducing these costs. The federal government recognizes this and has committed \$35 million in Budget 2013 — actually, it was Budget 2012; it was just announced in 2013 — to help fund our work nationally over the next five years.

Thanks to past investments by the government of B.C. and money leveraged by our foundation, B.C. has become a world leader in spinal cord research and care. Together over the past 25 years we have shaped a growing solution to the impact of spinal cord injury. However, we need more investment — about \$5 million annually — to keep pace with the cost of medical advances and shift our impact from good to great.

Since Rick's accident, research has advanced current treatment to the point that someone with his injuries can, increasingly, walk away after treatment today. Two less people with permanent paralysis each year in B.C. —

that's just a 1 percent reduction in the numbers of newly injured — would pay for the amount our program partners need to further reduce paralysis and address quality-of-life complications.

B.C.'s health care and research leads are today connected across the province to our hub, the Rick Hansen Institute, at the Blusson Spinal Cord Centre at the Vancouver General Hospital site. From Vancouver our institute has created and leads a collaborative research network of 31 sites, in every Canadian province, with partner sites in Australia, Israel, China and the United States. This network attracts and retains the best and brightest to work in B.C. It leverages funding from multiple sources — corporate, individual and other governments. Some of the innovations being tested have commercial potential as medical devices or drug therapies.

In addition, we are now running the first ever multi-centre clinical trials involving spinal-cord-injury patients in Canada, leading to better treatments, less paralysis and more hope than ever before.

Our work and that of our partners at the University of British Columbia, at our institute, at the Vancouver General Hospital site and our community service providers are testament to the power of collaboration. In many ways they represent the sustaining legacy of Rick's vision and work for a world without paralysis after injury.

These B.C. programs can become exceptional with sustainable funding levels. We ask your government to consider any and all opportunities to provide such funding starting next fiscal, 2014-15. Opportunities for new revenue could come from making those engaged in high-risk behaviour help pay for the consequences of their actions through increased fines.

The use of enhanced traffic violation surcharge programs to offset the research and care costs are implemented in more than half of the states in the United States of America. B.C. has already successfully tested this idea in a targeted manner with the use of the B.C. neurotrauma fund that was started 15 years ago. This approach supports government's existing goals and policies and priorities.

In conclusion, I'd like to thank you for your time and past investments. We hope that you can join with the government of Canada with new funding and look forward to continuing our partnership with you in the future and growing the benefits for British Columbians, their families and communities. Thank you, and I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.

D. Ashton (Chair): Colin, thank you for the presentation.

Any questions from the committee regarding this?

[1200]

M. Elmore: Thanks for your presentation. It's always

good to hear the updates, certainly in terms of the advances in treatment for individuals suffering from traumatic spinal injury.

Can you talk a little bit...? I'm interested in terms of what you've characterized as a centre of excellence and just the role — not only within B.C. but within Canada and internationally — the Rick Hansen Institute is playing in terms of research and innovation and development on this issue.

C. Ewart: Thank you for that question. It's a great opener. As a centre of excellence.... What I'd like to start off by saying is that what exists at the Blusson Spinal Cord Centre at Vancouver General Hospital is not entirely unique globally but is one of three such centres in the world.

To actually have on a major hospital site where trauma patients are brought in.... There's the ability to not only see them, treat them, rehabilitate them and then interact with the community service providers. That is quite a unique setting to do that.

To have discovery researchers in our building that come from the University of British Columbia that are working there to work with cells and new therapeutic ideas, but then to actually have those ideas translated as people come into the emergency and are treated at the acute and then at the rehab level is totally unique in Canada. There's one centre that's similar in the United States and one in Switzerland. So it truly is a centre of excellence.

It's because of Rick's vision that that building exists. It's because of our work with our Canadian partners in 31 sites. We are the hub of the Canadian network. It's B.C. money, government of Canada money, but also matching funds from other governments to the tune of over \$80 million that allows us to operate as a centre of excellence, and we're regarded as such not only by governments but by industry and by researchers.

Our role in terms of innovation is multiple. Our goal is, as I mentioned, to focus on translation of ideas. Although we have ideas that are coming from discovery research, the biggest part of our work is to apply those on patients with better treatment and care so they have better outcomes and less paralysis. That's a huge translational focus of ours.

Increasingly, we're finding that ideas are coming through from researchers that have got commercial potential. It may be a medical device. It may be a therapeutic treatment. It could be a range of things like that. Increasingly, we're introducing those ideas to private capital so they can get invested. They can become employment-generating opportunities and intellectual property opportunities for the province.

M. Hunt: During your presentation you talked about international collaboration being the key. You've got the

nations of Canada, the U.S., Israel, China and Australia highlighted versus the rest of the dots. What's the meaning?

C. Ewart: Over the next decade our goal is to have upwards of 90 centres internationally connected. At the moment we have six centres that we have already established connections with. Those were established during Rick's 25th anniversary initiative over the last few years.

As a result of that, we will be increasing those numbers. We've got centres in India, in South America and many parts of Europe that want to connect, because they recognize — to the earlier question — that we are a truly emergent global centre of excellence in this work.

The ones that I've highlighted are the ones that we already have formal relationships with. We're doing collaboration with them. In some cases we've helped them secure money. In other cases they've actually brought resources to the table.

The point that I'd like to stress, though, is that because the relative numbers of people with spinal injuries — certainly in B.C., if you look at it: 200 new injuries per year — is small, although the costs are profoundly expensive, for us to run clinical trials, especially, we need to recruit patients, large numbers of patients. And to do that effectively, it's important to partner with centres that can do that.

The example I would give is our partnership with a hospital in Beijing. They see more spinal patients through that one centre in Beijing than we see in all of Canada in one year. So to partner with them to do trials with them will accelerate our ability to test new ideas and to bring them forward. A lot of ideas take upwards of seven-plus years to even be brought into translation and into application, and we want to accelerate that and have it happen much faster.

[1205]

G. Holman: Thanks for your presentation. On the \$5 million request, what's the current level of funding?

C. Ewart: The current level of funding. The B.C. government in 2010 placed its first funding in the actual programmatic area of the Rick Hansen Institute, and that was \$11 million over three years. So we've essentially expended that money. We've been back in the process now of getting renewal, and we've been successful with the government of Canada. For the next five years, for the national application of the program that comes from B.C., they have committed \$35 million. So we're now back in the process of asking the B.C. government to participate, as they did in 2010, with a further contribution.

However, the request of \$5 million annually is for a multitude of partners. It's not just for the institute. The amount for the institute would probably be in the range of \$2 million. There's an amount for the discovery researchers. There's an amount for the community service

providers. So the \$5 million is actually spread across a number of partners that act in collaboration.

G. Holman: Just quickly. The model that you pointed to in the States, the traffic fine as a method of generating revenues. Just a question too.

Once people become disabled, does the foundation have anything directly to do with them at that point in terms of...? Or is that, then, over to essentially government programs around disability costs and re-employment programs? Just talk about the people — I know that's not your focus — and what you know of that.

C. Ewart: Yeah, I'll deal with both. Thank you. First of all, 26 states in the United States have some form of traffic surcharge program whereby they collect from offences. Remember, these are people that have driven dangerously. They've been drunk. They've been texting, or whatever it is.

At the point of their offence or through the court system, they get fined. Those states then take those moneys and flow those moneys back for the treatment, care — and prevention in some cases — of those types of accidents. It's a very well-proven, well-tested method of bringing revenues in and direct it.... Cause and effect, effectively. So that's the first part of your question.

The second part is our role in terms of ongoing engagement. We have a lot. If you witnessed our 25th anniversary, a huge component of that was to continue to build awareness around the challenges that people with spinal cord injuries face. We did that nationally, but a huge component was in B.C. It was where we had our final event.

We engage on an ongoing basis, on a daily basis, with people with spinal injuries who contact our organization. In many cases they're looking for our advice, our trusted advice, as to who they can work with. We have our partnerships. We have community service groups, but we are also able to direct people to research experts or clinical experts that can help them with the particular challenges they have.

The last thing that we often do — and we fundraise as an organization — is for what we call quality-of-life grants. These are the types of things that government programs typically would not provide.

An example from one of our events was that we were able to, with our corporate partner, get scooters in the hands of people, which allow them to get around their community and be much more mobile. We were able to direct those to people and individuals, and that comes directly from our organization.

D. Ashton (Chair): Colin, thank you very much. Greatly appreciate it, and thank you for the report.

The committee will reconvene at 1:15.

The committee recessed from 12:08 p.m. to 1:16 p.m.

[D. Ashton in the chair.]

D. Ashton (Chair): Good afternoon. Welcome to the committee. The layout is a ten-minute presentation, five minutes for questions. I'll give you a two-minute warning on it. We are very punctual.

Doctor, welcome.

M. Gleeson: Thank you. I've been here nine times before, and nothing has changed, so I'll be here next year. Next year I expect a cake. It'll be my tenth anniversary.

I need to talk to you about legal aid and mental illness. This is the Wally Oppal report. I've read every word. It's a remarkable piece. It is incredibly sad. And the sadness is that these people.... The name of the report is *Forsaken*. The sadness is that each and every one of these ladies, the missing women.... And by the way, there's no list of the missing young men, the child male prostitutes, the transients, etc., etc. But that's a topic for another nightmare.

Each and every one of these ladies would not have been afforded legal aid and legal aid assistance under the present legislation. The Canadian Bar Association recently put out a snippet in the newspaper — which is the only one I found, and I read four newspapers daily — saying that we need to reinstate legal aid.

I'm not suggesting for a moment that we wouldn't have lost these ladies. I am suggesting that each of these ladies — all of whom had associates, friends, most of whom had children — were not afforded wise and gentle counsel of the law profession in this province and, from the law profession, referrals free of charge to these individuals to people like my office.

This year we've had our share of the truly loony, who I adore, but we've had some very, very sad cases. We had a gentleman who came in. He lives with his shopping cart, a chair and a bedstead. It's a metal bedstead, which he fashions into swords to ward off evil spirits that come after him. Every time I see him, I take one of his swords away because I'm thinking this is not a wise thing to have in New Westminster.

I was talking to Bob, and Bob told me that he should have CPP. He showed me the documentation, which he keeps in his shopping cart. He lives behind the Tim Hortons in New Westminster under the stairs. And he should have OAP, but because he doesn't have an address, he doesn't get them.

I phoned OAP, at which I got a very nice receptionist, who said: "Oh, you again." I'm apparently a legendary nuisance at CPP and OAP. They told me they didn't care what Bob's address was, and they will not accept fourth dumpster from the left at the Arenex in New Westminster.

I asked the Post Office. We got him an address. Now we get his slips, and that's the only thing they care about. Not one person said to me: "Is he okay? Does he need anything? Should he be on welfare? Should he have some kind of assistance? He's a senior. Can we help him?" No

one asked anything.

[1320]

So every time I run into Bob in New Westminster and take his bedstead-fashioned sword away from him and I say to him, "Bob, how are you?" he goes: "I don't know. They won't tell me."

I had occasion to attend at one of the seniors buildings in New Westminster which is subsidized housing. A frantic young woman phoned me — fabulous gal — and said: "We just got one of your clients dumped here by the hospital." I go: "Dumped? My client dumped?" And she said: "Yes, he's here. He's had one leg removed. He's in a wheelchair. He's wearing a hospital gown, no drawers. He's sitting in the wheelchair without a pad, and they dropped him off with a hospital bed." We roared over there.

This isn't my favourite client by any stretch of the imagination, because he hates me. Be that as it may. We then roared to Value Village, got him some quilts, some pillows, some knives, some forks, and we took them to him. He's also 84 years old.

I said to him, "What happened?" and he goes: "I don't know." I said: "Well, did you talk to the social worker at the hospital?" "Well, no. I've been there for 14 months, and they just wanted me out. So when they said that such and such place was available, I said okay. I didn't know what to do."

I said: "Well, who takes care of you?" He pointed to me, and he said: "You do." I said: "But you hate me." He goes: "Yeah, but you're the closest thing I have to a loved one." He's on the back burner with no assistance. I can't get him a lawyer. He doesn't have a nickel.

In the old days of legal aid I'd phone any one of the lawyers. Lawyers have call display, yet they still take my calls. I don't get it, right? Like, my own lawyer — he still takes my calls, you know. He says, "I'm just leaving the office. Phone me at home," and he gave me that number. It was 30 years ago. He tells me when he updates the number or when he gets a new girlfriend. He goes: "Oh, my number's changed." They still take the calls.

The lawyers out there care. They will do legal aid. I have one lawyer who said to me: "Don't ever phone me at the office. Phone me at home, because if I get the call at home and process it at home, I don't have to pay my legal assistants and my staff. I'm not making any money on this file, and if it's one of your crazy clients, then this is going to be energy-consuming, and every time you phone and every time you give me a file, my entire office goes into a flurry."

I like to have my clients attend at that guy's office. It sort of adds a little bit of punch to his day and sort of knocks the fact home that there are people who dress at Value Village, who don't drive Bimmers, and they need the assistance of lawyers. And this guy has helped me since 1988. He's never asked for a thing. He does this stuff, and there's no legal aid.

The big joke is that when I die, all my clients are go-

ing to move into the carport. I phoned up my lawyer and told him that, and he goes: "Great. I'm the executor of your estate."

There is no legal aid to help these people. I have a guy who's got a fabulous case. He is going to go to court with Coast Mountain transit, which is Coast Mountain Bus Co. What he does is he buys those tickets. He also was missing a leg, but he's different than the other guy who's missing the leg — the other leg — so we've been sharing boxes of shoes, right?

What he does is he has the ticket, and he gets on the handyDART and says to the handyDART guy: "Well, I'm going to take the bus, so don't take the ticket away from me." Then he gets on the bus and says: "I gave my ticket to the handyDART guy." And then he gets on the SkyTrain and rides for free.

Now, this guy should be in finance somewhere, but the point is they finally caught up with him. The problem is: no one told him that for 42 bucks, we can get him a bus pass. I've got a lawyer friend who'll cough up the 42 bucks, because I'm sick of buying bus passes. We'll get him a bus pass, and we don't have to do handyDART.

[1325]

This is the same guy who got dumped backwards out of a handyDART and got a concussion because the gentleman who was supposed to secure him took a phone call. These things happen.

I have a guy, elderly gentleman, who went off to hospital. No one told Rogers. He had a stroke. He was in the hospital for 18 months and went to a rest home. He's now being sued by both B.C. Hydro and Rogers. My thought is that I don't have time for this.

Be that as it may, they can glean part of his pension money when he was in hospital. I'm going to have to go to this guy who has had a stroke, get power of attorney, get somebody to witness the power of attorney, that he's competent to do the power of attorney. He also hates me, by the way. Several of my patients hate me, but it's because I'm supposedly the voice of reason. But I'm going to have to get a power of attorney, and we're going to have to actually attend in front of a judge in New Westminster to get these charges removed. A lawyer, on the other hand, can ring up Hydro and can ring up Rogers.

My last one is a client of mine who is 12 years old. When his father beat his mother viciously, putting mom into a transition house, the boy went to live with his dad. Mom, who has suffered some brain damage, was in the transition house. Dad got an order for custody. It took them eight years, but it's now joint-joint. So 50 percent of the time the kid is with his mom; 50 percent of the time the kid is with his dad.

