



Select Standing Committee on Finance and
Government Services

REPORT ON THE BUDGET 2022 CONSULTATION

November 2021



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

Second Report
Second Session, 42nd Parliament



November 15, 2021

To the Honourable
Legislative Assembly of the
Province of British Columbia

Honourable Members:

I have the honour to present herewith the Second Report of the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services for the Second Session of the 42nd Parliament. This report covers the Committee's work in regard to the Budget 2022 Consultation as approved by the Committee.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Committee,

Janet Routledge, MLA
Chair

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COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

MEMBERS

Janet Routledge, MLA, Chair
Burnaby North

Ben Stewart, MLA, Deputy Chair
Kelowna West

Pam Alexis, MLA
Abbotsford-Mission
(to September 24, 2021; from November 4, 2021)

Jagrup Brar, MLA
Surrey-Fleetwood
(from September 24, 2021 to November 4, 2021)

Lorne Doerkson, MLA
Cariboo-Chilcotin

Megan Dykeman, MLA
Langley East

Greg Kylo, MLA
Shuswap

Grace Lore, MLA
Victoria-Beacon Hill

Harwinder Sandhu, MLA
Vernon-Monashee

Mike Starchuk, MLA
Surrey-Cloverdale

COMMITTEE STAFF

Jennifer Arril, Clerk of Committees

Karan Riarh, Senior Research Analyst

Katey Stickle, Committee Research Analyst

Jenny Byford and Jesse Gordon, Committee Researchers

Jonathon Hamilton, Committee Research Assistant (Co-op)

Mary Newell, Administrative Coordinator

Stephanie Raymond, Committees Assistant

TERMS OF REFERENCE

On April 15, 2021, the Legislative Assembly agreed that the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services be empowered to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every year, the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services (the “Committee”) conducts a consultation on the upcoming provincial budget. Between June 30 and September 30, 2021, British Columbians were invited to share their priorities for Budget 2022. During the consultation period, the Committee heard 347 presentations and received 710 submissions and 1,417 responses to an online survey.

This report provides a comprehensive summary of the priorities and ideas shared by British Columbians during the consultation and outlines the Committee's 143 recommendations. The report begins with a discussion on equity and inclusion in recognition of how this theme applies across many of the subsequent topics and policy areas. Thereafter, themes are presented in alphabetical order; the numbering of recommendations does not indicate priority.

In reflecting on the issues facing the province and the recommendations put forward by British Columbians, the Committee observes common threads with respect to the need for better coordination, communication, and collaboration across services and providers, along with better incorporation of local and Indigenous knowledge and perspectives. Members also emphasize the value of a more proactive, forward-looking lens across policy areas as upfront investments in prevention and early intervention can save on downstream costs. They additionally recognize that reconciliation must be foundational to all budgetary and policy decisions and actions, and that systemic barriers related to gender, race, and accessibility need to be addressed across all sectors. Digital connectivity is also a critical equity issue given the immense digital shift and the Committee urges significant investments in this regard.

The Committee highlights several areas for urgent and immediate action, including addressing housing affordability and supply. Members note that housing is at a crisis point and a growing source of socioeconomic inequality which is affecting health and the economy. They highlight that no one solution will solve this crisis, and as such, recommend government

examine all policy levers to increase the affordability and supply of housing.

Committee Members also stress the critical importance of addressing the climate crisis by mobilizing all of government to implement solutions. They emphasize that BC's climate measures should be actionable, adaptable, and flexible to enable different industries, communities, and regions to do their part. The Committee also makes recommendations related to clean and renewable energy, low- and zero-emission vehicles, and energy efficiency and building standards in support of climate action.

The Committee additionally focuses on strengthening emergency management planning and readiness to ensure BC is prepared and resourced for the next emergency. Reflecting on the most recent wildfire season, and in particular the impact on the residents of Lytton, Members highlight the need to ensure plans and strategies are comprehensive and proactive, and incorporate the full continuum of prevention to recovery, as well as improved communication and coordination.

Health care was another area of priority with a particular focus on prevention, early intervention, and affordability. Members support an immediate review of the continuum of long-term care to home care services, with a focus on standards, oversight, and accountability, as well as additional investments in long-term care and assisted living spaces, home care services, and community supports. They also urge investments in mental health and addictions services and infrastructure to address the range of needs and waitlists across all age groups. As it relates to health human resources, the Committee supports initiatives to increase recruitment and retention of health professionals as well as ensure all professionals are supported in working to their full scope of practice. Members also recommend expanding community-based primary care networks with the integration of additional health disciplines to ensure British Columbians receive appropriate, timely care. Other recommendations in health relate to: hospice and palliative

care; grief and bereavement programs; pharmaceuticals; public health; research; and rural and remote health care.

With respect to K-12 education, the Committee highlights the need to re-examine capital funding to be more forward-looking and responsive as well as the need to fast-track construction of new schools and additions. Members also support a review of the operational funding formula to ensure it is proactive and transparent, and addresses identified and anticipated needs related to programming and curriculum, health and safety, and enrolment growth. The provision of supports for students with special needs and vulnerable students, including funding for meal programs and mental health supports, is another area of interest, with Members noting the link to educational outcomes and inclusion. The Committee additionally makes recommendations with respect to the recruitment and retention of teachers as well as online and distributed learning programs.

As it relates to advanced education, the Committee recognizes the important role of the sector in addressing labour shortages as well as operational pressures and programming demands placed on institutions. Members recommend an examination of the funding model to address these areas, including ensuring accountability and transparency for funding. Support for Indigenous students and international students are other areas of interest for the Committee, along with funding to address sexualized and gender-based violence and mental health on campus. Members also highlight affordability barriers with respect to housing and post-secondary fees, and recommend additional investments in infrastructure along with improving transparency on fees. They also recommend investments in adult education and literacy, and technology, trades, and skills training, as well as research and innovation.

The Committee makes several recommendations to support arts and culture in recognition of the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes: the provision of predictable, long-term funding, mechanisms to support individual artists, and investments in capital infrastructure. Members also recommend ongoing support for the digital media, music, and film industry, including implementing a labour tax credit for the broadcast sector. The Committee also supports incentives for the purchase of BC-published books as well as increased funding for public libraries, noting how libraries play an important role in promoting equity and providing access to services and information. Investments in sport are also highlighted with Members recognizing how the sector came together to put

forward a request for implementing the provincial Pathways to Sport strategy.

Economic development recommendations cover a range of industries and sectors, including agriculture, natural resources, tourism, and technology. With respect to agriculture, the Committee recognizes a need to support the industry by addressing barriers to agricultural activity, investing in infrastructure, and supporting outreach, with Members emphasizing the importance of food security. Members also recognize a need to support the coastal economy and encourage investments in aquaculture and processing. On forestry, the Committee highlights how forest management needs to reflect reconciliation, healthy forests, community, climate action, and value-added opportunities. Committee Members additionally make several recommendations to support natural resource and rural development, including increasing resources to improve permitting, monitoring, and oversight, as well as dedicated supports for strengthening and diversifying rural economies. They also support electrification and decarbonization efforts, and funding for Geoscience BC. With respect to tourism, the Committee acknowledges the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sector and the need to support recovery, as well as pursue new opportunities related to sustainability and accessibility. Members additionally recognize the shift to a knowledge and services driven economy and the need for supports to the technology, life sciences, and innovation sectors. They also highlight challenges with labour shortages and recommend targeting untapped sources of skilled workers, investing in diversity and inclusion strategies, encouraging healthy and safe workplaces, and looking to immigration.

In addition to the urgency of addressing climate change, the Committee identifies a number of other areas for investment with respect to the environment. These include: investments in conservation and protection efforts, including permanent funding for fish, wildlife, and habitat management; funding for watershed security and the modernization of dams; funding for parks, recreation, and trails; and the exploration of a comprehensive province-wide waste management program. Members especially emphasize the need for increased funding for invasive species prevention, monitoring, regulation, inspection, and mitigation, in recognition of the negative and social impact invasive species have on ecosystems, tourism, and drinking water.

Committee Members make several recommendations in the area of fiscal and regulatory policy. They highlight how the budgetary and taxation framework must enable proactive spending, ensure competitiveness, and support equity while ensuring confidence in the province's finances. The Committee also expresses support for adapting pandemic-related supports for individuals and small- and medium-sized businesses to ensure they are responsive to need and evolving conditions. Members additionally make recommendations related to: commercial property assessment categories; non-compliance in the collection and remittance of the Province Sales Tax (PST); the employer health tax; the luxury tax; and the corporate income tax. They also encourage supports to the co-operative sector, the introduction of prompt payment legislation, and better enforcement of illegal tobacco and cannabis.

In addition to prioritizing immediate action on affordability and supply, the Committee makes several other recommendations in relation to housing. Members emphasize how complex care and supportive housing initiatives must incorporate culturally diverse and appropriate care to address the unique needs of different populations. They also highlight how rental regulations must support the objective of increasing and protecting the supply of rental availability. The Committee additionally makes recommendations related to community level housing data, mortgage fraud and money laundering, and strata governance and regulations.

As it relates to public safety and justice, Committee Members support increased investments in legal aid, child and youth advocacy centres, and restorative justice. They also highlight the need to improve access to justice and modernize the court system as well as increase services and supports for survivors of sexual assault and gender-based violence, including improving coordination and collaboration. The Committee also recommends exploring alternative approaches to mental health crises, and providing funding to address youth gang issues. Other areas of interest in public safety and justice include ground disturbance, correctional services, and sex work.

With respect to social services, Committee Members support continued investments in child care, including increasing spaces and improving affordability, noting how access to child care is an economic and equity issue. They also urge a full evaluation of systems and supports for children and youth in care, and sufficient supports for children and youth with special needs and their families. Support for the charitable and non-profit sector and predictable funding for community social services

is also highlighted. Employment standards and protections are another point of focus, along with poverty reduction measures related to income and disability assistance.

On transportation and transit, the Committee recommends continued investments in active transportation as well as the development of a comprehensive, province-wide plan for public transit. Members particularly note gaps in the provision of transportation options in small, rural, remote, and Indigenous communities. They also support investments and improvements in transportation infrastructure that support trade and the efficient movement of goods, as well as investments in roads and highways in rural BC, and the aviation industry. Continued enhancements to auto insurance is another area of interest.

CONSULTATION OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND

The *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act* requires the Minister of Finance to issue a budget consultation paper no later than September 15 each year. The paper outlines the province's fiscal forecast, key budget issues, and how British Columbians can share their views on those issues. The paper is referred to a select standing committee of the Legislative Assembly which must conduct a consultation and report on the results of the consultation no later than November 15. The Legislative Assembly assigns this responsibility to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services.

This year, the *Budget 2022 Consultation Paper* was released on June 30, 2021. The consultation was held between June 30, 2021 and September 30, 2021.

BUDGET CONSULTATION PAPER

The *Budget 2022 Consultation Paper* described pathways to economic recovery as the province continues to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. The paper outlined priorities in economic recovery, including promoting sustainability, inclusiveness, and innovation. The paper also detailed initiatives with respect to health care, job training, post-secondary education, infrastructure development, child care, and supports for businesses. The paper requested input on the following questions:

1. The BC government is committed to making life more affordable, delivering the services people count on and building a resilient, sustainable economy. Please select three priorities to help make life better for you, your family and your community as we move through recovery.
2. Part of BC's economic recovery includes a sustainable path back to a balanced provincial budget. Early projections of a return to balance are seven to nine years, and a more detailed timeline will be outlined in Budget 2022. Which statement below best matches your views about returning to balance?
3. The pandemic has required unprecedented spending to help people, businesses and communities. The British Columbia government has various tools it can use to reduce provincial debt over time. Check the options you can support.
4. How has the pandemic affected your financial well-being?

British Columbians were invited to respond to these questions through an online survey. Survey results are referenced throughout the report with a full summary in Appendix A. See *Consultation Process* for more information.

MINISTER OF FINANCE BRIEFING

On July 22, 2021, the Minister of Finance, Hon. Selina Robinson, MLA, appeared before the Committee to present the *Budget 2022 Consultation Paper*. The Minister recognized the cooperation and contributions of all British Columbians to BC's economic recovery, and noted that while the COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing, there are many reasons for hope and that it is time to cautiously turn attention to BC's future.

The Minister outlined the province's path to economic recovery which focuses on healthy people, healthy communities, and a strong economy. She shared that government will continue to protect British Columbians' health and safety, support people and businesses, and strengthen the foundation of the economy for a strong post-pandemic recovery. She noted a record \$26.4 billion in planned capital commitments in hospitals, schools, post-secondary facilities, transit, and infrastructure.