The kid attended at my office and said: "You know what living half-time at Mom's house and half-time at Dad's house means?" He says: "The judge thinks you have a home. What it really means is you got nothing."

If we could get a legal aid lawyer, we could fix this. We

could take a witness statement from the child. We could put together the letters of the general practitioner, myself and the schools and deal with this. Mom cleans houses for a living. She makes \$8,000, less than what she would be getting on welfare. Because it's joint-joint, she doesn't get child support. How is she going to afford a lawyer? Legal aid doesn't exist.

D. Ashton (Chair): Thank you for your presentation. Any questions of Dr. Gleeson?

M. Elmore: Hi. Thanks for your presentation and giving us, I think, real-life stories in terms of the interface of citizens in difficult life circumstances and their needs for access to justice. And thanks for the advocacy you do. We also heard a presentation in Vancouver on Friday from the lawyers, advocating on behalf of increasing legal aid and ensuring the principle of our democracy — that that access is available.

Do you have specific recommendations for the committee?

M. Gleeson: Absolutely. If we could go back to the legal aid tariffs even as far back as 1985.... I'm not talking about the monetary value, but I'm talking about the kinds of things that legal aid would support. I'm not in favour of the \$200,000-a-year income divorced couple who are fighting over the 50-foot garden hose, okay? I'm not going there. The people who grant legal aid authorization numbers don't go there either. But the problem is that we've got to interface with legal aid and the mentally ill.

I cannot send my beloved Bob with the sword to the law office of anybody anywhere. He's scary. He's big. He's smelly. He has done pot recently, two hours ago. He's drinking wine out of a bottle. He's got a sword. He used to have a great big smelly dog. I mean, I'm not going to be able to take Bob into any lawyer's office, but I am going to be able to talk to that lawyer about who Bob is and how he got there and why he is who he is. And I'm going to make that work.

The lawyer dealing solely with the client — it's not going to work. The lawyers would not have been able to deal with these tragic ladies. It's interesting that Wally Oppal named his report *Forsaken*. I looked it up, and it meant "abandoned." My people are abandoned.

[1330]

Bob with his swords and his smelly dog — he is abandoned. We need somebody to interface, and that means we need someone with mental health knowledge to go there and to speak for these people.

I've been in practice since 1972. My colleagues drive BMWs. I drive a Volkswagen, and I'm proud of it. It's a badge of courage. I love my people, and I take good care of them. It's not about the money. It's about making sure that we don't have one more report that comes out that looks like this.

This isn't several copies of the same report; this is the report. I have friends in high places who actually got me a copy, because it came over my screen: "If you want a copy of the report, download it." Yeah, right. Like we can download this.

Be that as it may, this is a scathing indictment on our lack of services for the most needy, the marginalized — as Wally Oppal calls them, the forsaken.

D. Ashton (Chair): Doctor, thank you very much. It's a pleasure to meet you. Thank you for giving me a different perspective. Have a good day. See you.

Association of Book Publishers of British Columbia, welcome. Nice to see you.

M. Reynolds: I should say it's not just the Association of Book Publishers of B.C. I'll introduce my colleagues.

D. Ashton (Chair): Okay, I'm sorry. Canadian Media Production Association and Music B.C. — all three. Perfect.

M. Reynolds: That's right, yeah.

D. Ashton (Chair): So all condensed into one — ten minutes. A two-minute warning I'll give you, and five minutes for questions. Welcome. Thank you for the presentation.

M. Reynolds: Thank you very much for allowing us to come and speak before you. We were here last year, and we're very pleased with the developments that have taken place between now and then, which we're going to talk a little bit about later.

First of all, I want to introduce who we are: Bob D'Eith from Music B.C.; Liz Shorten from the Canadian Media Production Association, B.C. branch; and myself from the Association of Book Publishers of B.C. We're missing one of our colleagues, Gary Davies, from the Association of Magazine Publishers of B.C.

We're a group that came together over the last two or three years. We were driven to come together, I guess, in some ways because of the synergies that are beginning to happen or have been happening over the last while in the digital world. We could see that we were all working in silos, and in fact what we needed was to work together to create an environment where we can move things forward for our industries, collectively and individually.

We've partnered, in that time, on a number of initiatives. Liz and I have partnered on a session called Opening the Book on Film, which was organized to encourage development between the film industry and the book industry. There are a number of film options from my publishers that have come out of that initiative. We've done it three times. We did one this spring.

Recently — actually, just last week — we did a very,

very successful copyright symposium — which, again, is something we can do together, all four groups, because we are deeply, of course, embedded in copyright issues and the business issues that come out of the new Copyright Modernization Act, Bill C-11. There were about 100 people who came to that session. We were very pleased, and it was a very stimulating and challenging discussion.

We've recently embarked on this campaign. You will all have received these beautiful boxes, created in B.C. This is a public awareness campaign.

L. Shorten: That was from us.

M. Reynolds: That was from us. So if you haven't had a chance to look at the books, please, I encourage you to, and to take a look at *Arctic Air* and the CDs from the PEAK Performance, from the music industry. There are a couple of magazines in there too.

We were compelled to do this because we think that the public needs to know more about the products that are coming from British Columbia. I don't think people realize that *Arctic Air* is from here or that the many beautiful books we publish every year are from here. So that is part of what we are doing.

The other initiative which has come out of our collective is Creative B.C., which was announced last February, as you all know. We're going to speak a little more to that later on.

[1335]

We are the producers, the publishers, the filmmakers, the directors and the producers of music. Where we come mostly in common is that we are the people who are exploiting our intellectual property. That is, as I'm sure you're aware, a very crucial and important element of what we do. We add value to the work that comes to us from the authors, and we disseminate it out to British Columbians and to the rest of Canadians and, more and more, across the world.

There's an infographic on page 4 of your document that we sent around that demonstrates a little bit the synergies that we see between our various sectors. In 2012 we released a document called *From the Margins to the Mainstream: Moving BC's Creative Industries Forward*, and that is our aim. Our aim is to move ourselves from outliers to those people who are at the forefront of your thinking and the public's thinking on what we should be doing for the creative industries.

We know that there are things that we can maximize, growth areas that we can maximize and relationships that we can develop together. We feel that this is an area that will create an economic benefit to British Columbia. It will increase tourism and exports of our products.

I'm going to now, at that point, turn it over to Bob, who is going to talk about the economic areas of interest to you.

B. D'Eith: Let's talk about the creative industries. We are an industry. We bring \$4 billion per annum into this province. With the creation of Creative B.C., I honestly think this is the first time we've been recognized as a big industry in British Columbia. We feel that we belong at the table with all the other industries.

We employ over 80,000 people in British Columbia, and our annual growth actually exceeds many other industries. If you see the chart — I'm not sure which page it is — you can see that, in fact, our employment in our sector is greater than agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, mining, oil and gas extraction. So we're a serious business and a serious player in this province, and we really feel that we deserve to be at the same table as all the other industries in this province.

You can also see that in terms of GDP our sectors bring in very close to the same types of dollars as some of the other industries. We'd just like the treasury, the committee, to really look at that seriously, because we are an industry that needs its support.

How do we do that? I think that's something that's really important to discuss, but one of the big steps that we made recently was Creative B.C. It's a fantastic move forward by the government, and we want to thank you very much for that. But to talk a little bit more about that, I will pass it on to my colleague Liz Shorten.

L. Shorten: One of the things Margaret touched on was intellectual property, and really, that is our resource. We were playing a little bit of fun here with the hardhat, but maybe you'll remember this from our presentation. Really, the core resource here in the creative industries across all sectors is the intellectual property, that copyright ownership. We have all of that in common.

What our members do. We take that product out to the international market, sell that product, bring it back to British Columbia and reinvest in our small and medium-sized businesses. That's the value proposition, I think, of the creative sector.

Certainly, at the CMPA we represent B.C. companies, the companies that develop and produce content here in British Columbia. Some of our members do service work, the Hollywood productions, but this value proposition is a little bit different than service work. Both are complementary, but when a B.C. company owns their own intellectual property, they can actually then be a global exporter.

I'm just going to share a couple of statistics, because I think you'd be surprised.

Interjection.

L. Shorten: We'll keep going very quickly.

A couple of our members.... Just to share, one of our animation companies, NerdCore Entertainment, has a product called *League of Super Evil*. It's an animated

series. It's sold in over 180 countries worldwide. Paperny Entertainment does a show called *Eat St.* — you may have seen it — about food carts around the world. It's sold in over 30 countries.

[1340]

The Cupcake Girls. One of our members, Force Four Entertainment, has sold it to over 95 countries, including Afghanistan. So a lot of export activity is going on in our sector.

I'll turn it over to my colleagues to talk a little bit about their sales as well.

M. Reynolds: We're a much smaller industry in the book industry, of course, than the film industry, but we're selling our books in the United States, Korea, U.K., Brazil, India, Germany, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Australia, New Zealand, Hungary, Turkey, France and China, just to name a few. Our export sales are growing. They now represent around 36 percent of overall sales, which is pretty substantial, and there's definitely room for growth there.

Those numbers don't represent the digital books — just print books at this point. We don't have reliable stats on digital sales. But you can imagine, as digital moves forward — and it's growing exponentially like this — that there's going to be massive growth areas, especially in the United States, for digital.

B. D'Eith: As far as the music industry, well, we have some incredible talent: Sarah McLachlan, Bryan Adams, Michael Bublé, Nickelback. The list goes on and on and on. We export some of the top artists in the world.

Our Carly Rae Jepsen, for example, who's from Mission, B.C., had the biggest song on the entire planet in 2012, and her growth is going right through the roof. We need to help to nurture and support these artists moving forward, and that is really what we're talking about here.

L. Shorten: Just quickly, we do have the new agency, Creative B.C., and that's what we wanted to talk to you a little bit about today. It's an economic development agency. We're a bit concerned that it hasn't been properly resourced to achieve its new mandate, which is cross-sectoral.

We also see there's an opportunity to include the creative industries in the jobs plan moving forward. Thank you.

D. Ashton (Chair): Well, thank you very much — right on time.

Questions?

L. Popham: I felt like we had the show *Shark Tank* happening here, with your hardhat. We're going to have to invest in your business. But I think it is similar to that, and I completely support what you're doing.

I have two questions. One is around the importance

for the book publishing industry to have that B.C. book publishing tax credit — if you could comment on that. Also, how important are procurement policies in B.C.? I'm thinking of B.C. books in B.C. schools, B.C. books on B.C. Ferries — that sort of thing.

M. Reynolds: The tax credit is enormously, hugely important to our industry. We currently get some funding for cultural product, but the tax credit is the industrial side of what we do. I would say that it's been the primary way in which our publishers have grown over the last ten years. It's a huge, huge, important thing, particularly at a time where the industry has been going through such dramatic changes.

We were heavily reliant on independent bookstores in the country, and of course, now they don't exist or are much smaller in numbers. When I started in the industry, we were selling 68 percent to independents. Now it's probably 18 percent. So we need an infrastructure that's going to help us to develop these new markets for our books. That's why you're seeing the increase in export — because we've very deliberately focused in that way. So the tax credit has been very important.

The procurement opportunities are also crucial. B.C. Ferries used to be one of our biggest venues for selling books. It is now a much smaller entity for us, but it's still a showcase for B.C. books. I think that's really important, because the people who see the books on the ferries will go out and buy them somewhere else, and that's terrific.

B. D'Eith: That has been the same for music on the B.C. ferries as well. It's been great.

M. Reynolds: We would very much love for the program that supported school libraries to be reinstated. That was a win-win for the education system and for us in the private sector — for schools to be able to increase their acquisitions, even by ten books.

I mean, some of these libraries have no acquisition budgets. This program allowed them to buy books from our publishers. And it was not an expensive program. It was around \$300,000, I think, and the enormous good that it did was significant.

There's lots more opportunity — co-publications, yup.

I got to say a lot more than my colleagues did on that, so I apologize.

[1345]

M. Elmore: You referenced Creative B.C., which was launched earlier this year. Can you talk a little bit about that and the status of where things are going?

L. Shorten: We were very thankful, because part of our work together was calling for a cross-sectoral agency like this. We're really pleased that it's in the economic development ministry, Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training,

which is, we think, fantastic and the right place for it to be, because it is economic development support that our sectors are looking for.

I think the challenge is that it's not adequately resourced. If there's one take-away from today, there's lots of opportunity in terms of export development and R and D, where we see public policy in terms of where our provincial government should be. We feel that additional resources are required for it to achieve its mandate.

M. Elmore: What's the current budget?

L. Shorten: Well, it's hard to know, but they did get an additional \$2 million in the spring. So we're thinking it's around \$3 million per year. We've certainly done some math and think that three times that would help.

B. D'Eith: It would be a good start.

D. Ashton (Chair): Any other questions?

L. Popham: I just have one really short question. Sorry, it's back to book publishing again. I believe that Quebec requires Quebec books to be used in the Quebec school system by legislation. Do you know if that is true or not?

M. Reynolds: No. They were required to purchase their books for the schools through independent bookstores. That was increasing volume through the independents to help to support them.

D. Ashton (Chair): Folks, thank you very much for your presentations. Have a good day. See you in a bit.

Good afternoon. We have the B.C. Association of Farmers Markets.

We'll just recess for a minute here, until this lady walks in.

The committee recessed from 1:47 p.m. to 1:48 p.m.

[D. Ashton in the chair.]

D. Ashton (Chair): Good afternoon. You made it.

Sorry, we have a real tight schedule. I do apologize. There are a lot of presenters. So ten minutes for the presentation — I'll give you a two-minute warning — and five minutes for questions. Jon, Elizabeth, welcome. I'll leave the floor to you. Thank you very much.

E. Quinn: The B.C. Association of Farmers Markets appreciates the opportunity for input into the provincial budget. Our association represents over 125 farmers markets, a growth of 25 percent since last year. We still can't believe that ourselves.

We are the voice for 3,000 small businesses, including more than 1,000 farmers across B.C. Our organization

facilitates communication between a very broad group of farmers, food processors, various financial institutions and provincial ministries.

Farmers markets continue to grow and gain popularity. In 2006 direct sales at B.C. farmers markets were \$46 million.

[1350]

A 2012 economic benefits study by the BCAFm and Dr. David Connell of the UNBC — funded by the Investment Agriculture Foundation, Agri-Food Canada and Vancity — found that direct sales have increased 147 percent, from \$46 million to \$113 million. So it's a good-news story. Overall, farmers markets are strengthening local economies and offering fresh, healthy food to British Columbians.

We sincerely thank the provincial government for the additional support for the farmers market nutrition and coupon program. We were given \$2 million last year and \$2 million this year. We would like to describe the impact this program is having in the province.

This year the farmers market nutrition and coupon program is operating in 34 B.C. communities, compared to 21 last year. We partner with 35 community agencies that offer nutrition and food skills programs to their clients. More than 400 farmers markets and over 1,500 low-income pregnant women, families and seniors are directly benefiting from eating fresh, local food from farmers markets. They're also enjoying going to the farmers markets.

This healthy families B.C. initiative offers coupons to lower-income pregnant women, families and seniors for the purchase of fresh B.C. food at farmers markets. Participants who demonstrate an interest in improving their health by participating in nutrition and hands-on cooking classes are provided with coupons every week to support their newly acquired knowledge and skills to achieve healthy eating. It's not a food security initiative; it's a health promotion initiative.