The Minister explained that while the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on families across the province, for many of them life was hard before the pandemic. The Minister highlighted the importance of the social infrastructure that government is committed to, including: K-12 education, free public transportation for children under 12, universal child care, permanent increases to income and disability assistance, temporary shelters for people experiencing homelessness, affordable housing, and protecting good jobs by supporting BC businesses. The Minister also highlighted the importance of

reconciliation and eliminating racism in the province. Lastly, the Minister explained that BC’s recovery will be reliant on building a green and sustainable post-COVID future, noting that \$2.2 billion will be allocated to greening the province over the next five years.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

British Columbians were invited to share their input in three ways: presenting to the Committee; making a written or video submission; or completing the online survey with questions from the *Budget 2022 Consultation Paper*. The Committee used a number of approaches to encourage participation in the consultation, including: a media release; advertisements in local and multicultural newspapers; online advertisements; social media; direct outreach to Members of the Legislative Assembly, constituency offices, regional districts, and community-based organizations; and online community calendars.

Those interested in presenting were asked to complete a request form outlining their preference for a virtual or in-person meeting as well as themes they would be discussing. The Committee received requests to present from over 500 organizations and individuals and was able to accommodate 347 presentations – the most in the history of the consultation. Those who could not be accommodated were encouraged to participate in other formats. Presentations were held virtually using the Zoom videoconferencing platform and in person in Vancouver, Victoria, Prince George, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nanaimo, and Richmond. Virtual presentations were organized thematically with participants largely grouped into panels; in-person presentations were all individual.

In addition to the presentations, the Committee received 710 written and video submissions and 1,417 survey responses. A list of organizations and individuals who made presentations and/or written and video submissions is available in Appendices B and C.

The Committee carefully considered all input received during their deliberations.

MEETING SCHEDULE

Second Session, 42nd Parliament

May 3, 2021	Planning
June 21, 2021	Planning

June 23, 2021	Planning
July 22, 2021	Planning; Minister’s Briefing
August 30, 2021	Public Hearing (Virtual)
August 31, 2021	Public Hearing (Virtual)
September 1, 2021	Public Hearing (Virtual)
September 2, 2021	Public Hearing (Virtual)
September 3, 2021	Public Hearing (Virtual)
September 20, 2021	Public Hearing (Vancouver)
September 21, 2021	Public Hearing (Vancouver)
September 27, 2021	Public Hearing (Victoria)
September 28, 2021	Public Hearings (Prince George, Kamloops)
September 29, 2021	Public Hearings (Kelowna, Nanaimo)
September 30, 2021	Public Hearing (Richmond)
October 18, 2021	Deliberations
October 19, 2021	Deliberations
October 20, 2021	Deliberations
October 21, 2021	Deliberations
October 22, 2021	Deliberations
October 25, 2021	Deliberations
October 26, 2021	Deliberations
October 28, 2021	Deliberations
October 29, 2021	Deliberations
November 1, 2021	Deliberations
November 2, 2021	Deliberations
November 3, 2021	Deliberations
November 8, 2021	Deliberations
November 9, 2021	Deliberations
November 15, 2021	Deliberations; Adoption of Report

EQUITY AND INCLUSION

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND RECONCILIATION

The Committee heard from many organizations about reconciliation, and the need to commit and follow through on the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Calls for Justice from the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and the recommendations of the *In Plain Sight* report on Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination in BC health care. Archway Community Services stated that the truth regarding the intergenerational impact of trauma brought on by colonialization and residential schools has always been known but has largely been disregarded until now. The Canadian Bar Association, BC Branch noted that in the two years since the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* was passed, there is still a lack of clarity on the process for meaningful consultation with Indigenous peoples as well as a lack of funding to support consultation.

Prisoners' Legal Services highlighted that Indigenous peoples continue to be overrepresented in the prison system, currently accounting for 35 percent of prisoners. The organization explained that prison is a continuation of colonial oppression and that to fully respect Indigenous rights to self-determination, First Nations and Indigenous organizations must be resourced to provide Indigenous community healing services.

Another key component of reconciliation raised was the high demand for Indigenous arts, language, and archival support. The BC Museum Association reported that the 2020 repatriation grants were underfunded and recommended ongoing repatriation funding to meet the demonstrated need.

The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade and BC Chamber of Commerce encouraged government to facilitate connections between businesses and Indigenous communities, and help identify opportunities for collaboration, partnership, and investments. They highlighted that disparities and systemic inequities directly impact Indigenous employment outcomes, particularly for youth. The BC General Service Employees' Union recommended directing resources and personnel to improve

equitable hiring in the public sector and improve sensitive, accessible, and culturally appropriate service delivery. They also recommended investing significantly in a comprehensive provincial anti-racism strategy for workplaces, communities, and public law enforcement.

Specific to reconciliation with Métis people, Métis Nation British Columbia submitted a proposal for funding to provide services and support for Métis people throughout the province. They explained that Métis people have a rich history in BC and while government has been focused on Indigenous reconciliation, there have been few specific mentions of reconciliation with Métis people. Their plan included specific requests for 12 ministries totaling \$100 million for the 2022 fiscal year with additional requests up to the 2024 fiscal year, with the largest component of the plan being land acquisition to provide housing, homeless programs, and nation services.

SYSTEMIC BARRIERS – GENDER AND RACE

The Committee received a number of submissions detailing systemic barriers faced by vulnerable, marginalized, and equity-deserving populations, particularly with respect to health and employment. The Hospital Employees' Union stated that racism is deeply entrenched in BC's health care system and needs to be properly addressed. Several organizations urged better acknowledgement of, and action on, these issues, including implementation of the *In Plain Sight* report on Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination in health care, and increasing diversity in leadership positions. The Support Network for Indigenous Women and Women of Colour noted that health is a gendered issue that is especially pronounced for Indigenous women, Black women, and women of colour. They pointed to Statistics Canada data which indicated that in areas where 25 percent or more of the population is considered a visible minority, the mortality rate related to COVID-19 was 34.5 per 100,000, compared to only 12.7 in communities where less than 10 percent of the population is a visible minority.

The Support Network for Indigenous Women and Women of Colour also emphasized that Indigenous women, Black women, and women of colour need to be prioritized to ensure equitable economic recovery. Organizations such as the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade and the BC NDP Women's and Gender Rights Committee spoke of the importance of addressing pay equity. The YWCA of Metro Vancouver shared that the gender wage gap must be closed and opportunities to attract and retain women and other underrepresented groups must be created, especially in BC's fastest growing sectors. The Canadian Union of Public Employees British Columbia shared that the proportion of women in the skilled trades workforce has barely increased in decades, and that isolation, discrimination, and poor workplace cultures continue to be outstanding barriers to the inclusion of women in the trades.

ACCESSIBILITY

The Committee heard from several groups on the need to improve accessibility and inclusion in the province. Inclusion BC explained that BC is not meeting thresholds outlined by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and that government needs to improve data collection on persons with disabilities. They stated that fragmented services and a lack of recognition and understanding has significantly marginalized British Columbians with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The Canadian Union of Public Employees British Columbia explained that many adults with developmental disabilities need disability supports, including residential life skills, employment, and community inclusion supports that empower them to live safe, healthy, and productive lives and to participate as full citizens. They recommended increasing annual funding for Community Living British Columbia to keep pace with the agency's projected caseload growth, as well as to commission a full review of the agency with a focus on governance, mandate, support needs, transparency, and operations. The Victoria Disability Resource Centre shared that demand for these services will continue to grow and recommended investment to continue the Lived Experiences Around Disability program to engage youth in activities and simulators to learn how to communicate, interact and assist members of their communities living with disabilities.

The National Elevator and Escalator Association explained that new residential buildings are not designed with consideration for mobility issues, meaning that some people with disabilities

could be excluded from access to housing. Motion highlighted that people with disabilities continue to face significant financial challenges in acquiring necessary mobility and accessibility supports that are fundamental to their daily lives and ability to thrive. They detailed that adults without income and disability assistance, or whose injuries are not covered by workplace or motor vehicle insurance, often receive little or no assistance from government in acquiring wheelchairs and other accessibility supports. For seniors, the cost of mobility devices is even more significant as the cost of a power wheelchair and vehicle powerlift exceeds the average senior's entire annual income. To help reduce the financial burden of accessibility supports, Motion recommended that the Home Renovation Tax Credit be expanded to include renovations to improve mobility.

DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

Many organizations noted that the COVID-19 pandemic amplified how access to stable, high-speed internet and cellular communications is essential for work, education, health, and social service care. The Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia stressed that internet access is, and must be, considered an essential service, especially for rural, remote, and Indigenous communities. ASPECT BC emphasized that the transition to online service has widened the equity gap between communities. They noted that individuals and small businesses in rural areas of the province have a difficult time accessing banking and investment services and that the ability for rural, remote, and Indigenous communities to compete and be resilient in the current economy is contingent on better and more affordable internet connections. The BC Chamber of Commerce and Fort Nelson & District Chamber of Commerce also discussed how increasing broadband connectivity is essential for the growth and success of small businesses.

Several non-profit organizations explained that limited understanding of technology, affordability, and reliable access hindered their ability to reach their service populations. The BC Schizophrenia Society noted that organizations adapted to online programming during the pandemic, but online-only access excluded some populations in rural areas or those with a limited understanding of technology from accessing the level of services they needed. The Society described how this greatly interfered with the ability for families to access support and strategies and the ability of service providers to monitor symptoms of relapse. The BC Society of Transition Houses shared that more than 70 percent of their transition houses will likely

continue providing online services after the pandemic; however, gaps in access persist as only 40 percent of rural and remote communities and 38 percent of Indigenous communities have access to internet speeds that allow for meaningful connectivity. The Canadian Bar Association, BC Branch also highlighted the legal ramifications of limited connectivity and explained that people are increasingly being asked to appear in court virtually, and those who lack access or basic computer skills, or speak a language other than English, are at a disadvantage.

SONS - Save Our Northern Seniors noted that as the trend for more health services migrates online, many seniors are at a disadvantage as they do not have a cell phone or a computer. The 411 Seniors' Centre Society shared that nearly 40 percent of seniors they serve do not have access to email, home computers, or the internet. They emphasized that the impact of the digital divide amid the COVID-19 pandemic is a matter of life and death for seniors and that information and applications for government programs must also be available in non-digital formats. CanAge recommended working with community organizations to create a technology lending and training program for seniors, investing in programs focused on increasing access to technology for seniors, and investing in high-speed internet across the province.

Affordability of digital connectivity was also raised. The BC Teachers' Federation cited the inequalities of digital access exposed by the pandemic and recommended the rapid implementation of public \$10 per month broadband service. The BC Poverty Coalition similarly recommended \$10 per month high speed service for those living below the Market Basket Measure poverty line as well as for anyone accessing any level of education. They additionally requested non-repayable grants for this population, as well as increasing digital literacy training throughout the province to address online safety, security, privacy, and disinformation. The Fort Nelson & District Chamber of Commerce highlighted that many regions do not have service diversification and urged setting minimum standards and competitive pricing for cellular and broadband services throughout the province.

CONCLUSIONS

The Committee acknowledged the significance of reconciliation in a year marked by the public confrontation of the atrocities of residential schools and the nation's first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Members discussed the vital importance of acknowledging the immense loss and the dark legacy of

residential schools and asserted their commitment to listening to Indigenous voices.

Committee Members recognized that reconciliation is a foundational element to many areas, including health, education, housing, and natural resource development, and agreed that reconciliation needs to be incorporated into all aspects of public policy. Committee Members also discussed the unique needs of Métis people and opportunities to support the Métis Nation British Columbia in the provision of supports and services.

The Committee discussed how systemic gender and racial barriers contribute to a significant economic cost and strain on government services. In particular, the escalated severity and rates of gender-based violence throughout the pandemic were noted for their significant impact on human health and a variety of government services, including policing, the justice system, and the health care system. The Committee viewed secure employment and economic opportunities as critical measures to enable individuals to seek safety, and that any factors contributing to workplace inequity, and barriers that limit opportunity or a shortage of labour, ultimately adversely affect all British Columbians. Acknowledging the ongoing initiatives focused on addressing gender inequity, the Committee expressed their support for these initiatives, and agreed that gender and racial equity should be core elements of government service.

Committee Members discussed how accessibility is foundational to dignity, economic independence, and quality of life. Day to day challenges of broken sidewalks, unconnected ramp pathways, and unassisted doors were some of examples the Committee cited as mobility barriers that need to be improved. The Committee highlighted that improvements to physical accessibility through the structure of public space or individual supports will benefit all British Columbians, acknowledging that the state of being able-bodied is a limited privilege that changes with age, illness, or injury. Additionally, Members noted that there are several compounding financial challenges of mobility aids and extremely limited housing options for British Columbians with physical disabilities or limitations. To address accessibility barriers, the Committee supported a comprehensive approach inclusive of building code requirements, municipal incentives, and grants or credits for home and vehicle accommodations.

As it relates to digital connectivity, Members stressed that access to connectivity is a critical social and economic issue,

particularly in rural and remote areas. They pointed to the immense digital shift and how much of everyday life now occurs online, and agreed that within this context, connectivity has become a basic right. As such, the Committee emphasized

the need to accelerate the expansion of infrastructure across the province, as well as address affordability, including working with telecommunications companies and exploring alternatives such as satellite connections.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Indigenous Peoples and Reconciliation

1. Ensure budgetary and policy decisions and actions are made through the lens of reconciliation and anchored in the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and the recommendations in the *In Plain Sight Report*.
2. Provide support to the Métis Nation British Columbia for programs and services to Métis people.

Systemic Barriers – Gender and Race

3. Provide predictable investments in programs, services, and supports across all sectors to improve gender and racial equity, access, opportunity, safety, and participation.

Accessibility

4. Continue a comprehensive approach to improving the accessibility of public infrastructure across the province.
5. Expand medical coverage or explore new ways to reduce the significant personal cost of accessibility modifications and mobility aids for individuals, including vehicle lifts, ramps, or hoists.

Digital Connectivity

6. Recognize the critical importance of digital connectivity and significantly enhance and expedite efforts to ensure the provision of affordable accessible internet across the province, with particular attention to rural, remote, and Indigenous communities.

ADVANCED EDUCATION

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY

Several literacy organizations advocated for increased and stable funding for their programs and emphasized the value of literacy with regard to accessing education, health, and employment. The Literacy Quesnel Society and Progressive Intercultural Community Services describe an increased need for community-based literacy programs due to the pandemic as people need literacy skills to navigate government assistance and to learn the key components needed to get back into the workforce. Comox Valley Lifelong Learning Centre noted that they are reliant on provincial sources for funding with core funding provided through the Community Adult Literacy Program while Decoda Literacy Solutions explained that the growing number applicants has led to less funding for programs. They added that time spent raising funds to keep doors open and services running means less time spent working with people to develop the literacy and essential skills they need for success. Similarly, READ Surrey/White Rock Society explained that a lack of multi-year funding for literacy programs makes this work unstable and uncertain, leaving organizations unable to plan forward-looking services and programs.

The Committee also heard about the value of adult education in building the workforce with the BC Teachers' Federation framing adult education and retraining as powerful recession-fighting tools, especially for those who are seeking to develop their language skills or enhance skills for employment and further education. The Surrey Teachers' Association also noted that teachers in this sector are aging but they cannot retire because there is no one to replace them. These organizations advocated for increased funding for adult education generally as well as for a broader range of courses to improve employment opportunities.

CAPITAL FUNDING

Organizations described a need to address barriers to student housing, noting the high cost of rental apartments as well as limited capacity on campus. The Camosun College Student Society particularly highlighted the need for funding for

student housing at colleges. The Graduate Student Societies of BC shared concerns about the high cost of apartment rentals on campus and pointed to limited options for students with families in advocating for housing dedicated to graduate students. Simon Fraser University described their designs for a 439-bed student housing project for upper-year students to meet their goal of providing student housing for ten percent of the student population.

Regarding infrastructure, the University of Victoria noted the need for additional classroom and research space to support their work in interdisciplinary research in social health and medicine. Langara College discussed safety concerns related to the age and design of many of their key buildings and requested funding to renew infrastructure and facilities. CUPE 3479 North Island College Support Staff stated that post-secondary funding should include funding for deferred maintenance rather than focusing solely on new builds. They further explained that ignoring deferred maintenance creates a more expensive problem in the future. Other universities requested funding for specific capital projects, including the Burnaby Mountain gondola at Simon Fraser University and a West Shore Campus at Royal Roads University.

INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

With respect to Indigenous students, post-secondary institutions and organizations advocated for mechanisms to improve access, inclusion, and supports. BC Colleges referred to a 2018 Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training report which indicated that Indigenous learners continue to face significant barriers to entering and succeeding in post-secondary education. They advocated for additional supports for Indigenous learners, including enhanced Elder programs, Indigenous counsellors and advisors, and emergency funds. Both Kwantlen Polytechnic University and the University of the Fraser Valley discussed Aboriginal Service Plan funding and highlighted the need for increased, sustainable funding that is extended to all institutions. Other organizations requested funding for specific programs such as the Aboriginal Access

Program at the University of British Columbia Okanagan which provides Indigenous students with a variety of pathways to a university degree, regardless of education attainment or experience. Engage Sport North Society and Northern Lights College advocated for funding for the Centre for Innovation in Indigenous Education, a joint project centred on the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions' Calls to Action.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Many organizations and institutions highlighted the value that international students bring to the province. Camosun College Student Society emphasized the important contributions made by international students and the gaps they fill in the labour market. The University of British Columbia noted that research universities in BC attract top international talent to the province and large numbers of international students go on to become permanent residents and citizens after graduation. They recommended promoting BC as a welcoming jurisdiction for international students and facilitating pathways to permanent residency. The University of the Fraser Valley Faculty and Staff Association noted the need for regulations to govern international education recruiters to prevent fraud and theft from international students in what can be a highly predatory system.

Several student unions noted that international student tuition is relied upon heavily to cover shortfalls in overall funding and that there is no cap on this tuition. North Island Students' Union cited studies which indicated that 47 percent of international students are economically vulnerable, and that financial insecurity weighs heavy on emotional health. A couple of organizations emphasized the need for predictability in tuition fees with the Douglas Students' Union stating that a lack of predictability for tuition fees is a barrier for international students and that many students skip semesters or take unfavourable loans as a result. The Students' Union of University of British Columbia Okanagan stated that capping fees for international students would allow them to predict and plan for how much the fees will be over the years.

In addition to recommendations related to international student tuition, some student unions pointed to the need for an international student strategy to provide support for these students and to assist in their cultural, social, and academic integration. Thompson Rivers University Students' Union explained that in the absence of a provincial strategy, each institution will be making decisions on their campus about

how to move forward after the COVID-19 pandemic without coordination or the benefit of any broader formalized provincial context.

ONLINE LEARNING AND DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Organizations and post-secondary institutions highlighted the importance of affordable, high-speed internet for accessing post-secondary education. Kwantlen Polytechnic University noted that the digital transformation of programs and services that was accelerated during the pandemic increased accessibility and opportunity for many students. The University of the Fraser Valley described a need for additional investments in digital infrastructure, virtual and remote learning, mobile-friendly systems, and the upgrading of core legacy systems. BC Colleges recommended improving broadband connectivity and campus Wi-Fi at colleges that are not yet adequately covered to provide better virtual access and support for learners.

OPERATIONAL FUNDING

Several organizations advocated for increases to operational funding for post-secondary education. The University of British Columbia explained that operating grants ensure post-secondary institutions can achieve their mandates; however, grant increases have not kept pace with inflation over the past 15 years despite increasing expectations around the delivery of student services and research. They recommended sustaining post-secondary operating grant funding to help institutions meet students' needs while maintaining academic excellence. A few organizations, including the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition, recommended an infusion of at least \$200 million annually across the advanced education sector so that it can remain healthy and accessible to the public.

In advocating for these operational funding increases, some organizations referenced the impact of the pandemic and the need to reduce reliance on international student tuition. The Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia recommended a stabilization fund to support institutional recovery from pandemic disruption. The Canadian Union of Public Employees British Columbia stated that lower government funding coupled with caps on domestic tuition fee increases have led to a funding model that is highly dependent on international student tuition fees; they advocated for increasing funding to at least 75 percent of base budgets.

Several student organizations advocated for a full review of funding in the sector. North Island Students' Union stated that block funding leads to higher rates of sessional instructors who are often precariously employed and less engaged. Organizations such as the Students' Union of Vancouver Community College also noted that the current model makes it unaffordable for institutions to run diverse programming and high-cost programs like upskilling and trades. With respect to regional inequities, the Kwantlen Faculty Association stated that post-secondary institutions in BC are not funded to meet the needs of their regions. Similarly, Camosun College Student Society noted that community-based post-secondary institutions continue to be underfunded. Both organizations made recommendations to revise the funding formula to address these inequities.

There were also recommendations with respect to the need for financial flexibility in running a deficit or accessing reserve funds. The University of the Fraser Valley explained that in order to maintain a surplus, universities allocate annual operating funds to cover non-cash amortization expenses related to assets which are self-funded. They stated that a legislative change to allow institutions to run a deficit for unfunded amortization would give institutions the necessary flexibility to access cash reserves. College of the Rockies stated that they need special permission to expend accumulated surplus or reserves and that they have made requests to be like other institutions and have more leeway to be strategic in their investments. Regarding surpluses, the Faculty Association of the College of New Caledonia stated that the 20 post-secondary institutions under the auspices of the Post-Secondary Employers Association have a combined \$1.13 billion in surpluses which is almost double the amount posted ten years ago. They noted that it would be better to use surpluses to create equitable working conditions for faculty, improve learning conditions for students, and meet programming needs.

Faculty associations remarked on the growth of precarious work in advanced education. The Capilano Faculty Association noted that many non-regular faculty who work in precarious conditions are members of equity-deserving groups and advocated for funding to encourage the hiring of permanent faculty to address precarious work. They also described issues related to discrimination in the post-secondary sector, many of which occur due to a lack of awareness and training, as well as a lack of diversity among faculty, administration, and staff. The Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia highlighted the work of faculty in

supporting institutions and students during the pandemic and recommended reinvesting in human infrastructure and expanding faculty personnel to support enrolment demands driven by workforce changes resulting from the pandemic. The Selkirk College Faculty Association emphasized the need to rehire educators who lost their jobs because of the pandemic and to provide them with more secure work and equal pay. The Faculty Association of the College of New Caledonia recommended eliminating the secondary scale which results in part-time faculty being paid 75 percent less than their full-time colleagues for doing the same work.

The Committee also received several requests for program funding, with post-secondary institutions and organizations, such as BC Federation of Students, highlighting need in areas such as health, early childhood education, and graduate education. The Health Sciences Association of BC described acute public-sector shortages of health science professionals, including therapists, diagnostic medical sonographers, medical laboratory technologists, and medical imaging technologists which they linked to lack of post-secondary training capacity amongst other factors. A few organizations advocated specifically for program funding in rural colleges with the Selkirk College Faculty Association noting that sustained funding for programming ensures that rural institutions can continue to offer programs and class sizes that are realistic for their region. They were joined by Federation of Post-Secondary Educators in recommending reinstating targeted funding to provide assurance that core programming will continue to be available to all, no matter where they live. The North Island College Faculty Association explained that ensuring post-secondary institutions have resources to offer varied areas of studies would have two key benefits: it promotes local access to learning, allowing students to plan and complete their studies on time, at home, where they live; and it can contribute to a broader jobs plan for the region.

Post-secondary institutions and associations also highlighted the importance of Indigenous language programs referencing how education was once a tool of oppression and is now a tool of empowerment. The Alma Mater Society of the University of British Columbia cited Call to Action 16 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada which calls on post-secondary institutions to create university, college degree and diploma programs in Indigenous languages. They noted that there is currently no standing funding for the preservation and revitalization of Indigenous languages for BC public

post-secondary institutions and emphasized the need for a province-wide degree framework for Indigenous languages. The Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia referenced several additional Calls to Action and recommended ongoing funding to support the hiring of Indigenous faculty into permanent positions and fund research programs aimed at dismantling systems of racism, discrimination, and poverty. The University of British Columbia highlighted their new Bachelor of Indigenous Land Stewardship program which is a direct-entry, four-year undergraduate program co-developed by the university's Faculty of Forestry and a First Nations-led steering committee. They requested funding for the program which has been designed to prepare students for careers working with and for Indigenous governments on land stewardship, as well as for other governments, industry, and consultancies.

Several post-secondary institutions made specific requests. The University of the Fraser Valley noted that they are the only public post-secondary institution situated in the Fraser Valley region and requested stable funding to meet the needs of the growing population base in the area. The Emily Carr Students' Union and Emily Carr Faculty Association explained that their university has a chronic deficit situation that threatens future operations with a \$7 million annual operating budget shortfall. They noted that this underfunding is due to the institution's designation as a teaching university rather than a research university and recommended that this designation be changed. Simon Fraser University outlined plans for a new medical school in Surrey and advocated for increasing the size of the Surrey campus to 5,000 full-time equivalent seats. Thompson Rivers University requested support for more graduate programs to meet student demand, noting that all of their graduate programs are entirely funded by tuition fees which is not the case elsewhere in BC.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Post-secondary institutions noted that the pandemic highlighted the importance of research and innovation. The University of British Columbia shared how their community has been at the forefront of the pandemic response, highlighting a spinoff company, Acuitas Therapeutics, which provided critical components for the Pfizer-BioNtech vaccine, based on four decades of research. They recommended investments in sectors such as life sciences and bio-manufacturing where BC can lead globally. The Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia described the negative impact of the

pandemic on some research programs due to inaccessible labs on closed campuses and the inability to conduct in-person and community-based research. Thompson Rivers University described investment in research and innovation as a way to spur economic and social recovery and highlighted the need for funding for faculty, graduate students and undergraduate students working on applied and basic research specific to the Interior. Kwantlen Polytechnic University also noted that a lack of funding for research at undergraduate universities and stated that long-term investment into applied research will enable them to broaden their reach and attract talented faculty and students from around the world.