The program is attracting additional investment from institutions which recognize the tremendous benefit of the program. Vancity has provided nearly \$10,000 this year alone in additional funding to support families. The Berman Foundation in Los Angeles — this is money from outside Canada — has granted \$10,000 for the 2014 farmers market nutrition and coupon program on Saltspring Island. That's interesting, and we're all curious to know how that happened. The community services on Saltspring organized that.

So we're bringing in more money. The provincial government is offering funding, but more people are stepping forward to support the program. We are also thankful to the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture for providing \$2 million in funding to the Buy Local campaign that will help B.C. farmers and food processors. We are also grateful that Ag Minister Pimm has promised an additional \$2 million investment into the Buy Local campaign.

The very small farmers market cannot raise the \$5,000 minimum, though, of matching funding. Therefore, we ask for an opportunity to discuss the option to provide grants to those markets for Buy Local, because \$5,000 for a little market is hard. In some of your communities, the markets are smaller.

BCAFM recently published a guide, *Planning for Successful Farmers' Markets in Towns and Cities*. It's a best-practices guide for municipalities. We seek your support in promoting these best practices to municipalities that are contemplating having a local farmers market or already have one. Last year we were about to publish it, and this year we have published it. We need help promoting it, getting it into the hands of municipal planners.

As you are aware, British Columbia is a vast province, and Minister Pimm pointed out that Prince George is the geographic centre of B.C., which is amazing. Organizing MarketSafe programs, which is one of our food safety programs, and reaching our members and vendors across the province has been challenging because people are so spread out. I'm sure you've heard this before.

For this reason, an on-line version of MarketSafe would facilitate the transmission of important food safety knowledge to vendors and markets. In light of the recent adverse event related to the consumption of raw milk artisan cheese, which is terrible and unfortunate, we realize that we need to ramp up food safety training for our vendors. We need an on-line version of MarketSafe, rather than having people travel to workshops. It works in Vancouver, in the Lower Mainland, but not as much outside the Lower Mainland.

Finally, in relation to the government invitation to have input into updating liquor distribution, BCAFm agrees in principle with the general concept of bringing local artisan wineries and craft breweries to B.C. farmers markets.

[1355]

This may not be feasible for all markets. Therefore, individual markets would have to have the ability to opt out of alcohol sales at markets. We recommend a trial period at a few markets to evaluate the concept.

In wrapping up, the recommendation to renew the Buy Local funding and develop a small grant program for farmers markets, encourage municipalities to adopt best practices to strengthen local food and farmers markets in their communities, provide support to develop an on-line MarketSafe training program and provide opportunities for artisan wineries and craft breweries at farmers markets.

Thank you for your time and attention.

D. Ashton (Chair): Thank you very much.

J. Bell: If I could just make a comment first of all, though. We failed to introduce ourselves. My name is Jon Bell, president of the B.C. Association of Farmers

Markets — I'm a farmer and a market vendor — and this is Ms. Elizabeth Quinn. She's our executive director.

D. Ashton (Chair): Thanks for the introductions. Questions?

E. Foster: I've heard in the past — and I don't know if this has been rectified — a lot of the smaller communities are just not large enough to hold strictly a farmers market, so they have other vendors. There was a discussion that they didn't really qualify as farmers markets because they weren't exclusively farm products. Has that changed?

J. Bell: We actually work to achieve 75 percent of food at farmers markets. We don't always get those numbers. Particularly if a market is starting, they might have a lot of craft vendors first of all. But hopefully, over time we will have a higher number of farmers and food processors actually at farmers markets.

But yes, there are some. Particularly at smaller markets, it's very difficult. If you think of up north, when they open, there's not very much available at that time.

M. Farnworth (Deputy Chair): At farmers markets are there regulations or requirements that all the produce be local, or is it okay to be selling from, like, Mexico or California?

E. Quinn: Well, absolutely, it has to be local. Whether it is... I'd say that in 99 percent of the cases it is local. But local can be defined as within 300 kilometres. So in the Lower Mainland some farmers come from the Cariboo. But if you know of any farmers who are selling anything that is not a B.C. product, please let me know.

M. Farnworth (Deputy Chair): Okay. The reason I asked that question is because I was at a farmers market early this year, and we got a whole bunch of beets and stuff. I'm looking, and my partner said: "You do know these aren't...?" I said: "Well, no, they're local." He goes: "Look at the boxes. They're all from California." And they had the things that bunch them together. And I'm like: "Really?"

E. Quinn: Uh-oh. Which farmers market was that? Tell me later.

M. Farnworth (Deputy Chair): I'll tell you later, yes.

E. Quinn: Okay. So we have a make-bake-grow policy. To become a member of our association, we ask that all vendors make, bake, grow. How can we police that? We're an association of... We're four people and our board. So there's no way. We talk about this all the time. But I haven't heard of very many vendors selling anything from outside of Canada. So that is extremely rare.

Sometimes they use boxes that they just get... Because they have to pay for boxes, they use anybody's boxes. But it gives the wrong message.

M. Elmore: Thanks for your presentation, and congratulations. I mean, it's quite a phenomenal success story, I think, in terms of the growth of the sector and the interest, and I think it's just continuing to grow. I know in my constituency there are discussions of bringing a farmers market in. We have a number of neighbouring ones that I frequent quite regularly.

What's your projected growth that you're looking at, and is it representative across the regions?

J. Bell: Growth is a very dangerous thing. We, in fact, might end up with far too many markets. This is a problem for us because, really, what we lack are farmers. We would like to see a lot of growth in farmers. If we have the farmers, the number of markets can increase endlessly.

[1400]

But no, we have not sort of sat down and said: "Well, where are we going in five years, ten years?" I don't really know. It depends how many farmers we can get.

We're getting a lot of new farmers. When you actually look at the vendors that are selling at farmers markets, they make me feel rather old sometimes. Yeah, we're having a lot of new farmers coming into the market, and we're seeing a lot of growth in new farms. The younger generation is sort of going back to the land, stopping being professionals and starting to farm.

L. Popham: Can you tell me how the chaos, I'll call it, with the meat regulations has affected farmers markets and if you see that that's been a deterrent for some of the sales there that could happen?

J. Bell: Meat regulations, as they have come about recently with the various classes, have made it easier for small farmers to, in fact, slaughter, process and freeze. Right now the only meat products we will allow are frozen. They would have to have the capacity to freeze their meat. We don't allow fresh meats or processed meats. It must be frozen meat. Really, the new slaughter regulations haven't affected us, but what they've done is allow some of the smaller players to get involved.

D. Ashton (Chair): Any other questions? Well, folks, thank you very much for your presentation. Next up we have the Students Union of Vancouver Community College.

Good afternoon and welcome. A ten-minute presentation, five minutes for questions, and I'll give you a two-minute warning.

N. Takkar: Good afternoon. Before I begin, I'd like to acknowledge that we are on traditional Coast Salish ter-

ritory, and I would like to thank the committee for their time for considering our proposal today.

I'll start by telling you a little bit about who we are. The students union was formed in 1974 and represents 13,000 students at Vancouver Community College. As a part of caring about the well-being of its membership, the SUVCC is connected to the heart of campus life, providing students with access to recreation, events and opportunities to contribute to the community. As a member of the Canadian Federation of Students, the SUVCC advocates for student rights and has successfully lobbied for and implemented a standardized and fair-priced universal transit pass for all Metro Vancouver students.

The SUVCC also provides its students with a tailored high-quality health and dental plan that meets the needs of its diverse constituency.

As many of you will recall, the SUVCC was the lead on implementing the U-pass program that students now benefit from every day. Over the last four years we've seen a significant contribution from government, of \$34.5 million, into the program to offset the costs for TransLink.

Before the implementation of the U-pass program, Vancouver Community College students were paying \$81 a month to ride the exact same transit as UBC students, who only paid \$23.50. This financial inequality further entrenched the already pronounced financial barriers for Vancouver Community College students. Recently, the renewal process brought together the collective voices of every public post-secondary student union in Metro Vancouver to work together on the long-term success of the program. We believe SUVCC has been key in developing relationships with stakeholders, the government and TransLink to make the program successful.

Next I'm going to walk you guys through our four recommendations for the B.C. budget. We believe, similar to the U-pass program, that the SUVCC is poised to work with the student community, the government to make these proposals become realities.

Start off by talking about a legislated tuition fee freeze. I think our provincial organization today already gave you a sense of financial barriers across the province. Today I want to talk to you specifically about VCC students.

Last fall the student union invited students to fill out a survey, asking one simple question: write down three things you want your students union to do this year. By making the question as general as possible, we hoped to garner a wide range of answers and the ideas that would ultimately provide us with a snapshot of priorities and concerns for the average VCC student. A total of 1,056 students submitted their wish lists. One in four students responded by putting "reducing tuition fees" or other accessibility responses to our survey.

[1405]

It's important to note that at no point were students prompted to give this response. In fact, you would im-

agine that a lot of students would put things like "have more pub nights," which they did, and they put things like "throw more events" or "have more clubs on campus," which they also did. But 44 percent of students responded citing a need for more affordable and high-quality food options. The top two answers that we had to our survey were more accessible education and cheaper food options on campus.

It gave us a very clear idea of how financially constrained students are and what issues they're talking about. Something as simple as the price fluctuation in the cafeteria has had significant effect on students' daily lives.

With this context in mind, it's critically important that the students are never subjected to extreme tuition fee increases of the early 2000s and instead the government seeks avenues to reduce financial barriers for the average student. We believe the best way we can do that is by legislating a reduction in tuition fees and a freeze to significantly reduce barriers to accessing and completing post-secondary education.

Next I would like to talk to you about programming that's very specific to Vancouver Community College, which is English-as-a-second-language programming. One hundred and fifty faculty and approximately \$15 million of the \$22 million provincial allocation goes to ESL programming at VCC. VCC is the largest provider of ESL programs in the B.C. post-secondary system.

Today over half of VCC's student population have a mother tongue other than English. The result in the class is that VCC has some degree of ESL embedded into all of their curriculum. All VCC instructors must recognize that their classes — in designing curriculum, employing teaching techniques and classroom management — have to take into account that English is not students' first language. Consequently, VCC has a heavy amount of expertise in ESL delivery.

VCC's ESL programs are at considerable risk as a result of the recent changes in federal immigration policy. As well, VCC's ELSA — English language services for adults — programs are currently being delivered by the B.C.–Canada immigration agreement that terminates in March 2014. In order to continue with this ELSA delivery, VCC was required to put in a bid with other private institutions along with not-for-profits to CIC to see if they will be able to garner the funding after the agreement terminates.

The consequence of potentially losing ESL funding at VCC won't just affect ESL students but will affect tens of thousands of newcomers to key settlement services that they require. And as I mentioned, ESL actually increases the enrolment of other programs at VCC because students come to VCC, and they receive ELSA training there. They then change into ESL training that's usually job-specific.

VCC offers some training that's specific to engineering or specific to working in the dentistry field. Often

what happens is they end up becoming post-secondary students in other programs after they've completed their settlement English services. It provides a lot of pathways to join the workforce and the local community.

The B.C. government has an important role to play in securing funding for VCC to continue its comprehensive ESL programming. We're recommending that the B.C. government invest in a comprehensive strategy to ensure long-term federal and provincial funding for all VCC ESL programming and to continue ESL to be tuition fee-free.

If there is one recommendation that I can highlight for you before I leave today, it will be the next one around eliminating interest on provincial student loans. It's interesting, because even the Canadian banks are talking about student debt in Canada this year. We've seen two significant surveys come out from the Bank of Montreal and CIBC talking about how student debt is a growing epidemic in our country. This is so much worse in British Columbia because we have the highest interest rate on our student loans compared to the rest of the provinces.

If there's one place this committee can find a sweet spot to take some action to address of the issue of student debt, it's definitely around the elimination of interest rates on student loans.

As you've already heard, the average public student debt for a four-year program is \$26,738. If you add the compound interest of more than \$8,000 to that amount to a ten-year payment schedule.... So that's pending that you graduate, you're able to get a job and start paying it. Maybe you graduate when you're, on average, 24. That means at 34 years old you're still paying off your student loan.

[1410]

At VCC that's even more highlighted, because most of our students are required to take out a student loan. So we're really taxing those who are the poorest of the poor because they're forced to take out a student loan, and then they pay more for their education than those who do not require a student loan.

There's a real opportunity for the B.C. government to take action on this issue. We've seen the committee make a recommendation for a reduction in student loans before, but it's kind of a sad time when private banks are talking about student debt more than our government is. We really think there's a golden opportunity, for an amount that's pretty small in the relative amount of the budget, for government to take action.

It not only affects current students, but it affects prospective students and students who have already graduated. So it's kind of your biggest bang for your buck here. You're going to target the largest population by making this small change in your budget.

The next thing I want to talk about is adult basic education. As a community college, ABE plays a huge role in VCC's programming. In 2007 the government eliminated tuition fees for ABE, very wisely. We're hoping that

this investment continues in ABE, because as you can imagine, with the B.C. jobs plan, retraining is one of the key relevant issues in the jobs plan.

Our economy is growing, and we know that 75 percent of jobs require some sort of post-secondary education. Most adults come back to upgrade one or two courses, and they need that support to be able to step back into retraining and finding a new career.

So we're looking for an investment in additional funding to make sure that ABE can be delivered tuition fee-free. What a lot of institutions are doing is reclassifying ABE as college prep classes, and then they charge regular tuition fees for them. We're really hopeful that in this budget there'll be some consideration given to retraining, particularly because of the B.C. jobs plan.

That concludes my presentation. I'm happy to take any questions.

D. Ashton (Chair): Perfect. Right on time. Any questions of Nimmi?

M. Elmore: Thanks for your presentation, Nimmi. Can you talk a little bit about...? VCC has submitted a bid for the programs to replace the English-language learner programs. What's the status of that?

N. Takkar: The status is unknown. They've placed a bid. They'll be competing with private institutions, not-for-profit organizations and other public post-secondary institutions who might be interested in offering that service.

At the same time, VCC is in the process of developing an ESL credential, which some of you might be aware of, that will really create a framework for how ESL is delivered in the province.

VCC is the expert on ESL delivery in British Columbia. It would be a shame if because of the change in their funding model — CIC — they're not able to secure the complete bid. We think that VCC will be able to secure some of the funding through the bid, but it won't be a dollar-to-dollar match in the agreement that currently exists. So we're really hopeful that the B.C. government has a plan to help subsidize the difference between what CIC offers VCC as a contract and then help top that up through the B.C. government.

M. Elmore: The ESL credential — is that in discussions between VCC and the Ministry of Education?

N. Takkar: Yes. The ESL is being developed through discussions with Advanced Ed. It actually is a curriculum that's being developed by faculty from Kwantlen, faculty from Langara — so kind of the cream of the crop on ESL delivery. Of course, there's a foundational piece coming from Vancouver Community College, because we offer the largest amount of ESL in the province.

M. Farnworth (Deputy Chair): Just a quick question. Do you know what percentage of students at VCC are in fact ESL or English as a second language?

N. Takkar: Approximately one-third of our FTE are ESL students.

D. Ashton (Chair): Nimmi, thank you very much for your presentation. Great. Have a good day.
Chris Blair. Good afternoon, Chris.

C. Blair: Hi. How are you?

D. Ashton (Chair): Good, thanks.
Ten minutes for the presentation. I'll give you a two-minute warning in the ten minutes. Then we have five minutes allotted for questions.