STUDENT SUPPORTS

A joint submission from the Alma Mater Society of the University of British Columbia, Alliance of British Columbia Students, and University of Victoria Students Society stated that when students feel more supported in terms of their mental health, they are more likely to remain engaged in their academics and graduate. They added that for mental health services to be accessible for post-secondary students, services need to be culturally safe and competent, especially for those who face multiple systemic barriers and marginalization, and stated that existing services often do not meet these criteria. They recommended investments in a more extensive and robust peer-support mental health network as well as funding to train campus mental health providers to ensure services are culturally safe and competent.

The Committee also received requests for funding with respect to diversity and inclusion initiatives. Kwantlen Polytechnic University stated that expectations for authentic and lasting justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion are higher than ever and will be difficult to meet without new funding, especially to support marginalized groups. The Research Universities' Council of British Columbia noted that diverse student populations are not well served by a one-size-fits-all approach to post-secondary education and advocated for wrap-around supports, including child care, to facilitate student success. The College of the Rockies Faculty Association noted that most post-secondary institutions received mandate letters to address lasting and meaningful reconciliation in equity and racism; however, they state that this requires ongoing dedicated funding and resources.

The Alma Mater Society of the University of British Columbia, Alliance of British Columbia Students, and University of Victoria

Students Society Student also advocated for continuous funding for projects and educational tools in relation to sexual violence. They pointed to studies that found between 15 to 25 percent of women in North America will be sexually assaulted during their time at post-secondary and noted that while all post-secondary institutions in BC have now implemented stand-alone sexual violence policies, there has been variation in the degree to which these policies have been successful.

TECHNOLOGY, TRADES, AND SKILLS TRAINING

Submissions related to trades focused on skilled trades certification, funding, and apprenticeships, and highlighted the importance of trades workers in economic recovery. BC Building Trades noted that BC will need to increase financial supports to non-profit trades training providers to meet the looming skills training shortage and the commitment to skilled trades certification. They also stated that additional funding for training providers is needed to ensure technical training is available to move people through their apprenticeship in a timely and comprehensive manner. With respect to counsellors, the BC Federation of Students highlighted their value in helping apprentices navigate and successfully manage technical class offerings. Similarly, North Island Students' Union supported apprentice counselling and explained that many trades programs run independent of academic scheduling, and their access to on-campus and community supports are just as staggered as their start dates. Thompson Rivers University Students' Union stated that restoring apprenticeship offices at post-secondary institutions will help students who are looking for financial support, employment support, and career counselling.

With respect to skills training and re-skilling, the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade stated that employers are facing a skilled labour shortage that has been exacerbated beyond pre-pandemic levels, which were already problematic for BC's long-term growth. This view was also expressed by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business who emphasized the impact of the pandemic on small businesses, noting that improving skills training and investing in youth training initiatives would help businesses address the labour shortage and support their economic recovery. The Council of Canadian Innovators noted that the biggest issue hindering BC tech companies' ability to scale up is access to highly skilled workers and that investments in skills programs are needed to help gain access to talent. BC Colleges remarked on a trend toward micro-credentials with

learners opting for shorter training programs and recommended expanding the array of college led micro-credentials programs, particularly those that retrain workers and deliver hands-on experiences.

Post-secondary institutions and organizations also advocated for technology-related spaces and program seats. The University of British Columbia noted that during the COVID-19 pandemic, many British Columbians turned to post-secondary education to upgrade their skills, pursue a career change, or otherwise advance in their careers, and that with this demand, there is potential to grow technology-related programs.

Some organizations made recommendations specific to internships and work-integrated learning. First West Credit Union noted that there is potential in growing co-op and internship programs for small businesses and advocated for support in the form of incentives. BC Colleges highlighted that work-integrated learning helps people build the employment-focused skills they need to thrive immediately in the workforce. They stated that although work-integrated learning is recognized for its contribution to the success of learner and employer outcomes, colleges have reached a threshold where they are constrained by a demand from learners that is outstripping the supply of placements.

TUITION AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Submissions related to grants focused largely on the BC Access Grant program with a few others related to graduate scholarships, needs-based grants, and a grant tax offset program. Organizations highlighted the importance of grants in reducing barriers and increasing access to education. The Thompson Rivers University Students' Union explained that a grant program is the best form of student financial aid and is most effective at helping students participate who would not otherwise be able to. The Federation of Post-Secondary Educators highlighted the need to address barriers to access across all demographics in advocating for expanding eligibility for the BC Access Grant program. Some organizations, including Students Union of University of British Columbia Okanagan and North Island Students' Union, emphasized financial difficulties for students related to the pandemic as many students were underemployed and unable to work towards savings to carry them through the school year. In addition, the BC Federation of Students noted that some people who would have otherwise been able to provide financial support to the learners in their families may not be able to do so during the pandemic. The

Emily Carr Students' Union and Emily Carr Faculty Association highlighted the impact of the high cost of housing and referred to students who are forced into extreme decisions about school supplies, food, tuition, and rent. The BCIT Student Association noted that tuition tax credits do not assist with upfront challenges accessing post-secondary education and are not necessarily means-tested. They recommended reinvesting tax credits that correspond to tuition into upfront needs-based grants.

The Committee also received multiple recommendations to freeze or reduce tuition fees. Some student organizations noted that annual tuition fees have risen over 200 percent in the last two decades. The BC Federation of Students noted that the Tuition Fee Limit Policy has not prevented institutions from implementing new fees for costs previously included as part of tuition. In addition, they stated that the policy does not apply to new courses; as such, institutions commonly collapse, rename, and slightly adjust programs, to essentially restart the same programs at a higher cost to students. Some organizations viewed the issue through the lens of poverty reduction and equity. The Camosun College Faculty Association noted that many students face barriers because they are Indigenous, persons of colour, or gender-non-conforming. They were of the view that the financial costs of post-secondary education need to be reduced or eliminated so that everyone has the ability to pursue an education without the burden of student debt. Similarly, First Call: Child and Youth Advocacy Society stated that high tuition fees and student loans are barriers for young families who need post-secondary education to qualify for jobs with family-sustaining wages.

CONCLUSIONS

Reflecting on input and recommendations from post-secondary institutions, faculty, and students, both domestic and international, the Committee noted several operational pressures for the post-secondary sector. Members highlighted the central role that post-secondary institutions play in shaping the future workforce and driving research and innovation in the province. As the economy and needs of the workforce evolve, the Committee agreed that post-secondary institutions should examine ways to expand capacity to meet educational demand in BC. Members also recognized the impact of the pandemic on the sector and discussed the need for financial flexibility, with clearly defined accountability. Committee Members also acknowledged the volume of input regarding faculty and

difficulties associated with precarious work in the sector as well as high demand for programs in a variety of areas including health and trades.

The Committee additionally discussed the challenge of housing affordability across BC and the impact on students. Committee Members acknowledged that many international students are exploited in the workplace due in part to a lack of housing available to them. Members also discussed the challenges with accommodation for students pursuing trades education and micro-credentials where courses are shorter, making finding rental housing particularly difficult. They noted that initiatives are already underway and further recognized that building more student housing frees up other housing in the community. As such, they agreed that efforts to build student housing should be urgently addressed, particularly at smaller colleges. Committee Members further stressed that post-secondary infrastructure has to keep up with the evolving role of post-secondary institutions in the modern economy and ensure institutions are able to provide full services to students, and discussed opportunities to encourage and support post-secondary institutions with infrastructure investments.

With respect to international students, the Committee reflected on input from student unions who emphasized that international student tuition is unpredictable, and is used to help fund shortfalls in post-secondary education. Committee Members also recognized that international students enrich the post-secondary education system and the province more broadly, and emphasized the need to encourage diversity, ensure that students are treated fairly, and have transparency with respect to tuition fees. Members noted that many international students choose to stay in the province upon completion of their studies. They agreed that ensuring BC is competitive will help the province to remain attractive to international students and bring talent to the province. The Committee also discussed ways to best support international students who are looking for help and to ensure their safety.

Committee Members discussed the inequity of opportunities for research and innovation outside of the major institutions. They noted a link between research and social and economic recovery, and supported continued investment in graduate and undergraduate research opportunities across BC.

The Committee also discussed the significant rates of sexualized violence on campus and recognized that sexualized violence on campus disproportionately impacts women, and acknowledged

the long-term health, social and economic impacts violence has on students, including their ability to complete school and obtain their skills and qualifications. They agreed that additional supports are needed to address sexualized and gender-based violence. They also noted that the pandemic has had a significant impact on student mental health and recognized the importance of further supports in this area.

With respect to trades and skills training, the Committee acknowledged their importance and noted that several initiatives in this regard are underway. Committee Members particularly recognized the value of co-op programs and micro-credentialing to get people into the workforce more quickly. Members additionally discussed the impact and cost to employers associated with apprenticeship programs and the need to assist with trades training of individuals in the workforce. They noted the need to address how trades training has not, in the past, had the same value placed on it as other kinds of post-secondary education.

Committee Members acknowledged the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students, many of whom are dependent on summer jobs to generate income for tuition. They noted how institutions can increase fees by renaming and adjusting programs, and how students also have additional ancillary fees and education expenses, including indirect costs such as transportation and parking, and discussed how to increase transparency in this area. Members also contemplated temporary increases to student grants, noting that these investments can also reduce poverty. With respect to Indigenous students, Committee Members acknowledged the importance of supports and noted that programs and services are not equitable across the province.

As it relates to adult education and literacy, Committee Members emphasized that investments in this area are important for equity, poverty reduction, and building the labour force and recognized the need to properly resource these programs. They also acknowledged that many teachers in this sector are retired or retiring and that there is a need for funding to support stable employment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Adult Education and Literacy

7. Increase funding for adult education and literacy, including increasing the number of funded courses to reflect a broad range of educational needs and interests and to improve employment opportunities for individuals.

Capital Funding

8. Allocate resources to support post-secondary institutions to build infrastructure to provide full services on campus such as recreation and wellness centres, and address the urgent need for student housing, particularly at smaller colleges.

Indigenous Students

9. Provide additional supports for Indigenous learners, including Elder programs and similar initiatives that provide connection to culture and community, Indigenous counsellors and advisors, and mechanisms to ensure improved access and affordability.

International Students

10. Recognize the value and contributions of international students and diversity by continuing to promote BC as a welcoming jurisdiction for international students including examining the business model, providing wrap-around supports, and ensuring safety and fair treatment as well as transparency and predictability regarding tuition fees.

Operational Funding

11. Recognize the value and importance of post-secondary education by examining the funding model to ensure investments position BC to meet the needs of the future workforce, address operational pressures and programming demands, and include consideration for short-term financial flexibility with clearly defined accountabilities and transparency to support recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research and Innovation

12. Provide consistent and ongoing funding for graduate and undergraduate student research across the province to support communities and spur economic and social recovery.

Student Supports

13. Increase supports to address sexualized and gender-based violence on campus and to ensure a more extensive and robust mental health network at post-secondary institutions across the province.

Technology, Trades, and Skills Training

14. Increase investments and opportunities for upskilling, reskilling, co-ops, and micro-credential programs as well as apprenticeships and trades training.

Tuition and Financial Assistance

15. Reduce financial barriers to post-secondary education, including by temporarily expanding grant funding, to ensure students have increased levels of support for the years following the COVID-19 pandemic and to encourage participation in and completion of post-secondary education.
16. Improve transparency regarding course fees, ancillary fees, and other expenses related to the direct and indirect costs of education.

ARTS, LIBRARIES AND SPORT

ARTS AND CULTURE

The arts and culture sector highlighted the importance of arts and culture to the lives of British Columbians and to the economy. The Exploration Place Museum + Science Centre emphasized the impact of cultural facilities in rural BC in providing equity of access to cultural products, materials, and interpretation. Similarly, the BC Museums Association noted that museums attract 8.6 million annual visitors, generating approximately \$213 million in annual revenue, while heritage-related tourism generates an estimated \$32 million each year.

The Committee heard from several organizations that the pandemic has decimated earnings for the sector which has been among the last to reopen. The Kamloops Symphony described challenges in returning to normal programming with the same number of artists, but half the capacity to recoup costs through ticket sales due to public health capacity limits. They advocated for transitional financial support to aid with reopening. Other organizations, including ProArt Alliance of Greater Victoria and BC Museums Association, highlighted the need to communicate to the public the role of the sector in strengthening local economies and supporting health and wellness during the pandemic.

Organizations including BC Sports Hall of Fame described the administrative burden placed on non-profits in applying for grants, which they noted can lead to mission drift and staff burnout. In addition, some organizations noted restrictive criteria for funding; Pacific National Exhibition shared that they are not eligible for Community Gaming Grants as they do not fit the criteria that are more suited to traditional non-profit organizations.

Several organizations spoke to the need for capital funding to upgrade technology, repair aging infrastructure, renew equipment, and undertake work on initiatives to build new spaces that were delayed due to the pandemic. The Richmond Arts Coalition explained that performance halls, art galleries, rehearsal spaces, and dance studios have had to close over the

past year and a half, and initiatives to build new ones have been side-lined by the pandemic. Western Canada Theatre advocated for funding for large-scale infrastructure projects, noting that a proposed Kamloops Arts Centre was postponed indefinitely due to the pandemic. A few organizations advocated for funding for specific projects including the Juan de Fuca Performing Arts Centre Society which proposed a centre to address the lack of performance spaces that are appropriate, accessible, available, and affordable on Victoria's West Shore. Similarly, H.R. MacMillan Space Centre spoke about the need for technology upgrades in their planetarium feeder while Science World noted that significant funds are needed to reskin the dome and replace IMAX technology. They joined H.R. MacMillan Space Centre and other organizations in calling for \$150 million in capital funding for non-profit educational attractions.

Some organizations highlighted the importance of BC Arts Council funding and Community Gaming Grants and advocated for increased funding for these programs; for example, the Kamloops Symphony noted that provincial operating funding from BC Arts Council and BC Gaming allows their organization and others to pursue region-specific programming and reach more members of the community. Similarly, Western Canada Theatre explained that BC Art Council's resilience supplement has had significant positive impacts on the arts sector and was essential to ensuring they and others survived the pandemic. They recommended doubling the BC Arts Council budget and providing multi-year and capacity building funding to improve equity, diversity and access, Indigenous engagement, and regional arts development. The Association of Book Publishers of BC advocated for increased investment in both BC Arts Council and Creative BC, noting the vital support programs they offer to ensure BC publishers are on a more level playing field with multinational publishing.

Submissions also emphasized the need to support individual artists. Performing Arts and Live Events Labour Coalition of BC advocated for employment incentives for BC artists, explaining that many arts workers are classified as independent

contractors and therefore do not have access to employment insurance. Ballet Victoria stated that it employs artists on contract and often loses dancers they train to other companies. They explained that a wage subsidy would help maintain a high international level of artists and increase the market value of the company's productions. The IATSE (International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees) 168 explained that, unlike the film industry, there are no labour tax credits for live entertainment in BC and recommended a \$20 million credit for BC based productions.

The Committee also received requests for funding for specific organizations. The British Columbia Rodeo Association shared that they have been unable to host events during the pandemic, and that they have not been included in funding opportunities available to many events and businesses over the past year. They noted that rodeos are typically the largest event of the year in smaller communities and that they provide significant economic and social benefits to these communities. The Pacific National Exhibition requested access to the Tourism Events Program. They noted that recovery funding mechanisms have been critical for fairs, events, and festivals to build back their normal operations and that the Pacific National Exhibition generates significant tourism activity; however, they have never been granted funding through the Tourism Events Program.

DIGITAL MEDIA, MUSIC, AND FILM

Two organizations advocated for tax credits and incentives for their industries. DigiBC highlighted the importance of the interactive digital media tax credit to the stability and growth of the sector. They also noted that creative tech firm employees can work anywhere there is broadband and power and advocated for a targeted tax credit for firms located outside of the Lower Mainland and Greater Victoria to help spur economic development and diversity in rural areas. The BC Association of Broadcasters discussed several challenges facing broadcasters in BC, including changes in the retail environment and the rapid growth in digital advertising alternatives. They stated that a labour tax credit for the creation of made-in-BC content could help stations survive, keep local economies strong, and preserve these important community voices.

Motion picture associations noted that provincial support received by producers in Ontario and Quebec is much higher than in BC and recommended increasing funding for Creative BC. The Motion Picture Production Industry Association of BC highlighted initiatives to educate and empower motion picture

productions to embrace sustainable production practices and to increase equity and improve diversity in the industry and advocated for ongoing support for these projects. The Canadian Media Producers Association, BC Branch spoke about the importance of developing intellectual property, owning copyright, and retaining revenues in BC and requested investment in their pilot intellectual property optioning fund for domestic producers to secure book rights for adaptation.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Many libraries highlighted the key role they play by serving as community hubs, reducing isolation, connecting people to information and resources, and promoting equity. Several presentations emphasized that this role has become even more important as a result of the pandemic and described ways that libraries facilitated access to government forms and assistance and pivoted to find new ways to support their communities during this time. The British Columbia Library Association noted that libraries and library workers will be key to strengthening and rebuilding the economy as they offer access to information and educational resources, teach new skills, provide physical space, and level the playing field for those in need. The Surrey Public Library Board emphasized the value of libraries, citing a 2020 report by the Canadian Museum Association and Library Archives Canada that found that every dollar spent on public libraries generates \$4.60 worth of benefit back to the economy.

Several libraries noted that public libraries have not had an increase in core provincial funding in over a decade. The Vancouver Public Library Board of Trustees and Richmond Public Library noted that while one-time grants are helpful and appreciated, libraries cannot maintain or improve core services without an increase to operating funding. Many organizations, including the BC Libraries Cooperative, explained that without periodic adjustments for inflation, a frozen budget delivers less over time. Nelson Public Library explained that stagnant provincial funding shifts costs to municipalities which have more restricted revenue options. Other organizations, including Cranbrook Public Library and the Town of Creston, linked a need for funding to the ability of public libraries to meet the increasingly complex demands of their communities. Overall, sixteen libraries, associations, and organizations called for increased operational funding of \$22 million for public libraries with ties to inflation and population increases.

Two submissions made recommendations for funding specific to rural libraries. Grand Forks & District Public Library explained

that in rural areas, public libraries are often one of the only places that people can access the internet, meet and interact with others, find educational and entertainment opportunities, and be inside without buying anything. They noted that many small libraries do not have professionally trained library staff due to a lack of funding. Similarly, Canadian Union of Public Employees British Columbia stated that small rural libraries have fewer resources to fund needed services and many rural and Indigenous communities have little or no access to library services.

SPORT

Several sport organizations recommended an investment of \$12 million to implement Pathways to Sport, BC's strategic framework for sport, citing the value and benefits of engaging in sport and physical activity. The BC Speed Skating Association noted benefits related to physical and mental health and encouraging volunteerism, while BC Wheelchair Sports Association highlighted specific benefits of wheelchair sports for persons with physical disabilities. KidSport BC noted that participation in sport ignites a sense of belonging, promotes inclusion, helps kids gain confidence and build friendships, and develops healthy habits.

Other organizations highlighted the need for funding to increase sport participation, particularly for certain populations. BC Ultimate explained that many provincial sport organizations provide programming directed at groups with lower participation rates, including girls and women, Indigenous persons, persons with disabilities, recent immigrants, economically disadvantaged groups, older adults, members of the LGBTQ2S+ communities, and those living rural and remote communities. With respect to girls' participation, ProMOTION Plus stated that one in three girls drop-out of sport versus one in ten boys. Ringette BC linked these drop-out rates to a lack of understanding of how girls access sport. The Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity & Recreation Council stated that many aspiring young Indigenous athletes are unable to afford participation. Similarly, Right to Play highlighted the need to deliver programs for Indigenous children and youth in more Indigenous communities.

Some submissions focused on the need to create safe and inclusive environments. Volleyball BC and the BC Soccer Association stated that most volunteer-run sport organizations do not have training, tools, or policies to address inappropriate behaviour. They advocated for further provincial investment so

that community-based clubs can access education and training in safety, and for the creation and implementation of standards.

Regarding the impact of the pandemic on the sector, Sport BC stated that it will take several years to rebuild the base of community volunteers and rehire staff, and that additional investments in Pathways to Sport will help get British Columbians back to sport. Several organizations described the significant impact of the pandemic on indoor sports such as diving, wrestling, and gymnastics. Other organizations such as Vancouver International Marathon Society (RUNVAN) and Pacific Institute for Sport Excellence described how the pandemic shut down many sporting events which in turn reduces their charitable contributions and ability to motivate youth. BC Sport Tourism Network / Sport Hosting Vancouver also advocated for investment in sport events, noting that the annual value of sport tourism in British Columbia is \$1.4 billion and that funding programs for sport events are vastly over-subscribed. The BC Blind Sports and Recreation Association described how the pandemic has affected the ability of individuals who are blind or partially sighted to participate in sport, noting challenges in being able to tell the distance from others for physical distancing and the availability of sport guides.

Several organizations pointed to an erosion of government funding for sport over the past decade. The British Columbia Provincial Football Association stated that funding for provincial sport organizations has remained stable for the past ten years; however, this represents a decline in real terms due to inflation. The BC Recreation and Parks Association noted that upwards of 80 per cent of BC's recreation, parks and sports facilities are at least 25 years old and require large scale repair or replacement and advocated for infrastructure funds dedicated to recreation and sport projects.

A few organizations advocated for funding for specific projects and programs. PacificSport Vancouver Island and BC School Sports described the value of school sports programs which can improve school attendance and are one of the most accessible forms of organized sport for families in BC. Both organizations requested funding to expand their programs. Tennis Canada requested funds for their Pacific Tennis Centre in Burnaby, which they stated will create additional year-round courts for the province and house the Junior National Training program and the National Wheelchair Tennis program.

CONCLUSIONS

Recognizing that the COVID-19 pandemic hit the arts and culture sector harder than many others, Committee Members discussed opportunities to support organizations and individuals through recovery. Members also acknowledged the hardship placed on arts and culture organizations with continually needing to apply for grants in the absence of core funding. Committee Members recognized the importance of the BC Arts Council, Community Gaming Grants, and Creative BC in supporting arts, digital media, film, and community initiatives, and discussed the inequity regarding tax credits and incentives for the live entertainment sector, agreeing on the need to improve supports for this sector. The Committee additionally reflected on the many compelling presentations regarding the need to support individual artists and agreed that tax credit models or incentives may help to address this issue.

With respect to digital media, music, and film, the Committee discussed how modern technology has enabled individuals to work remotely, especially in this industry. They noted that hiring people living in areas outside of the Lower Mainland could help to spur economic development in these areas and to diversify the sector.

As it relates to public libraries, the Committee acknowledged the critical role libraries play in communities and how they are a safe, supportive place to gather, learn, and access resources, noting how this was particularly highlighted during the pandemic. Members also discussed how many libraries served as cooling centres during this summer's heat wave. They noted that in rural areas, where there are connectivity issues, libraries play an especially valuable role; however, there are challenges with respect to funding due to the smaller tax base in these areas which can result in inequities in services.

Committee Members also discussed sport and agreed that there are significant returns on investments in the future as it encourages healthy living, improves mental health, and can help people to re-engage after the COVID-19 pandemic. Members recognized that many sports programs suffered during the pandemic and commented on the coordinated response from sport organizations who came together to request \$12 million to implement the provincial Pathways to Sport strategic framework. They highlighted presentations which outlined the drop-out rates among girls and women and emphasized the need to encourage gender equity and empowerment in sport.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Arts and Culture

17. Support recovery in the arts and culture sector by providing predictable, long-term funding, providing a live entertainment labour tax credit for BC-based productions, and promoting attendance at festivals, fairs, rodeos and other arts and culture events.
18. Explore mechanisms to support individual artists to eliminate insecurity and precarity.
19. Partner with other levels of government to invest in capital infrastructure for the arts and culture sector.
20. Create a program to incentivize the purchase of BC-published books in schools and libraries.

Digital Media, Music, and Film

21. Support the digital media, music, and film industry by implementing a labour tax credit for the creation of made-in-BC content for the broadcast sector, ensuring BC remains competitive in attracting productions and operations to the province, and affording equal opportunities for artists and companies throughout BC.

Public Libraries

22. Increase provincial operational funding for public libraries and provide targeted support for libraries in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities.