[1415]

C. Blair: Fabulous. Thank you. I appreciate it.
First of all, I never thought I'd find myself sitting here before a panel such as yourselves, and I'm very, very grateful for your time.

My name is Chris Blair. I'm a father of two teenaged daughters. I was once a wealthy business person but was financially devastated by trusting my money to my former wife's first cousins. These former relatives of mine, the Pappajohn family — specifically consisting of brothers Tom, John and Tony Pappajohn — took advantage of my trust in them and invested millions of dollars with them, which ultimately was lost. I discovered later that there is little protection for family creditors like me under the current legal system.

I'm here today to call for stronger laws to protect family creditors who are being devastated by their families and close friends. This is especially common among Canadian communities, particularly here in Vancouver, which I have learned over the last five years while I've been investigating this relationship with my ex-cousins.

The developers and the business people in these communities rely a lot on private money, as opposed to the banks and credit unions. They do this because there is less oversight and regulation. This results in people of all ethnicities losing money daily in thinly disguised schemes.

To give an example of this, I'll draw on my personal experience. I was married to Susan Stavridis. She was a first cousin to Tony, Tom and John Pappajohn. We sat at each other's table and broke bread for many years — 30, in fact. We celebrated life's events together, and I trusted them as family, as most family members do with one another.

This is typical in many other cases. Family creditors are convinced to lend money because of the perception that family will not betray them.

D. Ashton (Chair): Chris, can I just interject for a

second? You've seen some discussion up here at the front of the table. There are names, and I'm a little apprehensive about some liability in here. This is a public forum. It's my understanding that you've been in touch with a lawyer on this, in the sense about this presentation.

C. Blair: Yes, to answer your question, I appreciate your concern, and yes, Susan did come to me earlier. If you refer to page 3, there has already been an article published in *Business in Vancouver* by Bob Mackin. In that article the Pappajohns' names are clearly mentioned. This was dated back in June and July of this year.

D. Ashton (Chair): Well, we do have the newspaper. That's one of the things, the article.... Okay.

C. Blair: That's why I included it. I appreciate that.

D. Ashton (Chair): Sir, you have to.... Okay.

C. Blair: Since then, I've heard absolutely nothing from them in any which way, manner or form. So I'm clearly not concerned.

D. Ashton (Chair): But for the record, it's you making the presentation in a public venue. Just so you realize that.

C. Blair: For the record, I'm perfectly legal to explain my story.

D. Ashton (Chair): Okay. Sorry for interrupting.

C. Blair: I appreciate that. Thank you very much. I'm going to go back here.

I was initially asked to invest \$1 million in a project named Shaughnessy Mansions on 15th and Granville. After one year I got 40 percent return on my money. I was overjoyed with the high yield and told that, if it was okay with me, could they roll over my money into another project, namely Jameson House.

Looking back, I realize that I never saw my original \$1 million, and I may have been paid with my own money. I'm not quite sure. A good question to ask in the future.

Anyway, because of my trust in them, I invested another \$1.25 million in 2006 and then, following that, another \$250,000 on a third occasion. I also invested in all of their projects, which I was involved in, in the form of condos and real estate — namely, a \$1.6 million condo at Jameson House itself.

Later on I discovered that my money that I'd lent to them was lent to two companies that had nothing to do with the project itself. Only after they received my money did they transfer those funds to the companies that actually were registered in the project. Then they presented it to the bank as their money. Nobody knew I existed. Therefore, I was not allowed to be involved in the case

proceedings later on with CCAA. I was told to go in an opposite direction by the Pappajohns.

I began to realize how and why my money was invested in two unrelated companies. I was told that steps were being taken to recover my moneys. I then discovered that another family member, also first cousins to the Pappajohns, invested \$3.2 million under the exact same circumstances as myself.

[1420]

I began consulting dozens of lawyers, only to be told I had no case because my contracts were with unrelated companies. Yet I have a contract that states that they were. I realized that that was why we signed with unrelated companies.

Colin Bosa took over the project and reached an agreement with the Pappajohns. At that time, all my agreements were declared null and void. In essence, they decided our fate without consulting or advising me at all. We had no choice but to sign. Otherwise, I'd be walking away from my children's money.

Later on, after the agreement was signed, the Pappajohns then signed an affidavit stating that all creditors had been dealt with and accounted for. It was essential for this to happen for the CCAA proceedings to continue.

Later on I was informed that the sales would not reach the amount, and I will never see a dime of my money. I begged and pleaded for my money. I was told by John Pappajohn: "Come on, Chris. Life's not so bad. At least you can still play golf." I asked for \$75,000 to get back on my feet. Because they did not deliver, I got upset, and they actually called the police on me.

This has cost me five condos, my \$3½ million home on the west side, two private club memberships as well as my marriage. I've been renting for the past seven years, and my struggles continue. My pursuit — and clearly understand this — is to ensure that all are not affected like I have been devastated and would like the Pappajohns and others who have shared similar experiences or treated their family the way that I've been treated to answer for their behaviour and come before me.

As you can see by my example, similar stuff has happened to other family creditors who were just as devastated as I was. I would like to call for stronger laws to inform and protect people like myself who lend or invest our money trying to help a family, only to become victims of the very people who they try to help.

I would like to call for more information for family creditors so that they will be aware of unsecured creditors that have little protection under the current laws. I will continue to lobby for a law and protect family creditors as much as I can. If there are laws in place, why would I not be aware of it? If there's not, why are there not? I will call it Tony's law.

I want to thank you for your time. Again, I've got many years to pursue this. I just want to see this stopped. In the five to seven years I've been on this, I've heard countless

stories of people who have been devastated in similar ways. It's deplorable. It's absolutely deplorable.

D. Ashton (Chair): Sir, thank you for your presentation.

Are there any questions for the presenter?

M. Farnworth (Deputy Chair): Thank you for your presentation. In terms of existing laws, are there specific areas of the law that you think need to be changed? Or are there whole areas that need to be added that are not...?

C. Blair: Absolutely. In my case I initially loaned them \$1 million, and they gave me a return of 40 percent, of which they handed me a cheque for \$400,000. Well, let's call for a law that before those transactions can take place, all moneys must be returned. I never saw that \$1 million. For all I know, it could have been \$400,000 of my own money. I think they have a word for that. It's called Ponzi scheme.

I don't know. I'm just here to ask. I have a lot of questions, and there are a lot of things that need to be answered, and if not them, someone else, other people. Who knows? Clearly, there are loopholes in the system, and they took full advantage of it and were advised of it accordingly. Or they knew of it. I don't know.

What I do know is that I have a contract that states my moneys were invested in the project, written by their lawyer. Now, I want to know how it is that my money just magically disappeared, and not the court monitor nor Colin Bosa nor anyone involved in that project in any way, manner or form even knew that I existed. Yet \$2½ million of my cash poured that concrete and put that steel in that building, before they put the shovel in the ground.

M. Elmore: Yeah, that was also along those lines — and thanks, Chris, for your presentation — in terms of those loopholes. So the specific, I guess.... You have a reference here as unsecured creditors within the family. I guess you're looking for more protection.

C. Blair: Oh, absolutely. Even the creditors themselves, the people who loaned the money, need to be aware of their options. Often you hear the old cliché: "Oh, they're family. They're not going to hurt me. I'll shake his hand." I don't know where you come from, but where I come from — and I don't care what it's written on — you shake my hand, I'm going to hold you to it.

[1425]

Unfortunately, that's not enough under the current system. It doesn't work anymore. Things need to be written down. Things need to be accounted for, be it family, be it non-family.

You know, I have to tell you that if it had been Norm Cressey or Colin Bosa himself who had come to me many years ago and asked me to invest this money, because of

my naivety of the industry at that time, I wouldn't have done it. I would never have done it, because I don't know these people.

The only reason I forwarded this money was because I broke bread with these people at my table. This man was the trustee of my estate. I entrusted him to look after my children on my passing, and I trusted that they would give the advice to this family that my daughters would require growing up. I have stage 4 liver cancer. I have cirrhosis. I have Crohn's. I've lost 64 pounds, and so on. I want to make sure there are no cracks.

D. Ashton (Chair): Thanks, Chris.

Any other questions?

Sir, thank you very much for coming forward. I greatly appreciate it.

Simon Fraser University, good afternoon, welcome. Thank you for coming here today. The presentations are ten minutes. I'll give you a two-minute warning, just so you know, and we've allowed five minutes for questions. So please, Joanne, Andrew — welcome again.

A. Petter: Thank you very much. I'm Andrew Petter, president of Simon Fraser University, and I'm accompanied today by Joanne Curry, who's our associate vice-president, external relations, and also the executive director of our Surrey campus for the time being, until our new executive director takes over that position.

I really appreciate the opportunity to appear before the committee. Simon Fraser University is proud of many things — not least of which is our recently adopted vision to be Canada's engaged university. We're very proud to be part of the general B.C. post-secondary system.

B.C. commits nearly \$2 billion a year to one of the most comprehensive and diversified post-secondary education systems in Canada. It's a system we can really be proud of. Since 2001 the government has also invested \$1.8 billion in research and innovation to boost B.C.'s capacity in research development and commercialization.

I must say that there is a high level of collaboration and cooperation. B.C.'s 25 public universities, colleges and institutes collectively remain very much committed to developing that highly skilled workforce and cutting-edge research we need to ensure long-term prosperity.

However, we are facing looming labour shortages. We are in an increasingly competitive, global knowledge-based economy. In light of that, the province simply cannot let up in its support for post-secondary education and research, just as we are committed, as institutions, not to let up in our delivery of those programs and of research for the benefit of British Columbians.

To this end, the Research Universities Council of British Columbia last year presented to the standing committee an opportunity agenda for B.C. I'm not going to revisit that agenda, except to say that it was very much designed to create jobs and build prosperity in B.C.

through strategic investments in post-secondary education capacity and access and through a more coordinated and concerted approach to research and innovation. Clearly, that's still relevant, and I would recommend that agenda to you.

RUCBC has also asked the government to provide additional financial and policy flexibility. I think this is important, because this is an item that comes at no cost to the taxpayer. We believe that with more flexibility in a number of areas, universities can enhance facilities and improve the services they provide to students and support economic development, as I say, without any increased cost to government.

For example, one important area is increased flexibility in raising capital to build infrastructure — student residences, parking, and the like. That would certainly help, and I'd be happy to answer questions about that.

Today, what I'm going to focus on is the situation here in Surrey and SFU's Surrey campus. But I do want not to get on to that without passing reference to the submissions made to you last Friday by the Simon Fraser Student Society and our Graduate Student Society.

[1430]

I voice my support for their submissions, which talked about the needs that Simon Fraser has at our Burnaby campus with respect to deferred maintenance, improved transit and approval of financial arrangements for the Build SFU project that the students are committed to supporting through their own fees. I simply endorse their recommendations in that regard.

Turning then to Surrey and the South Fraser region, according to B.C. government forecasts, by 2020 one million jobs will be up for grabs in B.C. So 78 percent of those are going to require post-secondary education and training, and 65 percent of these new openings, in fields such as energy, health sciences and creative technologies, will be situated in B.C.'s densely populated Lower Mainland.

If B.C. is to remain productive and competitive in the face of these looming labour market demands, action must be taken now to ensure an adequate supply of workers with the knowledge and skills to fill these jobs. The expansion of Simon Fraser University Surrey campus is therefore not only an educational imperative for the communities of the South Fraser. It's also very much a needed investment in B.C.'s future.

Fuelled by rapid growth in Surrey, the South Fraser is B.C.'s fastest-growing region. By 2036 the region's population is projected to surpass that of Vancouver, Canada's third-largest city, by almost half a million. Today one in three Surrey residents is under 19, the largest of any municipality — very much a youthful community. By 2016 the South Fraser is going to account for one-third of all B.C. high school graduates. There is, therefore, a pressing and growing need for equitable and affordable access to post-secondary education in the region.

Consider just a few facts. Just 16 percent of Surrey residents hold a university degree, less than half of Vancouver's average of 33 percent. So there has been a lower-than-average university transfer rate that needs to be corrected to enable those young people to gain the skills they need in a knowledge-based economy and to contribute to B.C.'s economic future in that economy.

Surrey and the South Fraser region are underserved compared to the rest of B.C. Kwantlen Polytechnic University and SFU Surrey offer only 12.7 post-secondary spaces for every 100 18- to 24-year-olds in the region, while the rest of B.C. receives almost three times that level of access.

Surrey's growth in foreign-born residents is the highest of any Canadian city, and the Surrey school district has the largest population of aboriginal students in the Lower Mainland.

So there are needs that are not being met here in Surrey that really are out of keeping, and the needs are greater than those, certainly, of any other area of the province, by virtue of growth and demographics.

The B.C. government has in fact already recognized this. They recognized it in 2006 when the government entered into an MOU with Simon Fraser University that set out the goal of doubling the size of the Surrey campus to 5,000 student FTEs by 2015. The government at that time also enabled the purchase of land surrounding our campus to accommodate this expansion. However, due to fiscal conditions, no additional student spaces have yet been added.

While post-secondary transition rates for Surrey school district students have risen by over 10 percent in the past few years, growing demand and limited student spaces are resulting in ever-higher entry-level GPAs and thousands of capable students in the South Fraser region being denied access to Simon Fraser University and to Kwantlen Polytechnic University.

To expand seats and program options for undergraduate and graduate students at the Surrey campus, SFU has a plan to launch three new academic programs in energy systems engineering, health sciences and creative technologies. These programs will model the latest innovations in classroom and experiential learning, with a strong emphasis on entrepreneurship. They're going to build on SFU's considerable strengths and community partnerships and align with B.C.'s economic and social priorities while creating many new spaces for entry-level students coming out of high school.

For example, in order to address projected skill shortages in the energy, electricity and LNG sectors, the energy systems engineering program is going to take an integrated approach that infuses energy engineering education with economics policy and management. A recent government-funded labour market study shows strong employer support for such a program.

I must say that SFU prides itself on its commitment to

work-integrated learning, to connecting students to the community and to the labour market. We believe this program will accentuate that.

Students enrolled in new Surrey programs will benefit from participation in SFU's leading co-op education program, which is one of the largest and most comprehensive in Canada — another reason we call ourselves the engaged university.

[1435]

In the past two years SFU has placed almost 6,000 students in more than 1,000 organizations worldwide, including 4,600 placements in 852 different B.C. organizations. The top industries for such placements include engineering, mining, natural resources, utilities, high-tech information technology and health care — all areas of strategic importance to B.C. and our economic future.

What is the answer? The answer is that SFU stands ready, situated as it is in B.C.'s fastest-growing region, to increase capacity to meet this needed growth in student demand and to meet the economic needs of the region and of the province.

In 2006 the government, as I say, committed at that time for doubling the size of our campus at a time when growth was not nearly as great as it is today. Now, with the growth that has taken place in the interim, with the need for more graduates in these areas, we believe the time has come to reconfirm support for that initiative. Indeed, in 2011 the standing committee did exactly that in its report. It called for a recommit by the government to the 2006 MOU and its goal of doubling SFU Surrey's student size to 5,000 by 2015.

SFU recognizes the government's fiscal challenges and difficult choices required for the 2014 budget, but the case for expanding the SFU Surrey campus seems to us, as it does to the communities in this area, more urgent and compelling than ever, and it's strongly aligned, we believe, with the government's economic and jobs plan.

To cut to the chase, what we're asking this committee to do is to again confirm for government the commitment of this committee, and hopefully urge the government to adopt the same commitment, to double student FTEs at SFU Surrey campus from 2,500 to 5,000 by the year 2020 — five years later than originally hoped but as soon as I think is achievable — with an initial expansion of 1,300 student FTEs and supporting infrastructure beginning in 2014.

SFU is committed to working with government, business and post-secondary partners to leverage this investment to educate a skilled and flexible workforce and ensure the long-term prosperity of B.C. As I say, we're very proud of our record as Canada's most community-engaged research university. We want to build on that record for the benefit not only of Surrey and the South Fraser but of British Columbia and its economic future.

D. Ashton (Chair): Mr. Petter, thank you very much.

Questions?

M. Hunt: At the end of page 2 you have this little sentence. I'd like you to explain what you actually mean by it. It says: "...resulting in higher entry-level GPAs and thousands of capable students being denied admission." Can you explain what you mean by that?

A. Petter: Well, we have some really effective charts that can bring it to life for the entire committee, but essentially in the last five years or so, our entry-level GPAs, our cutoffs in programs, have been going up and up and up. It's driven very much by the demand out of the South Fraser region. So in programs like mechatronics I believe our GPA now is over 90 percent.

J. Curry: Eighty-eight.

A. Petter: It's 88 percent. In other programs it's 85 percent or higher. These are programs in which, five years ago, the entry-level GPA for students who were highly capable would have been, say, five points below that. And as I say, Mr. Hunt, we have some charts that can actually break it out for you by program. But what's happening is that students who are demonstrably capable by academic criteria are not gaining admission because we are funded for a set number of spaces. The demand for those spaces is going up, but the capacity is not.

M. Hunt: I'm wondering if we could get that as a written submission to the committee, please.

A. Petter: Sure. We'd be happy to provide it.

E. Foster: Well, Andrew, as a person who has sat on the other side of this table, I want to ask you.... We will see, I imagine, representation from every institution in the province over the next three weeks, all asking for essentially the same thing — and probably all worthy asks.

We've got a huge strain on our finances in this province. Where are we going to come up with the money?

A. Petter: Well, I would say, first of all, that I doubt you will be asked, at least not on the same basis, for the same things. I think we're the only research-intensive university that is looking to increase our undergraduate spaces in any significant way. I think that's a significant differentiating factor, but by far the greater differentiating factor is the circumstances in the South Fraser and Surrey, where the government, very much to the government's credit, has increased investment in the K-to-12 system and the buildout there in recognition of the need to provide education.

[1440]

I think this committee is well aware, and I know the government is well aware, that it's not just a question

of equipping students. It's a question of preparing for a stronger economy that will produce more tax revenue — that education no longer ends, if it ever did, at grade 12. The kind of education students need includes — in a very significant component, according to the government's own labour market statistics — post-secondary education.

I know the word "investment" is thrown around an awful lot by people on this side of the table, but this truly is an investment. By government's own data, students who graduate from university, students who undertake post-secondary education, even in non-baccalaureate programs, will be the taxpayers of the future who will fill those coffers.

So this is very much part of an economic strategy, but driven by unique circumstances — unique circumstances about the growth in this region, the demand in this region and the fact that SFU, being the only research university with a presence in this region, has made this our priority for future growth.

D. Ashton (Chair): Any other questions?

Sir, thank you very much. Greatly appreciated. Have a good day.

Mr. Tavender, welcome.

R. Tavender: Thank you for having me.

D. Ashton (Chair): We have ten minutes for the presentation and a five-minute question period. I'll give you a two-minute warning before the ten-minute mark is up, okay?

R. Tavender: Sure, if you say so. *Bonjour. Je m'appelle Robin.*

I had wished to present in Vancouver city, but unfortunately, your Vancouver hearing was fully subscribed. I asked for another Vancouver hearing to be scheduled at your expense so that I might attend it with minimal hassle, and I'm sure that would be true for others as well. I don't believe that was to be, so I have travelled here at my own expense in time and money to attend here and to speak with you. No one is paying me to be here today. I am here merely of my own free will.

I will begin by acknowledging our presence in aboriginal territory in one of the indigenous languages of this territory, Chinook. [Chinook was spoken.]

That being said, I will continue with my specific comments, which centre around education and income assistance. At the outset, I want to make my position clear. I think that it is a breach of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to fail to provide either sufficient income assistance or education up to the doctoral level on the basis of merit without regard to capacity to undertake debt. I will begin with income assistance.

The current rate of income assistance provided to able-

bodied people is insufficient, as is the rate provided to disabled people and to seniors. Further, I have heard it said by some individuals — I don't know if this is true or not — that you impose time limits on the collection of security. This violates the security of the person.

People are entitled under the Charter to security of the person, and security means sufficient security. Further, this is a human right contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to which I trust we all accede.

I quote article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control." That's section (1) of article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

This violation has existed for some time, and it will continue to exist until you raise the rate to something dignified. What exactly that should be is not for me to say, but it is a common occurrence in Vancouver city that the poor protest their conditions.

[1445]

They cannot afford adequate shelter on social assistance, so they take from their support allowance to pay for adequate shelter. This leaves them with an insufficient support allowance, which is used to purchase items like food, soap, razors, over-the-counter medications, toilet paper, clothing, bus fares, and so on and so forth. So rather than go without shelter, they go without access to food, soap, razors, over-the-counter medications, toilet paper, clothing, bus fares, and so on and so forth.

Some of these items are provided by private charities, but they are unreliable, and it is contrary to fundamental justice for the government to underfund the social service, rendering the people reliant on private charity.

The government enjoys great power, but it is power according to law — law that imposes duties upon government in exchange for government's wielding the power of imposing duties upon the people. The arrangement is reciprocal in free and democratic societies. This power is not being used equitably, and this inequity infringes the security of the person. The remedy for such is to pay sufficient security to the poor, to the disabled and to our elders.

This leads to my second point: education. How are people to know the true duties imposed upon government and the true duties imposed upon themselves if they are not educated?

As it stands in British Columbia, education is a privilege reserved for those willing and able to pay. Most of my friends are unable to pay without taking out large loans. That is not access to education. It is access to debt, or otherwise — we can call it bondage — and I believe it

is contrary to the spirit and the intent of the founders of the University of British Columbia as well as to the statute law produced to inform the people of the right use of the university.

To employ an analogy, university is to high school as high school is to elementary school. That is, one who has graduated from elementary school may proceed to high school, and one who has graduated from high school may proceed to university. This process is supposed to be very simple, and it is not supposed to involve paying the university any more than it involved paying the high school or the elementary school.

The conversion of British Columbia's free university system into a for-profit institution by your government and by previous governments is a fraud on the people of British Columbia.

The 1915-16 calendar of the University of British Columbia states:

"The University of British Columbia is to be considered an integral part of the public educational system of the province. As such, it completes the work begun in the public and high schools, holding to the high school, with regard to studies, a position comparable to that which the high school sustains to the public school.

"As those who have passed through the public schools may freely avail themselves of the high school, so those who have profited by instruction offered in the high schools may advance to the opportunities afforded by the university. To encourage all who may be able to proceed to the higher education, the passage from one grade to another is made as easy and natural as possible.

"The province, through the university, undertakes to furnish instruction in the various branches requisite for a liberal education and in the technical branches that have a bearing upon the life and industries of the province."

I would like to comment there that I would, instead of "liberal," put "free" there, and I think the meaning would be much the same.

The language here is an unequivocal undertaking that is not conditioned to any specific period of time. It does not say that "the province, through the university, undertakes to furnish instruction to the class of 1915-16." It says that "the province...undertakes to furnish instruction," without limitation to any time, though it does specify the place: the University of British Columbia. This duty is also expressed in section 102 of the British Columbia University Act, 1908. I have searched for, though I have not found, any explicit act of repeal of that section.

Why is the province not budgeting for this expense? Has the province gone back on its undertaking? The people of the province gave the university a large land grant on the expectation that it would provide free education to British Columbia in perpetuity. The university is not living up to its end of the bargain.

[1450]

I will touch on one final point. The idea that legislation may require a balanced budget at the expense of governmental duties and undertakings is incorrect. While it is true that specific legislation may specifically remove duties or specifically annul undertakings, such must be done

directly, without equivocation. Such balanced-budget legislation, therefore, has the effect of infringing the security of the person if such leads to the underfunding of social services like income assistance or education.

If I were a judge, I would not accede to any submission to the effect that curtailing free access to education and free access to sufficient security is justifiable in a free and democratic society, as both infringe the security of the person unjustifiably.

Thanks for your time. I will answer any questions that you may have.

D. Ashton (Chair): Thank you, Mr. Tavender, for the presentation.

Any questions of Mr. Tavender?

Sir, thank you very much.

Mariane, welcome. The scope of the presentation is ten minutes. I'll give you a two-minute warning, and then we have five minutes reserved for questions. The floor is yours.

M. Bourcheix-Laporte: Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Mariane Bourcheix-Laporte. I'm presenting today on behalf of the Pacific Association of Artist Run Centres, which is also known under the acronym PAARC, which is how I will refer to it today.

PAARC represents artist-run centres in British Columbia. Artist-run centres are non-profit organizations working in visual and media arts that present non-commercial and experimental work and work towards the benefit of the practising artist.

Artist-run centres support artists at all stages of their careers, pay professional artist fees according to a national standard, and employ cultural workers and administrators.

PAARC currently counts 31 active organizations in its membership who are located in Vancouver, Victoria, Kamloops, Kelowna and Nelson. Today PAARC is making a presentation to the committee on behalf of these organizations but also on behalf of the numerous independent, non-profit arts organizations that exist throughout the province and, of course, on behalf of the practising artists — because artists are at the core of B.C.'s cultural vitality.

PAARC's presentation today will engage directly two of the priorities identified by the current government, which are the creation of sustainable jobs and investment in sectors that actively participate in the knowledge economy.

PAARC understands that one of the priorities of the current government is the economic prosperity of the province and creating a secure economic future for generations to come.

Recently the Liberal government has demonstrated its commitment to transmitting a passion for art and culture to the youth and supporting higher education arts train-

ing by implementing some of the initiatives included in the B.C. Creative Futures plan. These initiatives include increased arts education funding, increased access to out-of-school cultural activities, increased scholarship and co-op education opportunities for university arts students and a substantial investment in the new Emily Carr University Great Northern Way Campus.

We salute these initiatives, as they demonstrate the importance of making accessible art and culture to the next generation of British Columbians. They also testify to the current government's commitment to quality higher education arts training.

We urge the government to follow the logic of these steps and increase arts funding not only at an educational level but all around. That is, we encourage the government to increase individual subsidies to practising artists, secure operational funding to arts organizations and increase access to project-based funding.

[1455]

Moreover, we urge the government to invest in arts and culture and bring the province's per-capita public funding to the arts, at a minimum, to the national average. In recent years British Columbia has systematically ranked last of the provinces in per-capita funding to the arts; 2009 and '10 statistics indicate that British Columbia's per-capita governmental funding to the arts was more than \$100 under the national average. Comparative statistics after 2010 are not available currently, but recent funding does not seem to discredit these trends.

Yet British Columbia is the Canadian province with the highest number of working artists. They comprise 1.8 percent of the province's labour force. B.C. is also second in rank amongst the provinces, with 3.65 percent of its labour force being comprised of cultural workers. Together, artists and cultural workers account for 5.45 percent of the province's labour force.

Apart from being contradictory, what the gap between the provincial funding to the arts and the high percentage of artists and cultural workers in British Columbia demonstrates is that the province is rich in creativity. As a natural resource, creativity is not only renewable; it has the potential to grow exponentially. The same goes for its effects not only on the lives of British Columbians but on the province's economy.

We urge you to consider that increased investment in arts and culture can only have beneficial repercussions on the overall economy of British Columbia and, of course, that there are countless non-measurable benefits to increased arts-and-culture funding, with trickle-down effects into the economy. These include increased quality of life, strengthening B.C. identity and communities and increased recognition of B.C. artists and artistic production on national and international levels.

In a report on Canada's creative economy, the Conference Board of Canada stated that arts and culture are "cornerstones of the creative knowledge-based

economy." Numbers support this claim. Since 2002 cultural industries in Canada have had a 2.1 percent yearly growth rate. Also, creating a job in the arts and culture sector is less costly than in any other sector of the economy. The average cost varies between \$20,000 and \$30,000 compared to \$100,000 to \$300,000 for jobs in medium to heavy industries.

Following this analysis, PAARC's recommendations to the committee are the following.

Our first recommendation is to increase the B.C. Arts Council core budget so as to increase funding opportunities to individual artists, secure funding to establish arts organizations, and increase access to funding to emerging organizations and to organizations that currently do not receive funding from the council.

We see this recommendation aligned with the government's priority to create sustainable jobs in British Columbia, given the following facts. The average earnings of working artists are 37 percent below the Canadian labour force average. In British Columbia artist-run centres receive, on average, \$11,000 less public sector revenue than the Canadian average.

Less than half of the organizations on PAARC's membership received operational funding from the B.C. Arts Council last year, and lack of adequate access to operational funding and the chronic instability of project-based funding proved difficult on the daily operations of non-profit arts organizations like artist-run centres. Organizations operate with less paid staff than required and often have to shut down due to lack of financial resources.

Increased subsidies to individual artists could alleviate the gap between the earnings of artists in British Columbia and the overall labour force. Increased funding to arts organizations would not only ensure that current jobs in the cultural sector be maintained; it would also enable the creation of new jobs in the sector.

Our second recommendation is the following: that the government start planning increased funding measures for the cultural sector in response to the positive impacts of its investment in youth art education and higher education artistic training. We believe that this measure would be consistent with the government's priority to invest in sectors of the knowledge-based economy. It would also constitute the logical step to take, after increasing funding to arts education through the B.C. Creative Futures initiative.

[1500]

Increasing youth access to arts and increasing the capacity of Emily Carr University will yield not only stronger interest in the arts in the province but also an increased number of trained artists and cultural workers.

We urge the government to start planning ahead and increase subsidies to the cultural sector in response to the upsurge of the trained artistic and cultural workforce that the B.C. Creative Futures initiative will foster.

We believe that increasing public funding to artists and arts organizations in British Columbia, at a minimum, to the national per-capita average will ensure economic capitalization on the talent fostered in the province through increased arts education opportunities. Creating more opportunities for artists to produce and showcase their work in the province is a way to ensure that we will see the effects of these measures materialized in the B.C. economy.

The Pacific Association of Artist Run Centres will also be making a written report to the committee. We thank you for your time.

D. Ashton (Chair): Thank you for your presentation. Questions?

M. Elmore: Thanks, Mariane, for your presentation. Is PAARC a B.C.-wide organization, and how many member centres are there?

M. Bourcheix-Laporte: Yes, we represent artists from centres throughout the province. We are a provincial organization. We have 31 member organizations.

M. Elmore: Do you usually have a physical centre and then member groups participate in that? What's the structure of it?

M. Bourcheix-Laporte: PAARC doesn't have a physical locale at the moment. We operate out of one of our members' space, the Western Front Society in Vancouver. Sorry. What was the second part of your question?