Sport

23. Increase investment in the sport sector, including providing an additional \$12 million over three years to implement the provincial Pathways to Sport strategic framework, to promote recovery in the sector, increase participation in sport, address gender equity in sport participation, and encourage healthy living and wellness.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

AGRICULTURE, FISH, AND FOOD SECURITY

Several organizations discussed opportunities to strengthen and support the agricultural sector. Richmond FarmWatch emphasized the importance of long-term planning in farming and how tenant farmers are particularly challenged in this regard by speculators who may not have much interest in having their land farmed long-term. They also expressed concerns about exclusions in the Agricultural Land Reserve and how small-scale farmers are displaced and unable to compete with speculators who drive up land prices and lease rates. They made several recommendations with respect to minimum farm revenue, buying farmland, providing incentives, leasing, and assessments with a view to encouraging more farming as well as ensuring farmland is used for farming purposes. The BC Fruit Growers' Association similarly made a recommendation to incent agriculture use by increasing taxation on non-agriculture use of the Agricultural Land Reserve and diverting those funds into the agriculture budget or into a trust that would fund agriculture programs. They also requested funding for the Sterile Insect Release Program as well as supported the establishment of a marketing commission or board for apples.

The BC Association of Farmers' Markets discussed the need for strong, sufficiently resourced, and meaningful investment in non-profit farmers' markets, along with farms and food producers. The association also recommended ongoing and increased funding for the BC Farmers' Market Nutrition Coupon Program to expand the program to additional communities. They shared that farmers' markets are a catalyst to localize the food system and that they help ensure greater food security.

Food and nutrition security was additionally discussed by LUSH Valley Food Action Society. They shared that higher food cost, increased poverty, housing instability, and decreases in federal funding for food programs has been squeezing food hub organizations across Vancouver Island. They noted that food hubs were shown to be extremely responsive in the face of the pandemic, meeting increasing community needs around food program delivery. They recommended additional funding for

food security planning, as well as including community food security to the mandates of emergency operations centres. The BC Dairy Association described dairy as one of the most valuable land-based agricultural commodities in BC, and encouraged specific investments in enhancing dairy-processing capacity as a means to improve food security. They noted that British Columbians are increasing valuing stable supply chains and increased self-sufficiency in the food system and that BC farmers are in position to advance food production.

Wine Growers BC requested support for a wine grape replant program to provide financial assistance with replacing varieties that will meet consumer demands. They shared that the industry generates significant economic activity and is looking at ways to generate additional jobs and revenue as part of a long-term strategic plan. The organization also made a specific recommendation to implement an alcohol wholesale price floor, noting that BC's minimum price of alcohol lags other provinces and results in cheap import wines competing against BC wines.

The Pacific National Exhibition advocated for support of their work on agricultural education and outreach. They described how the Pacific National Exhibition brings urban residents and rural producers together through participatory programming. They shared that their revenues have been significantly reduced over the past two years due to the pandemic, and that without provincial support, they will be unable to continue investing in non-revenue-generating agriculture programs.

Investments in agricultural infrastructure was another key theme. The BC Agriculture Council, LUSH Valley Food Action Society, and the BC Fruit Growers' Association made recommendations related to agricultural water supply and infrastructure while the BC Cattlemen's Association discussed the need to update aging and depleted infrastructure such as fences. The BC Agriculture Council noted challenges with irrigation curtailment and climate, and how proper investment, planning, and consultation is needed on water strategies to ensure food security is achievable.

The BC Agriculture Council further advocated for dedicated investment and collaboration on climate-change related infrastructure as well as emissions reductions in the agricultural sector, including the sector's Agricultural GHG Commitment to Lowering Emissions by Approach Net-Zero (AGCLEAN) strategy. They described how climate change presents significant challenges and opportunities for BC's farmers and ranchers who are vulnerable to changes in climatic conditions and how small shifts can have significant consequences for food production, the livelihoods of producers, and the future of the agri-food sector. The BC Dairy Association also expressed support for the AGCLEAN strategy and noted that supporting this work will help advance agricultural adaptation and climate change mitigation.

Another area raised by the BC Agriculture Council was temporary farm workers. The council specifically recommended investment in, and implementation of, a new mid-season inspection process to ensure farm worker safety. They stated this would benefit farmers and government by reducing the need for foreign governments to do as many farm visits, increasing consistency of the complaint process, discouraging complacent employers who are not necessarily meeting expectations, and increasing confidence in the temporary foreign worker program. The council additionally suggested continuing centralized facilities for temporary workers entering BC as this protects farm operations and communities from disease introduction and the associated economic impacts of COVID-19.

The Committee also received submissions from the BC SPCA and the Fur-Bearers to end to fur farming. The BC SPCA was of the view that fur farming is inhumane and noted that 30 percent of all mink farms in BC faced a COVID-19 outbreak. The Fur-Bearers described fur farming as unsustainable and noted that several countries have recently banned fur or mink farming due to COVID-19. Both organizations stated that fur farms and workers could be provided supports to transition out of the industry.

The United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union, Northern Office described the importance of fisheries to the coastal economy and made recommendations related to fish processing and salmon stock. With respect to processing, they shared that BC-caught fish are being shipped for processing offshore and that some of the same companies exporting fish for processing are reimporting it for sale. They encouraged government to keep fish processing in BC. As it relates to the protection of salmon stock, they described issues with the protection of habitat,

water quality and quantity, and pinniped predation. They further described opportunities to support coastal economies while protecting wild stock through hatchery produced salmon.

The BC Seafood Alliance discussed the northern shelf bioregion marine protected area network, which is currently in development by the federal government, the provincial government, and other partners. The alliance expressed concerns that the draft proposal would have a significant impact on commercial fishing, resulting in loss of fishing operations and infrastructure. They shared that they have engaged commercial fisheries to develop an alternative proposal that would meet conservation targets while reducing the economic impact and asked for more time to develop the northern shelf bioregion marine protected area network.

FORESTRY

The Committee heard from a number of organizations with respect to the forestry sector. The Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative discussed the importance of supporting forest sector workers and communities as they adapt to changes resulting from new forest management systems. The Fort Nelson & District Chamber of Commerce emphasized the need to ensure all forestry reform initiatives have appropriate time and funding to fully engage all stakeholders.

The BC Council of Forest Industries acknowledged that the sector has done well during the pandemic; however, predictable access to reasonably priced fibre remains a major determinant to the industry's ability to be competitive and attract new investment. They shared that BC is among the highest-cost fibre jurisdictions in the world and this is made more complex by wildfires, beetles, and restricted supply. They emphasized the need for decisions about forest resources to be grounded in, and informed by, science, good data, robust socio-economic analysis, and traditional Indigenous knowledge. They also noted that Indigenous communities are vital to BC's forest sector as owners, partners, and employees, and that many want to increase participation and are seeking a greater share of revenues from government for forestry activities taking place on traditional territories. The BC Council of Forest Industries also discussed value-added opportunities for the sector through climate-smart forestry and low-carbon forest, such as mass timber and the use of residual forest fibre.

The Surge Narrows Forest Advisory Committee recommended developing a community-based, small-scale forest sector. They explained that community owned and operated tenures would

have strong incentives to manage forests for multiple values unlike those owned and managed by companies. They were of the view that shifting toward community control of forest tenures and the development of value-added manufacturing and non-timber forest products could create a healthier and more sustainable forestry sector in BC while also creating safe and resilient livelihoods in rural areas and providing a platform for reconciliation.

Mosaic Forest Management described challenges for private managed forests and a need to review the private managed forest land program to encourage landowners to keep their lands as forest. They also suggested removing log export restrictions, noting that these restrictions depress local log prices, often below the cost of production.

The Committee also received input related to better incorporating wildlife values in forest stewardship. The Guide Outfitters Association of British Columbia was of the view that the professional reliance model does not accommodate the comprehensive landscape level planning required and does not consider cumulative effects, and as such, there are significant ecological challenges in many parts of the province.

Several organizations and individuals also advocated for an end to old growth logging. For Our Kids North Vancouver recommended immediate interim protection measures for old growth forests, and along with the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative, encouraged implementation of the recommendations from the Old Growth Strategic Review report. Climate Action Now! emphasized the impact of forest practices on forest fires and biodiversity, and recommended a moratorium on old-growth logging as well as a phase-out of clearcut logging.

JOBS AND IMMIGRATION

Organizations representing a variety of sectors identified labour shortages as a significant challenge. The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade reported that employers are facing a skilled labour shortage that has been exacerbated beyond pre-pandemic levels and that this is problematic for BC's long-term growth. The First West Credit Union noted that many of their business members are experiencing challenges attracting and retaining talent, and that innovative solutions are needed to address the shortages and improve labour mobility. Food, Health & Consumer Products of Canada suggested expanding the scope of programs to re-skill disrupted workers, retaining

and attracting highly skilled global talent, providing predictable and timely access to workers outside of Canada, and investing in the commercialization of labour-saving technologies to help address the labour gap. The Chartered Professionals in Human Resources of British Columbia and Yukon recommended encouraging senior workers to stay employed as well as growing the workforce through diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging strategies.

Some organizations pointed to various employer programs and incentives as a means to address labour shortages. The Canadian Beverage Association stated that the beverage sector is struggling to keep up with the cost of training and that strong incentives, such as an employer tax credit for new hires, are needed for employers to enhance investments in training. Heights Merchants Association suggested providing grants to assist for the first few months of hiring to offset the high cost of training and onboarding for small businesses. The Canadian Home Builder's Association British Columbia and Sysco British Columbia specifically recommended continued funding for the Employer Training Grant program to help workers develop needed skill sets.

YWCA Metro Vancouver focused on opportunities to attract and retain women to the workforce, particularly in fast growing and male-dominated sectors. They noted that women are concentrated in industries that were first to be impacted by the pandemic, including health care, retail, education, and hospitality. They encouraged targeted opportunities for women to retrain, retool and find new jobs through investments in education and training, occupational skills training, and short duration training, particularly for women displaced from the workforce due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Canadian Union of Public Employees British Columbia focused on women in the trades, noting that women represent an average of four percent of the skilled trades workforce in BC. They shared that significantly increasing the number of women and other underrepresented groups in trades careers is crucial to bridging the gap, particularly given the current skilled trades labour shortage, and recommended permanent funding for the BC Centre for Women in Trades.

The BC Centre for Women in the Trades discussed issues with toxic work environments in the skilled trades. They noted that many workplaces have initiatives to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion; however, retention is the main challenge with women and equity-deserving populations facing environments with bullying, harassment, and discrimination.

They recommended funding for the Be More than a Bystander Program which teaches men how to intervene and be leaders in creating healthy, safe, and respectful workplaces in skilled trades.

Some organizations pointed to immigration as a source for BC's workforce. The Council of Canadian Innovators shared that the biggest issue hindering the ability of BC's tech companies to scale is access to highly skilled workers. They noted that remote work combined with the ability of foreign multinational companies to pay significantly higher salaries means Canadian firms are having difficulty competing and attracting talent, and as such, innovative immigration policies are needed. The Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce noted that many immigrants are trained but unable to work in their fields in BC and that a seamless process needs to be developed to stream immigrants into the workforce.

The Manufacturing Safety Alliance of BC discussed the importance of effective workplace health and safety programs, particularly mental health programs. They described how workforce shortages increase workloads and stress levels and increase the risk of fatigue and injury, and that companies with health and safety management systems are better prepared to protect workers and mitigate risk. They further indicated that mental health programs are a critical factor in successful recruitment, retention, accommodation, and return-to-work programs.

NATURAL RESOURCE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Several organizations emphasized the need to improve predictability, timelines, and certainty of the regulatory approval process for resource projects. The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers stated that policy and regulatory uncertainty make it difficult to choose to invest in BC and that a competitive fiscal framework needs to be maintained to encourage long-term investment. Teck Resources Limited similarly highlighted challenges with predictability of process, noting regulatory overlap between ministries as well as issues with how provincial processes align with federal and Indigenous processes. They stated that this results in duplication, lack of clarity, and extended review processes, and that coordination and efficiency within the regulatory approval process is needed. Enbridge Inc. explained that regulatory uncertainty impacts global competitiveness for LNG and emphasized a need to re-

examine fiscal, tax, and regulatory elements for the industry to attract investment.

The Association for Mineral Exploration, the Mining Association of BC, and the BC Stone Sand and Gravel Association also discussed the importance of timeliness in the permitting process to provide better predictability for the mining sector, and recommended funding for additional permitting capacity. The Mining Association of BC additionally suggested funding to Indigenous groups to enhance their capacity to review mine permitting referrals and authorizations, noting that timely permitting and authorizations without compromising environmental protection is critical to realizing new mines or mine extension opportunities and to maintaining existing operations.

Challenges with hiring support and technical staff for natural resource ministries was discussed by the Professional Employees Association. They shared that half of their members feel they lack sufficient resources to meet their ministry's scientific mandates; the association attributed these challenges to low compensation, noting that government licensed professionals' pay is 24 percent lower than federal rates. They suggested improving hiring practices, succession planning, compensation, and career laddering.