M. Elmore: I know you mentioned that it covered a variety of artists and performers.

M. Bourcheix-Laporte: Right. I was just introducing you to the work of artist-run centres, which are a network. There exists a network of probably over 500 organizations throughout the country. They have been very important since the 1970s in the visual arts ecology of the country. Actually, most of the internationally known artists in Canada have started their careers in artist-run centres. But we support artists at all stages of their careers — emerging, mid-career and established.

M. Elmore: Right. Yeah, I'm familiar with Western Front in Vancouver. Thanks.

D. Ashton (Chair): Any other questions? Mariane, thank you very much for coming. We'll take a ten-minute recess. Is that okay?

The committee recessed from 3:02 p.m. to 3:28 p.m.

[D. Ashton in the chair.]

D. Ashton (Chair): Good afternoon. Thanks for coming, and thanks for coming forward early, David. I appreciate it. The schedule is ten minutes for the presentation — I'll give you a two-minute warning — and we've reserved five minutes for questions from the committee.

D. Field: I think I'm going to make that this time around.

Thank you for this opportunity to address the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services. My name is David Field, and today I would like to speak about B.C. Hydro's important contribution to the provincial budget.

Successive governments in B.C. have benefited from the annual dividend B.C. Hydro provides to the people of the province, a dividend paid in return for the substantial investment our parents and grandparents made decades ago in the province's core hydroelectric-generating infrastructure and transmission systems.

As we all know, the global economy is still recovering from the meltdown of 2008. This makes balancing the provincial budget and keeping provincial spending under control a difficult but eminently prudent objective. As we also know, B.C. Hydro is facing considerable cost pressures, primarily from the need to renew and expand the valuable hydroelectric-generating infrastructure built in this province by previous generations.

The challenge, then, is to figure out how we can safeguard the substantial financial contribution B.C. Hydro makes annually toward the provincial budget while also tending to energy needs of our province. I would like to suggest a way that can help us meet this challenge and potentially take some of the infrastructure cost measures off B.C. Hydro.

[1530]

First, let me provide you with a little bit of background information to support and clarify what I'll be suggesting to the committee. In 2004 a net-metering rate known as RS 1289 for general-service-rate customers was established by B.C. Hydro for the Crown utility's residential and commercial customers who wished to install clean or renewable distributed generation facilities at their premises, primarily for the purpose of allowing them to meet all or part their electricity needs.

Currently, those who take part in B.C. Hydro's RS 1289 net-metering program are paid a rate of 9.99 cents per kilowatt hour, which is slightly higher than the tier 1 rate B.C. Hydro charges its customers and slightly lower than the tier 2 rate.

Unfortunately, in terms of increasing public participation in the RS 1289 net-metering program, only those with a generating capacity that does not exceed 50 kilowatts can qualify for the program.

Fifty kilowatts is not very much generating capacity. A typical house can consume 11,000 kilowatt hours per annum, or 1,830 kilowatt hours bimonthly, while the

average for small general-service customer consumption in 2012 was approximately 23,000 kilowatt hours per annum, or 3,833 kilowatt hours bimonthly. A typical small community could easily consume up to ten times this amount of energy, depending on the number of residential houses and commercial enterprises.

A comparison of electric utilities in 13 different jurisdictions — part of a B.C. Hydro report requested by the BCUC — shows that B.C. Hydro's 50-kilowatt capacity cap limit is the lowest of all. Not surprising, of those jurisdictions studied, B.C. also has the smallest contribution to the electrical grid, from net generations at 0.01 percent.

The 50-kilowatt cap for net metering is simply too low and has only served to stifle the growth of distributed generation and net metering in this province. I would therefore suggest to the committee that the cap needs to be raised to 100 kilowatts for general-service customers as soon as possible.

In support of my suggestion and for brevity, I have included some of the findings and recommendations contained in an April 30, 2013, B.C. Hydro report entitled *Net Metering Evaluation Report No. 3*. It was requested on the BCUC order number G-57-12. Also I've included a link to it for your reference. It can be found on the B.C. Hydro site.

These are all statements that were included in the report:

"Increase the net-metering cap from 50 kilowatts to 100 kilowatts for general-service-rate customers — example: commercial, institutional, industrial and municipal and First Nations customers — provided that B.C. Hydro is satisfied there will be no adverse cost impacts on non-participating ratepayers. Automate and improve building practices to increase accuracy, enhance online accessibility and ensure consistency with other customer programs. Continue to promote net metering through B.C. Hydro's website and by implementing the actions identified in B.C. Hydro's marketing and communications plan for the net-metering program.

"Work with local government, contractors and installers and customers on educational materials to enhance understanding of the impacts of solar PV on the urban environment. This will include discussions around streamlining the permitting process for small-scale rooftop PV systems."

In short, B.C. Hydro is already recommending that the net-metering cap should be increased from 50 kilowatts to 100 kilowatts. Likewise, to foster the development of small-scale distributed-generation projects, the report recommends streamlining the acquisition process in a way that supports small-scale distributed-generation projects up to one megawatt under the umbrella of B.C. Hydro's standing offer program.

Once again, for the sake of brevity, the following comes from B.C. Hydro's same report:

"Design a streamlined acquisition process that supports small-scale DG projects 50 kilowatts to one megawatt under the umbrella of the SOP" — standing operating program. "Identify opportunities to work collaboratively with industry associations to standardize interconnection equipment for small-scale DG projects.

"Explore the replacement of revenue meters with smart meters to reduce costs for both customers and B.C. Hydro. Explore the implementation of a flat fee for interconnection studies for small

DG projects less than one megawatt, taking into consideration associated impacts to interconnection processes, demands on interconnection resources and costs impacts on B.C. Hydro and its customers. Explore the possibility of deferring costs of upgrades until projects have reached commercial operation.

"Create optional contract lengths — five, ten, 15 and up to 40 years — for small-scale projects. Explore how B.C. Hydro applies energy price escalation rates for small-scale projects and determine if an alternative approach may be appropriate."

B.C. Hydro is to be applauded for their vision and direction with respect to improving the net-metering program and supporting distributed generation. However, what is currently missing is a definitive timeline for acting on the recommendations, implementing the changes and putting the vision into practice.

[1535]

Gabriola Island offers a timely example of a B.C. community that is considering entering into a net-metering program arrangement with B.C. Hydro and adopting the distributed generation model. The Gabriola community has an ambitious and very admirable goal to become net zero consumers and generators of electricity. The community is in the early development stage of the proposal, which will see installation of small wind turbines below one megawatt in size, solar photovoltaic systems and some form of tidal or wave generation.

Gabriola's ready to go, and increasing that metering cap would be a major positive inducement that would make the project more financially attractive to the community and investors alike. Increasing the RS 1289 net-metering generating cap, as recommended in B.C. Hydro's report, would go a long way toward enabling Gabriola to make their net-zero objective a reality.

Needless to say, the capital costs of generating infrastructure on a project such as Gabriola's will be borne by the community itself, mostly by private individuals and small commercial entities that would generate locally and contribute to the grid. Clearly, if the Gabriola Island example is a reality and repeated in other communities across the province, it would take a considerable load off B.C. Hydro in terms of having to invest in new generating capacity.

I would add that in terms of small, clean technology companies, B.C. is blessed with a multitude, and these companies are developing some incredible cutting-edge products. Not only do these companies have the potential to grow into much larger manufacturing operations, thereby creating jobs and attracting investment dollars throughout the province; these companies also have the potential to expand the range of clean, renewable energy technology B.C. can export to the world.

I thank the committee for your time. I hope you will give serious considerations to raising the RS 1289 net-metering, rate-generating cap from its current 50 kilowatts to 100 kilowatts and streamlining the acquisition process in a way that supports small-scale distributed-generation projects up to one megawatt in size, under the umbrella of a standing offer program.

In so doing, you'd be giving an incredible boost to the development of distributed generation in this province at no cost to taxpayers, while also helping to relieve the cost pressures faced by B.C. Hydro, thereby safeguarding B.C. Hydro's bottom-line profitability and the significant financial contribution B.C. Hydro makes annually toward balancing the provincial budget.

How'd I do for time?

D. Ashton (Chair): Thank you. You did it perfectly — eight minutes. You did a good job.

M. Hunt: Dave, it sounds technically wonderful, but I haven't a clue on how big one megawatt is — or 50 kilowatts, for that matter. So if you can give me an idea. Let's deal with me at my house and a rooftop. Do I get close to any of that?

D. Field: What it breaks down to is watts per square foot.

Off the top of my head, typically you will.... There are different ways of measuring your electricity capacity. What it boils down to is watts per square foot you can put on your rooftop. So 15 square feet would be about a 250-watt solar panel.

M. Hunt: Fifteen square foot is...?

D. Field: Fifteen square feet equals 240 watts. So it depends how big your roof is. You could probably put up to two kilowatts on your roof, on one side of your roof.

M. Hunt: Okay, but you went and cheated at the top of your second page. One minute you're talking about these 50 kilowatts, and you sort of got me flowing on that one, and the next thing you do is shift gears and talk about 11,000 kilowatts per annum, or so many bi-monthly and all that. That's not fair.

D. Field: Okay. The way that's broken down, if you measure how electricity is consumed in your home....

M. Hunt: Yeah, but when you're doing 50 kilowatts, you're doing 50 kilowatts per...?

D. Field: There's a difference between capacity and energy. Capacity is measured as a snapshot in time of how much something can generate. Energy is over time, so it's based on an hourly basis.

For instance, if you had a solar panel that generated one kilowatt, and it generated one kilowatt for one hour, you'd have one kilowatt hour. It doesn't matter whether it's a solar panel, a wind turbine or a hydro generator. Energy over time — that function over time — is based on an hourly basis. The way you get it over a yearly basis is you multiply 24 hours in a day by 365 days in a year.

[1540]

So when you pay for your electricity on your hydro bill.... When you look at it, it tells you how much per hour you pay. On tier 1 it's about 6.25 cents per kilowatt hour. When you put up a solar panel, you're never going to get 50 kilowatts if you put out 50 kilowatts, because it's based upon the efficiency of the solar panels. Out of 50 kilowatts, based over a 24-hour period, you'd be lucky if you'd get 20 kilowatts. The same with a wind turbine rated at 100 kilowatts. It's about 30 percent efficient. So you might get, depending on the wind speed.... That's the difference between capacity and what they call nameplate, a nameplate rating of your generator.

M. Hunt: Okay. I've got some math to do here.

D. Field: Yes. When you get your electricity bill.... How many people look at their electricity bill?

M. Hunt: I just look at the bottom line — how much it costs me.

D. Field: Exactly. Do you know exactly how much you pay tier 1, tier 2?

D. Ashton (Chair): I've got two minutes left here, and I have a question.

G. Holman: Just quickly, I take it from your report that you are recommending this increasing of the cap, which is actually recommended by B.C. Hydro. Is that right?

D. Field: Well, if you take a look at it, at the very beginning of the sentence they say "explore" or "look at." So they're exploring it, under the recommendations of the BCUC, but there's no definitive timeline saying: "We're going to do this by 2015" or "We're going to do it by 2016." So there's no impetus for them to do it anytime soon. For instance, let's set a timeline. Let's say: "Okay, let's get it done by 2015."

G. Holman: Okay. And what you're suggesting is the provincial government could push that schedule forward.

D. Field: Absolutely.

G. Holman: But there are a number of other things here that are listed that would help promote net metering and small communities generate.... It's not just the cap but some other issues as well.

D. Field: Well, yes. The recent introduction of the smart meters was hugely beneficial because previous to that, if you wanted to install solar panels, anybody wanted to install solar panels on your roof, you had to put two meters in, using the old analog system. You were charged

by B.C. Hydro for the energy you consumed, and then you were given a credit for the energy that you generated.

Meters only went one way. Like, they don't spin backwards. You paid your regular rate, and then B.C. kept track of how much you generated. At the end of the year, if you generated as much as you consumed, you would be net zero. You would have a zero balance. Do you understand?

G. Holman: If I could be permitted an editorial comment, I find it.... You're saying that Hydro is doing this with BCUC oversight, working with the Utilities Commission?

D. Field: Well, they've actually had the standing offer program since 2004, so it's already in place. Part of the problem is that it's not very well advertised. While they say that they've let people know, I imagine if you walked out in the street and asked the guy walking down the street, "Did you realize that there is a standing offer program," they'd go: "Say what?"

Education is one thing that the government and B.C. Hydro can do — educate people. The cost of solar panels now has come down. It has reduced 80 percent. The cost of a solar panel has reduced 80 percent in five years.

G. Holman: Okay, but my question was: does the Utilities Commission have to approve changes like this?

D. Field: No. B.C. Hydro can. It has already been pushed towards B.C. Hydro and the recommendation report. The report that I quoted....

G. Holman: So you don't need to go through a process with the Utilities Commission. Hydro can do it.

D. Field: Yes, Hydro can do it.

D. Ashton (Chair): We're out of time, but thank you, David. We appreciate the presentation. We have other presenters. Ride safe going home.
Karin, good afternoon.

K. Litzcke: Good afternoon.

D. Ashton (Chair): Ten minutes for a presentation. I'll give you a two-minute warning, and then we have five minutes reserved for questions.

K. Litzcke: Do you all have a copy of my presentation?

D. Ashton (Chair): It's coming around right now.

K. Litzcke: I think the safest bet is just to speedread through this, and I think that gets me to exactly ten minutes. I don't know if that makes for an entertaining pres-

entation, but at least it will make for one that's within the time.

My topic today is parenting, specifically the effect of the public education system on parenting. If you'll bear with me, I promise there is a relevance to the mandate of your committee.

[1545]

I'm from Vancouver but wasn't able to get a spot in hearings there. But I think my points are applicable more widely. I don't work for anyone. Even through family income, I'm not vested at all in what I'm here to say except as a citizen.

I'm a full-time mother and housewife who's just finished ushering her kids through the public school system. In the course of doing so, I became a very active parent in the schools and became engaged with some of the school system's puzzling behaviours.

For the past 16 years I've made a pretty serious hobby out of studying and writing about public education. I've drawn some rather unpalatable conclusions about it. In the interest of speed, I'll speak bluntly, so this may be a little unpalatable.

With the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on residential schooling having just visited B.C., I think it's an apropos time to frankly consider what the story of residential schooling has taught. It taught that a culture rests on an invisible infrastructure of parenting. It taught that institutional care of children is always suboptimal because it interrupts the parenting cycle. It undermines the invisible infrastructure of parenting.

The question is: why are we doing the same thing again? Why are we even doing it to the same kids? Did we not learn anything from this teaching? Today most children in Canada, including aboriginal kids, spend a minimum of 13 years of their lives in institutional care. It's not residential, but it's getting too close for comfort, and the push is on to expand it in myriad ways.

There is demand for schooling to start earlier in a child's life and last longer. The length of the school day is growing with the addition of breakfast and early classes and after-school extracurriculars. The topics taught delve ever deeper into a child's psyche and family life.

Remember, it started as an experience lasting some five years, from about ages seven to 12, covering skills and literature. It rocketed to 13 years in a very short period of time and has been stuck there for over 50 years. It's time to realize that 13 years of eight-hour days is too long. This increasing institutionalization of children is all lobbied for as an ostensible benefit. Ten-dollar-a-day child care for all, free university tuition, eradicating child poverty, career preparation, mindfulness — who can argue with all that?

Well, I'm here to argue with it. Remember what residential schooling taught: institutional care of children is suboptimal. Parental connection matters.

Let's define "parenting." It's the job of raising chil-

dren to functional adulthood in the culture they inhabit. Where adulthood used to begin shortly after puberty, kids will soon be stumbling into their first experience of adulthood as their best reproductive years end. We're already labelling "youth" as anything up to age 35.

Since "senior" now starts at 55, what we're seeing is the demise of the concept of adult, the supplanting of adulthood with the perpetual status of student — that ten-some years of additional forced retention in juvenile life for people biologically ready for much more. No wonder it's not going well.

In making the comparison to residential schools, I want to make it clear that I'm not forgetting the abuse, and I'm certainly not minimizing it. But the key question is: would residential schools have been acceptable without the abuse, if children in them were all treated kindly? The answer is no. The fundamental abuse was the removal of the kids from their families.

That is why the expansionist tendencies of the school system today must be regarded with equal alarm. I think the system is already sending out considerable warning signals. If bullying, suicides, drug addiction, gang membership and what is being called a mental health crisis are not enough, consider that there is a large population of kids currently being drugged to keep them functioning in schools.

It's my submission to this committee that the enterprise we call public schooling is exercising an oppressive effect on people, our culture and our economy. The system is not underfunded; it's overgrown.

With respect to the economy, the lifelong institutional care system — daycare, school, post-secondary — exerts a black-hole effect. It sucks not only every available dollar in its direction with no discernible improvement in human outcomes but also exerts a depressive effect on innovation, exploration, entrepreneurship and creativity in the whole education and child-raising sector.

It's my belief that if one year were chopped off the system one way or the other and that same funding put into the hands of families directly, the effect on the economy would be of 1,000 flowers blooming, never mind the effect on the people.

Since some of the negative consequences of schooling include exacerbating mental health problems, criminality or just overall dysfunction in families to the point of family breakdown, reducing the footprint of the education system would create a much wider scope of economic relief. Overgrowth in economies, as in nature, destroys the life around it.

We talk with concern about the 1 percent in terms of personal wealth, but the same syndrome exists in government services. Overenrichment of any one sector starves the others.

[1550]

As for the effect on people, it must be realized that the requirement that children spend a fixed time in school

makes the system focused on filling that time rather than focused, as we would like, on providing maximum content or an optimal experience. This requires awareness and vigilance at least and correction at best. This twisted focus on filling a set amount of time has resulted in a system that produces created need in students rather than serving their needs.

Since the intended content of schooling could be accomplished for most children in far less than 13 years times 200 days each, the system has become adept at not teaching, creating students who are confused and behind and who need remedial and supportive work. This is analogous to the concept of planned obsolescence in manufacturing and shares with it the job creation agenda.

What it amounts to is that children are required to attend school not to the extent that they really need it but to the extent that adults need jobs. In the bluntest possible terms, this is the new child labour, except in this version children don't even get paid, although many of them come out as stunted as they did from coal mines.

Finally, the effect on our culture. It's quite trendy these days to denigrate our culture because it does not meet some lofty utopian ideal, but we should keep in mind that for all our flaws, we are one of the most equitable, tolerant and peaceful cultures in the world. As such, whatever replaces the culture we now have can only be more tyrannical and hierarchical. Whether a tyranny is from a new arrival or the dominance of an existing force, it will be less peaceful. On the basis that it compares well to any real alternatives, I submit that our culture is worth preserving.

We have taken to relying heavily on public schooling to transmit and develop our culture — too heavily, I would submit. The negative outcomes of this heavy reliance include a paradoxical exclusion of adults, including parents, from cultural relevance and an excessive vulnerability to subversive forces that can replicate themselves by sneaking into the school system under cover as pedagogical trends.

I'd suggest that culture should be a function of adult life, not of student life. As such, it is vitally important that children have the opportunities to connect with adult culture in many different ways, with different adults in a real-life environment and not that the school system becomes their sole window on adult life and modern culture.

In summary, governments need to support parents, not schools. Those parents, in turn, will raise connected children. It is disconnected, excluded and marginalized parents who have trouble with that task at present, and paradoxically, they are most in danger of being elbowed out of their children's lives.

You've heard the term "child poverty," which with just two words wipes the picture clean of a parental presence. The children to whom this term is most consistently being applied are aboriginal kids. This is not a beneficent

force.

Government services that pull children and parents together, rather than those that push them apart and stick institutions between them, are what we need for a healthier economy, culture and population. That's not the whole answer, but it's a good bottom-line policy.

To act on such a policy, it is necessary to address ways to shrink or fragment the institutions that are oppressing us and imposing further costs on us. The urge for growth that those institutions have is so strong and they are so adept at lobbying for it that, as policy-makers, it is hard to resist acquiescing to it.

All I really ask is that you not tread that path blindly for lack of an alternative view, even if it comes to you from only one voice.

D. Ashton (Chair): Thank you for the presentation. Questions? Any questions?

M. Hunt: How can you question that? It was delightful. Thank you.

K. Litzcke: I'd like to just add that there is an additional piece in your package. Just this morning, as I was putting this together, I found this blog from Britain that addresses basically the same issue: the division of parenting work between parents and schools. It's a very British take on it. It's very political.

But the message is the same and really, for me, goes to say that this is not really, in many ways, a local problem. It's something that comes from the systemic nature of the institution itself and its urge to grow that is just built into all institutions.

It's something, I think, that's time is coming everywhere — that this is an institution that needs to be pulled back.

D. Ashton (Chair): Okay. Thank you very much for your presentation. Have a good day.

[1555]

Vancouver Board of Trade. Welcome. I see Iain again. Rob, Lori, welcome. You may have heard — ten minutes for a presentation. If required, I'll give you a two-minute warning. And we have five minutes for questions if required.

I. Black: Mr. Chair, I'll start, if I may, by introducing the people who are joining me today.

To my immediate left is Rob MacKay-Dunn. He is the Vancouver Board of Trade's director of public policy.

To my right is Lori Mathison. She's one of our volunteers. In her day job she is the managing partner and an accountant with Dentons, one of the largest international law firms in the world. She is the managing partner here in Vancouver. She's also the tax partner of that firm. But near and dear to our world, she is one of our key volun-

teers, as she chairs our government budget and finance committee, and issues our famous report cards once a year, when the government produces a budget.

Mr. Chair, first of all, thank you for having us here today. I want to say thank you to members from both sides of the House. I have friends on this committee and former colleagues, as well, from the Legislature.

I remember well, having served on this committee for three years, the gruelling effort that you are going through at the moment. The tour of duty across British Columbia is not an easy one, compressed into a very short period of time. It's exhausting, and we're at the end of a very long day for you. So thank you for having us here. I do not take lightly the work that you are doing, as I know it awfully well and have the battle scars to prove it.

The Vancouver Board of Trade, by way of introduction for those of you who are not aware of this organization, is a 126-year-old institution in this province. About 60 percent of our members come from Vancouver. The rest are scattered throughout the province. About 80 percent of our members are small business, and cumulatively, we represent about a third of the working people of British Columbia in terms of employee count.

We are a member-driven organization. We receive no money by way of grants from governments. That makes us unique in Canada. The Montreal Board of Trade, the Toronto Board of Trade and a few others like them get a lot of money from government. Of the major ones in Canada, the five or six of us, we are one of the few, if not the only one, that takes no money from outside influences.

Members join us for three distinct reasons, to frame out our remarks today. They join us for our member benefits — the kind of standard chambers-of-commerce variety of Visa or MasterCard fees; insurance coverage; in our case a new car — if you wish a new car, we have 17 different car manufacturers, so we can get a substantial discount; payroll services; parking at the airport; and those types of things.

Secondly, they join us for our legendary events business. We are one of the largest events businesses in the country, doing about 60 to 70 a year, putting people on stage who are either thought leaders or celebrities and everything in between.

Finally, and the reason we're here today, is that they join us because of our policy development and the advocacy work that we do. Guiding and guided by our board's policy council, we have over 300 volunteers — people who work on a dozen different committees; individuals, men and women, who sign the front of paycheques, not the back, and who make the capital investment decisions that actually do create jobs and economic prosperity in the province of British Columbia.

The history of these committees is very distinct. We rightly lay claim to leading the devolution of YVR into the magnificent success that it is today, over 20 years ago.

We were the tipping-point force in the Canada Line debate. The Nexus passes at the border were a Vancouver Board of Trade initiative, and we are broadly credited with making a substantial impact on the homelessness in the Downtown Eastside. So we do cover the gamut.

The board of trade every year prepares a submission with respect to the provincial budget and also issues our report card when the budget is released. Our submission and report card consider four key priorities: debt reduction, spending restraint, tax competitiveness and the economic vision of the government in power.

Our comments today will also track to those four priorities. To lead you through those, I turn it over to Lori, to my immediate right.

L. Mathison: Thank you, Iain.

The first priority that we look at is debt reduction. The board of trade is highly supportive of the government's balanced budget. The board of trade also recognizes that the B.C. taxpayer-supported debt-to-GDP ratio compares very favourably to that of the other provinces.

The second priority that we look to is spending restraint. The board of trade acknowledges that the government has introduced a comprehensive core review process and applauds this initiative.

Spending in the area of health care is a specific area where a close review is needed. As the Minister of Health's mandate letter outlines, it is necessary to innovate and find savings throughout the health care system. The board of trade believes that the government should closely consider expanding the services delivered by low-cost health care professionals, which will lead to the reduction in health care costs, improved access to services and better patient outcomes.

[1600]

Measures such as having pharmacists administer immunizations and allowing nurse practitioners to administer and discharge patients have already been introduced and are a good start, but B.C. must do more to expand health services delivered by pharmacists and nurse practitioners.

For example, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Quebec have expanded pharmacy-based primary care in areas such as treatment for minor ailments and the management of chronic diseases. In addition, Alberta and Ontario lead B.C. in health services offered by nurse practitioners.

Of specific note, mental health poses a significant cost to taxpayers and is estimated to cost B.C. businesses more than \$4 billion each year. The board of trade encourages the government to take a leadership role in the area of mental health and a proactive approach to mental health issues, including thoroughly exploring collaborative approaches with B.C.'s employers. Funding both prevention and early treatment can help to significantly reduce the cost of maintaining mental wellness and providing health

care, both to government and to business.

Specific requests include providing additional funding for both prevention and early treatments for mental wellness, working with employers to encourage additional focus on and employer funding of prevention and treatment, working with the public to remove the stigma of mental illness, providing additional support services for higher-risk populations such as the homeless, providing additional support for treatment of substance abuse and providing additional funding for subsidized housing for higher-risk populations such as the homeless.

The third priority is tax competitiveness. Having a competitive tax structure is necessary to retain existing businesses and to attract new investment to the province. The board of trade is concerned that recent legislative tax developments are placing B.C. at a competitive disadvantage.

Firstly on the PST, the B.C. Expert Panel on B.C.'s Business Tax Competitiveness recommended in its 2012 report that the B.C. government provide a fully refundable investment tax credit claimed on businesses' income tax returns equal to the PST paid on all acquisitions of machinery and equipment, including computers and software but excluding buildings and structures with a capital cost allowance rate of 5 percent or less.

The expert panel also recommended that the credits claimed be spread over two years in equal amounts in order to manage the impact of the ITC, or the investment tax credit. The board of trade continues to support this recommendation of the expert panel and believes that this improvement to the PST will help to mitigate the negative effects of the PST on business and employment.

Also in the area of tax, corporate tax in particular, the 2013 provincial budget increased the general corporate income tax rate from 10 percent to 11 percent, effective April 1, 2013, accelerating an increase that was previously announced in the 2012 provincial budget. Unlike the increase in the personal income tax rate, this tax rate increase was not noted to be a temporary increase, unlike the temporary increase for individuals at the highest marginal bracket.

At the time of the announcement of this corporate increase it was noted that the B.C. general corporate income tax rate would still be 33 percent lower than it was in 2001. Although we support this decrease over the years, the current general corporate income tax rate now is higher than in Alberta, which is arguably our greatest competition for investment dollars due to its proximity to B.C.

In order to improve B.C.'s tax competitiveness, we recommend that the government revisit this permanent tax rate increase and consider reducing it back to 10 percent when its finances allow it to do so.

The fourth area is economic vision. As a business association representing small, medium and large private sector members across all of B.C.'s core industries, we

want to express our appreciation for the proactive initiatives that drive our provincial economy and support B.C.'s competitive advantage.

The board of trade is highly supportive of the B.C. government's leadership in respect of LNG. However, we are concerned that the LNG window of opportunity is short. We need a practical, realistic and timely action plan.

[1605]

In particular, there's an urgent need for a firm understanding of the applicable tax regime, which must be competitive and sensitive to the overall pricing of the product within the market.

The board of trade would like to see continuing development of B.C.'s role as Canada's Asia-Pacific gateway through the aggressive development of sea, land and rail infrastructure. These projects include the port expansion at Roberts Bank terminal and improved rail capacity across the Fraser River. We are delighted to hear the news of the much-needed replacement of the George Massey Tunnel, on which we specifically wrote to the government earlier this year.

The board of trade also sees a leading role for B.C.'s already well-established knowledge economy and brand for world-class post-secondary education. With appropriate recognition, we have the potential to be the Boston of the west coast. In short, B.C. has the opportunity to recognize the brand and exploit an already functioning international education industry to drive yet another economic sector.

I appreciate I'm on the time.

D. Ashton (Chair): You are, so if you just want close, please. I just have to keep it fair for everybody.

L. Mathison: Certainly.

Just as a final remark, the board of trade is pleased to see the government commit to investing \$50 billion in the Building Canada fund.

We can certainly answer any questions and provide more detailed submissions.

D. Ashton (Chair): Okay. Questions?

G. Holman: Thanks for your presentation. I had a question about the PST. In my understanding, there were already PST exemptions for machinery and equipment. Am I right in that? And how does your proposal differ from that?

L. Mathison: My understanding is that the exemptions you're referring to are specific to the particular industries. The existing Provincial Sales Tax Act contains, for certain industries, exemptions, but they're not broadly available to all industries. What we're proposing is a more comprehensive investment tax credit mechanism that would be more broadly available.

G. Holman: Does this proposal essentially create a value-added kind of input tax credit system that, in fact, voters turned down not too long ago? Or is this something different?

I. Black: No, I wouldn't suggest that. It's an element of tax credits that's focused on, if you will, levelling the playing field across other investment areas so that your subsidy is withdrawing the cost of investment, the tax implications, away from the small business owners.

L. Mathison: It's an aspect of the value-added tax, but it's very, very narrow in the sense that it's only.... It's much more narrow than the input tax credit is for the Excise Tax Act.

M. Elmore: Thanks for your presentation. Under your second priority, the spending restraint, you note — I didn't know it was that high; \$4 billion a year — the cost to B.C. businesses in terms of mental health. Does the Vancouver Board of Trade have a specific initiative around mental health? Do you have a committee, or is there a report?

I. Black: Yeah, the Vancouver Board of Trade has had a committee on mental health and wellness in the workplace. It produced a report that was very well received about a year and a half ago, with specific focus on the private sector role in this crucial area.

It's a very real cost, at \$4.1 billion or \$4.2 billion per year to the private sector, as a result of mental health and addiction issues within the workplace. It's not something that we believe is the sole domain of government. Businesses have to step up, and that stepping up can take a variety of different forms that are articulated within that report. I'd be pleased to send you a copy of the report, if you'd like to see it.