The Committee also heard concerns about the effectiveness and approach of current climate strategies, particularly as it relates to energy-intensive, trade-exposed industries. The Business Council of British Columbia noted that BC exporters pay millions in carbon tax while competitors in other jurisdictions pay little or nothing. The Mining Association of British Columbia shared that this puts BC's industries at a competitive disadvantage and leads to carbon leakage where investment and industrial activity shifts from one jurisdiction to another with less stringent carbon pricing and leads to higher global emissions. They further noted that BC's approach is inconsistent with the federal output-based pricing system which takes into account the risk of leakage. They encouraged government to examine measures through the tax system or granting mechanisms to incent further greenhouse gas emission reductions, noting that by enabling BC mines to reinvest money that would otherwise have gone to pay carbon tax, they can reduce their emissions.

Another key theme with respect to natural resource development was investing in electrification and decarbonization. The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers shared that one of the single largest opportunities to achieve a substantial

reduction in upstream emission intensity, while supporting growth in the natural gas sector, is the electrification of new upstream natural gas facilities; however, they noted a need to address transmission infrastructure and commercial challenges to enable electrification. The Mining Association of BC also emphasized the importance of electrification for growing BC's mining industry. Both the association and Teck Resources Limited noted many BC mines are among the lowest carbon-emitting operations because they run on hydroelectricity; however, there are challenges with the electrification of transportation and equipment where grid infrastructure and further advancement is needed. They also highlighted challenges that industrial loads put on the electrical grid system and emphasized the need to increase capacity.

Teck Resources Limited additionally encouraged investment in advancing BC's critical minerals sector. They shared that the demand for critical minerals and metals continues to increase for the development of clean energy infrastructure such as power grids, electric batteries, solar panels, and wind turbines, and that BC has large deposits of minerals and metals essential to the world's transition towards a lower-carbon future. The Association for Mineral Exploration made specific recommendations for increasing the mining exploration and mining flow-through share tax credits to make BC the most competitive jurisdiction in Canada. They stated that the lost tax revenue is offset by the economic activity generated by increased investment in mineral exploration.

The Association for Mineral Exploration, along with Geoscience BC, advocated for increased funding for public geoscience. Geoscience BC stated that the progression to a lower carbon economy is forecast to increase demand for BC's natural resources and with it the need for quality geoscience to make well-informed decisions about mineral, energy, and water resources, and that investments in geoscience provides economic returns through mineral exploration. The Association for Mineral Exploration similarly noted that foundational public geoscience provides mineral explorers with basic information on where to find rare and hidden mineral deposits, and also plays a vital role in modernizing land use decisions.

The Committee also heard about a need to address mine rehabilitation and change BC's financial assurances framework. Northern Confluence Initiative shared that BC did not require reclamation fees until 1969 for mines and still lacks full bonds for current operating mines, and that over 1,800 historical mine sites in BC need clean up. They stated that restoring lands

can provide multiple benefits, including carbon sequestration, erosion control, and improved water quality, while also being labour-intensive which creates jobs in mostly rural communities.

FortisBC advocated for the development of programs, policies, and infrastructure to establish BC as a global LNG marine fueling hub. They stated that increasingly stringent emissions and air quality regulations are putting pressure on the marine shipping sector to reduce their environmental impact and that the sector is looking to LNG as a fuel that can address these challenges.

Committee Members also received recommendations related to chemistry and plastics. The Chemistry Industry Association of Canada shared that there is an opportunity to leverage the province's low-carbon and natural gas value chain and nearly zero-carbon-emission electricity system and add value to natural gas and natural gas liquids before they leave the province. They encouraged government to consider chemistry and plastics as a strategic supply chain sector and provide supports for low- and zero-carbon facilities as well as emission reduction technologies.

The Fort Nelson & District Chamber of Commerce discussed the importance of the natural resource sector to rural communities. They noted that many rural communities across BC are stagnant or declining due to the lack of economic diversity, causing uncertainty and an unstable investment climate. In addition to supporting natural resource development, they suggested a community economic and development investment fund program to support rural communities.

TOURISM

The tourism sector stressed the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to facilitate short- and long-term recovery. The Tourism Industry Association of British Columbia highlighted that many tourism operators and major attractions lost a second straight peak summer season due to a resurgence of COVID-19, wildfires, and the late opening of the Canadian border to American visitors. They stated that domestic tourism markets are not expected to return to pre-pandemic levels until at least 2023 with international markets taking much longer. The association was of the view that a long-term strategy is needed to address critical issues and opportunities.

The Tourism Industry Association of British Columbia additionally shared that the primary issue facing tourism operators is meeting monthly fixed-cost expenses, noting that

larger operators such as hotels and attractions have not yet received the kind of support needed to sustain operations over the long-term. Measures to help larger operators could include more favourable interest rates, capitalization of interest costs, and repayment timelines that better coincide with recovery time periods. The association also recommended reintroducing grant supports such as the Circuit Breaker or the Small and Medium Sized Business Recovery Grant. The British Columbia Hotel Association highlighted this challenge for the accommodation sector as well, noting that hotel revenue is down 70 to 80 percent. They recommended a grant program for the accommodation sector as well as relief on energy costs and property taxes.

The BC Regional Tourism Secretariat emphasized that the industry is slowly returning and that major drivers such as conventions, business travel, and international tourism are not likely to return quickly. They acknowledged that provincial business programs ensured operators were able to pivot and adapt; however, many businesses did not survive. They further highlighted that the challenges of the pandemic are compounded by the effects of climate change with wildfires and flooding. The secretariat sought collaboration for emergency management and destination development to support recovery.

Destination Greater Victoria also drew attention to the significant decline in revenue for many hotels, restaurants, attractions, and transportation providers. They encouraged government to consult with visitor economy leaders on focused investments for the sector. They also recommended expanding programs like Hosting BC and the Major Sport Event Hosting program, noting that sport tourism was a growing business prior to the pandemic. Investments to support community organizations to deliver large-scale meetings, events, and conferences when public health restrictions allow would also help the visitor economy recovery.

Several organizations identified new and emerging tourism opportunities. The Tourism Industry Association of British Columbia discussed environmentally-friendly visitor experiences while the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative encouraged support for Indigenous communities to pursue cultural and eco-tourism businesses. The Tourism Industry Association of British Columbia and the British Columbia Hotel Association also suggested investments in sustainable business practices in the sector.

The Guide Outfitters Association of British Columbia and the Adventure Tourism Coalition requested additional support for adventure tourism. The Guide Outfitters Association of British Columbia shared that adventure tourism makes significant economic contributions to rural communities, promoting tourism in communities that otherwise might have few visitors, especially in shoulder seasons. Both organizations advocated for the creation and implementation of a new adventure tourism policy to encourage, enable, and manage the sector's growth.

Access BC – SCI BC – Regional Tourism Associations highlighted the need to expand accessibility and inclusion in tourism. They described how tourism, and in particular outdoor tourism, remains inaccessible to many, and highlighted work by Access BC to provide educational workshops, universal design training, and accessibility audits. They sought funding for Access BC to continue this work, including expanding regional tourism access and inclusion liaison positions. The Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association also encouraged support for the access and inclusion liaison positions, who develop resources, establish best practices, and educate tourism community stakeholders about access and inclusion. They shared that creating accessible spaces and environments allows equal opportunity and full inclusion for everyone, regardless of age, size, ability, culture, or gender, and that it nurtures a sense of belonging and well-being for all people.

Another area that was identified as requiring investments and supports to ensure recovery in the tourism sector was the workforce. The British Columbia Hotel Association noted that an estimated 30 percent of the workforce has been lost since 2019 and highlighted that this issue is exacerbated by the limited access to affordable housing in tourism reliant communities. They suggested a workforce strategy for tourism and hospitality. The Tourism Industry Association of British Columbia recommended a range of recruitment and training initiatives, including promoting recruitment of underrepresented populations and developing policies to encourage the hiring of recent graduates for leadership and management roles.

AirBnB Canada discussed specific issues with the municipal regional district tax. AirBnB Canada collects the tax on behalf of the provincial government for distribution to local municipalities and regional districts. They stated that municipalities have different rates and conditions and that the tax is not collected by all short-term rental platforms as it is not mandatory. They were of the view that establishing a single and mandatory municipal regional district tax would help support municipalities and

regional districts with needed funding while also streamlining administration.

TRADE

The Committee received a couple of submissions that discussed inter-provincial and international trade. The Kelowna Chamber of Commerce advocated for removal of inter-provincial trade barriers as they create challenges for small- and medium-sized businesses while the Prince Rupert Port Authority encouraged continued recognition of trade and exports as foundational to BC's economy. Finning International recommended ongoing development of BC's inter-provincial and international trade relations.

TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

The BC Tech Association described the shift to a knowledge- and services-driven economy over the last three decades, and discussed ways to support and scale up technology companies. They noted that only two percent of BC's tech companies employ 100 people or more and that larger companies are much more likely to stay in the local community, even if acquired. In addition to support for entrepreneurs to scale up, the association also recommended investment in education, skills training, and tech talent.

The Canadian Council for Canadian Innovators described how data and intellectual property have become two of the most valuable assets and are now a primary source of wealth creation. They were of the view that governments continue to rely on 19th and 20th century policy strategies, and as such, BC lags in the global intellectual property and data race. They recommended the development of a competitive tax eco-system to encourage investment and high-growth domestic innovators to stay and build businesses in BC.

The Committee also received input with respect to the life sciences sector. Life Sciences British Columbia noted that BC is home to the fastest growing life sciences sector in Canada. They shared that BC's biomedical companies are facing a critical shortage of wet lab space due to high costs of building or converting space. This has resulted in delayed growth and young companies have either needed to relocate or sell their intellectual property. They advocated for the development of a comprehensive sector-wide strategy as well as investments in wet lab space for small- and medium-sized companies, the

creation of a national biomanufacturing and training centre, and the development of a provincial intellectual property strategy.

D-Wave Systems Inc. specifically discussed opportunities for quantum computing. They shared that investments in expanding the commercial market for quantum technology will support the innovation economy and accelerate BC's innovation leadership role in harnessing quantum technologies to solve complex problems. They noted that collaboration with the federal government through the development of a national framework can help provide strategic guidance on quantum policy, identify key areas for workforce development, and build supply chain infrastructure. They further indicated that tax incentives help foster and maintain a commercial environment and provide financial stability for companies who are reinvesting in research and development, as well as attract new companies and investments to the province.

CONCLUSIONS

The Committee reflected on how the pandemic highlighted the importance of local food security and processing capacity in areas such as dairy, and further, how agriculture plays a key role in BC's economy and the health and wellness of British Columbians. Members also noted that BC is well-positioned to be an exporter and would benefit from investing additional resources and supports, particularly with respect to encouraging agricultural activity and supporting young farmers. This includes examining how land is preserved in the Agricultural Land Reserve and how farming is encouraged on it, as well as identifying and encouraging best practices through partnerships and extension services. Committee Members also supported the implementation of a wholesale price floor on absolute alcohol.

They also discussed issues with access to labour in the agricultural sector given the reliance on workers from outside the province, which was particularly challenging during the pandemic, and at the same time, the need to improve living conditions and protections for temporary farm workers. Committee Members additionally examined the need for investments in agricultural infrastructure, including water, fencing, and climate-related infrastructure, as well as the urgent need to provide assistance to rebuild agricultural infrastructure damaged as a result of wildfires. The Committee also acknowledged how the Pacific National Exhibition has long supported agricultural outreach and the importance of providing support to continue this work.

With respect to fisheries, the Committee agreed that the industry is important to the province and to British Columbians, and that a stronger, more proactive approach is needed for the protection of salmon stock, including addressing issues of predation. Members were also interested in opportunities related to processing and land-based aquaculture. They further noted that efforts related to these issues require work and coordination with the federal government.

Committee Members observed that there was a wide-range of input on forestry and acknowledged that significant work is already underway in these areas; they were of the view that this work needs to continue in close consultation and collaboration with communities, industry, and Indigenous peoples. The Committee was especially interested in developing a community-based forest sector which provides small communities, who have local knowledge, with economic opportunities, as well as the value-added aspect of forestry. Members discussed at length the need to provide support to rural and remote communities that rely on the forest sector, including supporting re-training and transition. They additionally discussed ways to better use the forest through measures such as varying stumpage rates to incent the use of residual forest fibre. The Committee emphasized that forest management should be guided by values related to reconciliation, climate change, and community.

As it relates to natural resources more broadly, including mining, the Committee recognized that natural resource development, including corresponding processing and manufacturing industries, is important to the provincial economy and key to rural development. At the same time, Members examined opportunities to diversify and better support rural economies, and looked to the previous Rural Dividend Fund as a potential mechanism.