M. Elmore: That would be great. I'd be interested to hear it in terms of your recommendation for prevention and early treatment for mental illness. I know that budget restraints.... There have been some cuts, particularly to community-based mental health programs.

I. Black: I'd be glad to send you a copy of the report.

M. Farnworth (Deputy Chair): Just one question, and that's under the transportation portion of section 4. That is around the new replacement for the Massey Tunnel. I don't think anyone disagrees with the need for that and many other transportation improvements. I note in there that you used the term "Boston of the west coast," and I certainly think that I would agree in terms of Vancouver's potential.

[1610]

But Boston of the west coast could just as easily apply

to another side of Boston on the east coast, which is their absolute nightmare of a transportation system and the amount of money that they have poured into it to try and fix it. I mean, the Big Dig was — what? — I think over \$14 billion on that one project alone.

So my question is: how do we pay for those initiatives? That is the crucial question. I will go home tonight over the Port Mann, and that has tolls. Does the board of trade have a policy on how these initiatives should be paid for, as needed as they are?

I. Black: One of our longest-standing committees is our regional transportation and infrastructure committee. It's got on it some of the key consultants in this area. Like the public discourse that all of you have to engage in on a daily basis, they also don't find themselves coming up with any obvious answers.

I think it's fair to say, however, that there's recognition at the board of trade that the overall funding approach to large infrastructure across the country, never mind just in British Columbia, is broken. It doesn't work particularly well. It sets up parochial bunfights as to what projects should be funded in one area versus the Lower Mainland versus another.

There would be broad support at the Vancouver Board of Trade for a new approach to be taken. But it also involves some pretty grown-up conversations about the realities of public transportation, including stepping up the conversations on user-pay systems. We are not afraid of those types of conversations.

We are not averse to tolling. There's a tolling history in our province going back decades that the board of trade, in the generations long before I showed up, was advocating for. It's a recognition, I think, first and foremost, that yes, it's complex. It falls into that wonderful category of "Everybody wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die to get there."

D. Ashton (Chair): Very good closing remarks.

L. Popham: I think my question is quite simple. Does the Vancouver Board of Trade have a climate change lens it looks through when considering its economic vision and strategy?

I. Black: Thank you for that question. Actually, we have a standing environmental and sustainability committee. It's one of our committees. We're going through the process right now, after about 25 years, of changing the overall committee structure at the board of trade to streamline it, to get it better-focused and to ensure it's reflecting the needs and priorities of our members.

Included in that package of recommendations, which goes to our board next week, is the introduction of an advisory panel that actually cuts across all of the sitting

committees of the Vancouver Board of Trade, including special committees of the board — to ensure the three-pillar approach, if you will. Specifically, one of our advisory panels is on the environment and sustainability, which reflects, in large measure, a lot of the priorities of our younger members.

Of the members we've signed up in the last 90 days, which include two of our strongest Julys and Augusts in the history of our organization, 45 percent were under the age of 35. They very much take the environmental considerations into account when going about their way, running their businesses and helping grow the organizations that they're a part of. It's very much a priority of what we do.

L. Popham: Can I just have one follow-up?

That's great. It's good to know. I'm glad to see the demographic is also changing as well. I think that's very hopeful.

But I guess, when I'm reading through your economic vision and I take a look at the port expansion and all of that, part of having a climate change lens is looking at our food security and protecting our farmland and food-growing areas. How does that coincide with your vision, if you're looking at expanding the port and the things that, obviously, we've been talking about over the last year — the threat to that farmland?

I. Black: Well, we don't believe that they're mutually exclusive. I think that's the first thing to say. Reflecting that there's \$475 million a day going in and out of the Port Metro Vancouver on boats at the moment, creating about 100,000 jobs within a five-mile radius of the port itself, every one of them being family-sustaining, employment-level types of jobs, it's not something that we should be blind to. And frankly, it represents one of our very few unique competitive advantages economically that we have in the Lower Mainland.

We are very much proponents of trade, very much proponents of a port that is well utilized and whatnot. We are at the moment setting the terms of reference for a regional economic development strategy, which will be one of the first comprehensive documents done of this type. It'll be focused on geography, probably from Whistler through to Abbotsford, if not Chilliwack. It will also be regional in focus. Livability is a very large part of it, including public transportation and environmental considerations that have to go with that.

But it'll also have what I call the grown-up conversation on industrial lands and offsetting that against the agricultural lands. One of our biggest challenges is that we've gone through about 3,000 hectares of industrial lands here in the last two generations, leaving us only about 28,000 at the moment to create additional economic prosperity for the rest of the province.

It's a very important conversation. It is not a simple

one. But to suggest that they are mutually exclusive is not something we agree with. We believe that there is a coexistence for sustainable, responsible economic growth and that the port can still play a centre piece within that.

D. Ashton (Chair): Thank you, Lori, Iain, Rob. I appreciate the input. Have a great day. Travel safe.

I. Black: By SkyTrain, I might add.

D. Ashton (Chair): We'll recess for a few minutes here. We have just a short wait until the next one.

The committee recessed from 4:15 p.m. to 4:24 p.m.

[D. Ashton in the chair.]

D. Ashton (Chair): Welcome, Mike. Thank you for coming. It's ten minutes for the presentation. I'll give you a two-minute warning before the ten minutes is up. Then we've allowed five minutes for questioning.

M. Klassen: I'll go at a good clip.

Thank you to all the committee members for hearing from us. I'm Mike Klassen, the B.C. director for the Canadian Federation of Independent Business.

The first couple of slides tell us who we are and who we represent. We have 10,000 independent business members in British Columbia and 109,000 members Canada-wide. We're a non-partisan, not-for-profit political advocacy organization, and we represent all sectors in all regions of the province.

[1625]

You probably know that small business is a very important part of B.C.'s economy. Eighty percent of small businesses employ fewer than five staff. I think the number is 98 percent of British Columbia businesses are small businesses. Small and medium enterprises represent approximately one-third of B.C.'s GDP. SMEs employ over half of B.C.'s private sector workforce, and B.C. has the highest number of small businesses per capita in Canada. We like to point out that they are integral parts of our community, contributing to charitable and other causes.

Our first couple of slides will give you a little idea of where we see things in the climate of small business optimism. There have been a number of issues that have created some concerns for small business — the transition to PST, which I don't think anybody really wanted per se. It has created some financial struggles, and we're still hearing from our members about... Essentially, they're not really clear on the rules — whether there are some changes to the PST rules from before — so we've been going back and forth with the government on that issue.

Family Day was a cost. Minimum wage — a few increases but no more expected right now.

One of the issues that has been raised lately stems from the 2013 budget, which was the decision to remove the school tax exemption from class 5 properties. We have a lot of light industrial members who are seeing very large, whopping tax increases over the next two years, which is a big concern for them. In light of some of the other things they've been struggling with, it makes it challenging.

Then there's one up here in the right-hand corner that says "MMBC," which I'm going to talk about a little bit later on in this presentation.

I just wanted to let you know about our small business barometer. This is something that we issue the last Thursday of every month. It is what I describe as a kind of a real-time pulse of the economy over time. The lower graph down there is actually where the monthly business barometer national results match up with real GDP in Canada.

We have, in British Columbia, been sort of following what small business has to say. Some of the information that we draw from is their intention to hire. I can say that over the last year B.C. small business has really held its own. It hasn't really been strong, so I continuously refer to the recovery as being fragile.

On the next slide, the reasons that businesses indicate that they're still held back are domestic demand, which would be sales; interestingly, a shortage of skilled labour is an ongoing issue; and I think things like time and other restraints that you can see there.

At any rate, we do ask them what the most important issues to their business are, and we usually hear about taxes, as you might imagine. The cost of local government has been an increasing concern over the last few years — and one of our favourite subjects, which is red tape and regulatory burden.

On the next couple of slides is just information that some of you may have seen before. This is what we called our pre-election survey. We surveyed members in the month before the writ was dropped. Interestingly, we got a... It sort of took the pulse of small business that sounded very much like what we ended up seeing in the results of the election, which is...

I heard somebody say recently on a radio talk show that small business elected this government. If you look at how important the issues of keeping the budget balanced and making sure that we pay down government debt were, a reflection of the opinion of small business, it's hard not to dispute that — and, of course, red tape being another issue.

[1630]

On the next slide we look at a number of issues that were of lesser priority, including issues around environmental regulations.

Our first ask, if you like, is that we'd like to recognize the importance of taking a look at the PST tax and some changes that we might request there over the long term.

When we surveyed our members during that same March 2013 survey, we asked them: if the government were to choose to reduce taxes, which were the ones would they prefer? Tied with personal income tax was PST on business inputs.

On the next slide we have, essentially, a proposition that does not come without a price tag. We call it fixing the PST. The Expert Panel on B.C.'s Business Tax Competitiveness filed a report in 2012, and they did identify the actual PST tax on business inputs such as machinery, other equipment, computers and qualifying software as being something that limits growth. We did note that in the Finance Minister's mandate letter there is a recommendation to consider and implement the recommendations of that very same tax competitiveness panel.

Right now British Columbia has the highest marginal effective tax rate in Canada, and this is a result of going back to the PST. The report suggests that to remove that business input — give the tax credit on machinery and equipment — would cost approximately \$500 million.

If we lose \$500 million in revenue for the government, clearly that has to be made up in another way, so this is not something that we're expecting to happen anytime soon. We realize that we've been through a difficult transition back to PST. Government has made some commitments to small business with regards to tax, but this is one that I think will help us all in the long run.

I will carry on. I want to just draw your attention to an issue that we find extremely important to small business across the country, which is to make sure that we don't increase the CPP payroll tax. According to this graph here, this first one, it says that the one tax that does affect growth the most is payroll tax. When asked what would happen if we did increase CPP, we have everything from cutting salaries to reducing other investments in business.

I also just wanted to point out that we have been out in the field talking to our members, and year to date we've had over 25,000 calls to reject the CPP-QPP hikes. Each one of these letters was signed by members, and we've submitted some of those to the Premiers.

This is a big subject, but I'll have to give you a very short version of it. The adoption of new environmental-producer responsibility standards for printed paper and packaging is becoming a very big sore point with our members and small business at large. This is an implementation of a new phase, one that I think most of us have been quite comfortable with, which is having producer responsibility for things like batteries, solvents, paints, tires and electronics — and, of course, bottles and other paper. But this is something that is probably going to be the biggest of them all.

Unfortunately, the actual plan for trying to get people in business to comply to this is extraordinarily complex. You can take a look at some of these questions later on, but I think, as a visual, these next two pages will give you an idea.

If you're a small business — I'm talking sort of four or five employees, perhaps running a restaurant; you deliver pizzas, and you put the name of your restaurant on the top of the pizza box — you're probably going to have to keep track of all the paper that you produce and remit regular fees. It's a very big job.

[1635]

This whole plan was really built around a big business paradigm with big business representatives on the MMBC board. What we would like to strongly recommend is that if government is going to give anybody the ability to do any kind of enforcement of regulation or charge fees or collect taxes that they are subject to the province's policy on regulatory reform.

I'll quickly go through our list of recommendations.

Commit to ongoing balanced budgets and debt reduction. Fix the PST. Keep the small business corporate tax rate low. Pass the pooled registered pension plan legislation to foster more retirement savings and forgo supporting a national CPP payroll tax increase. Exempt small business from these new printed paper and packaging recycling fees. Launch the next phase of regulatory reform. As I said, third-party and arm's-length agencies should be subject to the same regulatory guidelines. And honour the principles of the B.C. small business accord, which would ask government to try and use a small business lens in any policy development.

D. Ashton (Chair): Mike, thanks for your presentation.

Are there any questions from the panel?

L. Popham: I have a question. We met earlier this summer, and I think we discussed some of the packaging problems. At that point, I asked if you had contacted the agriculture community, because they are also struggling like this. I guess, if you had made contact with them.

M. Klassen: No, I haven't spoken with people in the agricultural sector. For the last two months this has been of foremost concern for us, and it has definitely become the biggest issue that we've seen from small business in many years.

To fully understand what is being proposed here, if you have a product that goes to a consumer and it has any printed paper or packaging — your name on it, a brand of any kind — then you are going to have to pay a fee. Now, I think all of us appreciate that producer responsibility is a trend and where governments are going. I think small businesses would like to be able to comply, but the way it is currently proposed is unworkable for small business.

M. Elmore: Thanks for the presentation, Mike. With respect to the MMBC, there was a lot of discussion at UBCM last week. Do you have a specific recommendation around that?

M. Klassen: Our specific recommendation would be to create what is known as a *de minimis*. Our ask is that any businesses that have \$10 million of gross revenue or less would be subject to a *de minimis*, which would effectively, at that rate, keep all small business exempt from this PPP plan.

G. Holman: Two questions. One is about the lost property tax credit. I didn't understand what that meant. Secondly, the highest marginal effective tax rate — can you explain that a little more? What taxes are you including in that calculation?

M. Klassen: The class 5 property was a decision that was made in the 2013 budget. It was one that probably didn't get a lot of attention because it really affected a small part of the economy. In fact, I don't recall anybody really talking about it at the time. I think we were, at the time, more concerned about the corporate tax rate and the small business corporate tax rate.

These class 5 properties have had, since 2008, a 30 per cent tax exemption. These are light industrial properties. They're doing light manufacturing — building computer cases — in all sorts of businesses right throughout the province.

We've heard from members in different parts of the province. I had a couple of letters that I was reading through this afternoon, members in Surrey who are seeing \$7,000- or \$8,000-a-year tax increases just this year alone. Next year it will be even higher because it's a two-year phasing out of this exemption.

This is a part of our economy that is struggling a little bit. It is probably not a good idea to bring down too many challenges for them, including all the other ones that we talked about.

[1640]

As far as the METR, the marginal effective tax rate, this is just a calculation of the.... I'm going to read the definition for you here, because I think it's probably going to be better than my trying to explain it. It is calculated as "the pre-tax rate of return minus the after-tax rate of return on a new investment, divided by the pre-tax rate of return."

Essentially, if you're going to be buying new equipment — a new vehicle, a tractor or office equipment such as computers and some qualifying software — these are things that help you grow your business. The way our taxes are currently structured, we are now the highest taxed on that growth in Canada right now, using the widely recognized effective tax rate.

G. Holman: For example, that would include the PST on a new...?

M. Klassen: Correct, which is why we are asking to see if we can get a tax credit for business inputs. Business in-

puts would be equipment — the kinds of things that you would use to grow your business.

G. Holman: I asked this question before — sorry to go on — of the board of trade as well. There are certain PST exemptions, but they explained that that only applies to a certain group of industries. Are you referring primarily to industries that don't get the PST exemption, or would they be rolled into this calculation?

M. Klassen: Well, I think that you need a handbook to try and go through all the PST exemptions. We know the ones that are common — school clothes, bicycles, and things like that. The PST is a tax that puts us at an unfair competitive advantage to other businesses in Canada. It's about really trying to level the playing field for small

business.

You can be sure that we're competing with our neighbours right across the country. When we brought back PST, that was an immediate sort of reduction in our competitiveness. This particular ask is a very specific ask around the kinds of things that businesses commonly need to grow their business, so machinery and things like computers — office equipment, we call it.

D. Ashton (Chair): Any other questions?

Mike, thank you for your presentation. I really appreciate it.

At this point in time we'll adjourn the meeting. Thanks, everyone.

The committee adjourned at 4:42 p.m.

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