Committee Members also discussed challenges with permitting and agreed that ministries need to be better resourced to improve timelines. Members also acknowledged that natural resource development must incorporate reconciliation and adapt to the realities of climate change. They particularly pointed to opportunities with mining, which is critical to the transition to a cleaner economy and climate action as metals such as copper are needed for electrification. They agreed that Geoscience BC does important work as a precursor to major mines and has a significant return on investment while also providing for well-paying jobs in rural and remote parts of the

province. As such, they recommended increased funding for Geoscience BC.

The Committee also agreed that government should take a leadership role in supporting the mining sector to be environmentally-friendly with a strict regulatory environment to ensure confidence in the sector. Members also discussed competitiveness challenges and the risk of carbon leakage for emissions-intensive, trade-exposed industries, including mining. They had extensive conversations about BC's carbon pricing system, how it compares to the federal output-based pricing system, and whether discussions should be initiated to create alignment between the two to address these challenges; however, they were unable to come to a consensus on this matter. They acknowledged that the pathway for electrification and decarbonization of mining and other natural resource operations needs to continue, noting that there is a significant amount of electrification in the mining sector already. With respect to LNG, the Committee noted that there is already a commitment by government in this regard, and also noted that BC is a global leader in environmental standards with respect to many industries in the natural resource sector.

As it relates to jobs and immigration, Committee Members acknowledged that labour shortages are a significant issue across many sectors and that challenges will impede the province's economic growth. They noted that small businesses are especially struggling, and as such, an immediate response is required. The Committee examined opportunities to address this challenge by identifying untapped sources of skilled workers, addressing retention issues, and ensuring healthy and safe workplaces. Members additionally looked to immigration as a key solution, and specifically discussed the Provincial Nominee Program which enables the province to target immigrants based on need and specific skills sets. They were of the view that government should work with the federal government to increase the province's allocation for this program.

With respect to tourism, Committee Members reflected on the significant impact the pandemic has had on the sector, and the critical need to facilitate recovery. They noted opportunities to support areas of tourism that also achieve reconciliation and social objectives through partnerships with Indigenous groups on tourism products and economic development, as well as sustainable tourism development and accessible tourism. The Committee also agreed that additional efforts are needed in attracting tourists.

The Committee recognized that technology is a key part of the economy and that there is significant competition in this sector. Members were of the view that government needs to continue to foster space for this sector and ensure companies can stay in BC where they add value to the community and provide well-paying jobs. The Committee also expressed support for investments in the life sciences and biomanufacturing sector,

noting that BC has a great education cluster and could be leading this work. Committee Members observed that the technology and innovation sector could be encouraged to set-up and expand to rural areas, provided connectivity is available (see Equity and Inclusion), and to provide opportunities for groups who are currently under-represented, such as women and Indigenous peoples.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Agriculture, Fish and Food Security

24. Support BC's agriculture industry and strengthen food security by addressing barriers to new and continued agricultural activity, including examining how the Agricultural Land Reserve can better facilitate farming, providing supports to new farmers, and encouraging best practices through extension services.
25. Invest in agricultural infrastructure, including water infrastructure and aging and depleted infrastructure such as fences, as well as climate adaptation and emissions-reduction measures.
26. Ensure a robust regulatory framework and strengthen protections and safety for temporary farm workers, including implementing a new mid-season inspection process in consultation with industry.
27. Support the role of the PNE as a provincial leader in agricultural outreach.
28. Implement a minimum wholesale price on absolute alcohol.
29. Increase support for aquaculture and processing in BC, including working with the federal government on regulatory and protection measures to enhance aquaculture.

Forestry

30. Ensure reforms to forest management and practices support reconciliation, healthy forests, climate action, strong communities, and value-added opportunities, in consultation and collaboration with Indigenous peoples, industry and local communities, including developing a community-based forest sector and strengthening economic transition supports for families and communities.

Jobs and Immigration

31. Take a comprehensive approach to addressing labour shortages by targeting untapped sources of skilled workers, investing in diversity and inclusion strategies, encouraging healthy and safe workplaces, and working with the federal government to increase BC's allocation for the Provincial Nominee Program.

Natural Resource and Rural Development

32. Significantly increase resources to ensure sufficient capacity within natural resource ministries and Indigenous communities to provide predictability and improve timeliness of permitting as well as to enhance monitoring and oversight.
33. Continue the pathway to electrification and decarbonization of mining and other natural resource operations.
34. Increase funding for Geoscience BC.

35. Consider the value-added resource manufacturing sectors of chemistry and plastics as a strategic supply chain sector for the province, and provide supports to build new, low-carbon and zero-carbon facilities, where possible, or deploy emission reduction technologies.
36. Provide dedicated supports to strengthen and diversify rural economies through a mechanism such as the Rural Dividend Fund.

Tourism

37. Support recovery and expansion of the tourism sector, including exploring partnerships with Indigenous groups and communities, promoting environmentally-friendly visitor experiences and sustainable business practices, expanding accessibility and inclusion initiatives, and increasing investment in tourism marketing.

Trade

38. Reduce interprovincial trade barriers to support small- and medium-sized businesses, and strengthen investments to support international trade and exports.

Technology and Innovation

39. Continue to embrace technology and innovation as critical drivers of economic growth and resilience with increased investment in tech talent and training, support for entrepreneurs to scale up, and a competitive tax eco-system that encourages high-growth domestic innovators to stay and build businesses in BC.
40. Support the development of the life sciences and biomanufacturing strategy, including training and development of needed talent.
41. Ensure that the benefits of technology and innovation are felt around the province by working with rural and northern communities to support innovation and create job growth.
42. Provide tax incentives to BC-based businesses using, building, and commercializing quantum computing technologies.

ENVIRONMENT

CLEAN ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Many organizations and individuals, including over 70 written submissions, stressed that climate change is a significant problem which has not been adequately prioritized. One submission noted that the world is on a trajectory of 3 to 5 degrees of warming and pointed out that significant ecological damage will occur at 2 degrees of global warming. With respect to the online survey, supporting the transition to a cleaner economy was the top selection in response to Question 1 on top three priorities. One individual noted that in the Okanagan, it is common for summers to be threatened by wildfires and springs to be threatened by flooding. The Burnaby Board of Trade urged focus not just on mitigating climate change, but also on investments in climate resilient infrastructure. Several organizations commended the CleanBC goals; however, they were of the view that the budget needs to be significantly increased with the David Suzuki Foundation suggesting two percent of BC's GDP be allocated to climate change mitigation efforts.

Some organizations expressed concerns with how emissions are currently measured, noting that if forest harvesting activities or forest fires were included, BC's emissions would be significantly higher than current estimates. They further noted that methane is not accurately measured or monitored. A number of organizations recommended ending fossil fuel subsidies and increasing the carbon tax, stating that the current distribution of subsidies to natural resource extraction is far too generous. Stand.earth suggested that money from the subsidies could be re-invested to promote economic diversification in communities reliant on oil and gas extraction while others expressed interest in redistributing the funds to green industries.

The Fort Nelson & District Chamber of Commerce highlighted differences between rural and urban regions with respect to clean energy, noting that rural and northern BC does not have the same access to public transportation or clean energy with remote areas often relying on gas or diesel power generation. The Citizens Climate Lobby – West Kootenay Chapter similarly

noted that it is difficult for rural and small communities which have limited resources, both financial and staff, to achieve meaningful progress on climate change. A number of organizations requested support for municipalities on climate action, with the City of Vancouver noting that the Climate Action Revenue Incentive Program was a critical enabler of local government climate action and leadership and that the program provided municipalities with predictable and flexible funding.

Several organizations suggested increased investments in green energy to help achieve climate targets. FortisBC noted that hydrogen is an excellent alternative fuel source that can help BC reduce its carbon footprint. Hydra Energy Canada Corp shared that the Motor Fuel Tax Regulation currently provides an exemption for hydrogen when used in fuel cell vehicles but not when used in internal combustion engines; they were of the view that this should be adjusted. Innergex Renewable Energy explained that the development of green hydrogen is being constrained by the high cost of the technology needed to create hydrogen from water and suggested that subsidies be provided to increase uptake in the process.

The Canadian Biogas Association noted that in 2020, the biogas sector produced the equivalent of 13 large hydro dams in clean electricity and that BC is home to 33 of Canada's biogas projects. BC Bioenergy Network noted that a significant amount of biofuels is imported into the province, as BC's manufacturing capacity is constrained and in need of additional investment. They further shared that biogas needs dedicated programs and investments to grow, and that building low-carbon fuel infrastructure will create permanent jobs and use value-added biomass residues from BC's municipalities and forest sector. Advanced Biofuels Canada similarly requested support for biofuels by exempting it and other clean fuels from the carbon tax.

ELECTRIC AND LOW-EMISSION VEHICLES

The Committee heard significant support for zero-emission vehicles and the maintenance of or increased funding for their adoption as well as additional subsidies for long-range battery powered vehicles. The Vancouver Electric Vehicle Association noted that the zero-emission vehicle mandate needs to be re-evaluated and updated as the current rate for zero-emission vehicle adoption is outpacing established targets. At the same time, one individual noted that infrastructure issues such as a lack of charging stations in multi-unit dwellings are slowing zero-emission vehicle adoption. The Global Automakers of Canada encouraged increased incentives for home, workplace, and public charging and hydrogen fueling stations.

Sysco British Columbia expressed interest in converting larger vehicles in their fleet to lower carbon fuels and recommended that the Heavy-Duty Vehicle Efficiency Program and the Specialty Use Vehicle Initiative be expanded. The BC Trucking Association similarly noted that medium and heavy-duty commercial vehicles account for 50 percent of BC's total road transportation emissions; they were of the view that incentives aimed at getting older vehicles off the road can significantly reduce greenhouse gases. The BC General Service Employees' Union suggested replacing the government fleet with zero-emission vehicles as vehicles reach the end of their life cycle along with increased and accelerated electrification of public transit.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND BUILDING STANDARDS

The Committee received a number of submissions recommending an increase in retrofit programs to increase energy efficiency in support of climate action. The Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Institute of Canada explained that buildings make up a significant amount of the total greenhouse gas emissions emitted in the province, exceeded only by road transportation and the oil and gas sector. MoveUP noted that scaling up retrofitting can create good-paying sustainable jobs, increase equity and affordability in BC, and improve community health. Several organizations noted that this is a rapidly growing industry that will need significant job skills training to meet future demand.

The Building Owners and Managers Association of BC discussed the discrepancy between the cost of retrofits and the benefits to the building owner as much of the benefits of retrofitting

are seen by tenants. They suggested incentive programs to help accelerate the adoption of more energy efficient materials and the adoption of the Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy financing tool to enable investments in greenhouse gas reduction retrofits. LandlordBC recommended that government commit to long-term, widespread investment in financial incentives to help property owners retrofit existing buildings.

Some organizations also noted that low-income and rental households have difficulty with the costs associated with improving the energy efficiency of their homes. Ecotrust Canada shared that energy poverty is a problem across BC, but especially in rural areas, where it has a profound impact on human health and well-being. They stated that existing programs designed to alleviate high energy costs for low-income households have not achieved widespread adoption or significant bill savings. They also noted that Better Homes BC rebates for heat pumps and insulation are effective tools but have not managed to help the most vulnerable.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION

The Committee received over 300 submissions advocating for an increased investment in the planning and expansion of BC's protected areas, including specific funding for Indigenous-led conservation initiatives. The submissions acknowledged recent investments in BC Parks; however, they stated that conservation and protection requires more than a one-time investment. They pointed to how investments in conservation and protection support mental health and well-being, protect species-at-risk and cultural sites, and provide economic opportunities, while providing a high return on investment through the visitor economy and jobs in habitat restoration.

Wildsight, along with several other organizations, advocated for increased investments in fish, wildlife, and habitat management. They explained that a lack of investment in this area combined with the impacts of resource extraction, is jeopardizing the future of BC's natural legacy. They further noted that BC is contributing less funding to this area than neighbouring jurisdictions. The BC Wildlife Federation and the Guide Outfitters Association of British Columbia suggested that hunting and fishing license fees could be dedicated to funding fish and wildlife management.

The BC Wildlife Federation additionally noted concerns about the number of species in BC whose populations are currently

in decline or at-risk, and along with the Guide Outfitters Association of British Columbia, recommended legislating outcomes and objectives for fish, wildlife, and habitat. The Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative shared that annual wildlife-vehicle collisions cost government millions of dollars annually, and added that such collisions can be avoided with better land management practices, noting that such practices can help preserve wildlife, lives, and ultimately money.

The Committee also heard about the connection between biodiversity and the intensity of wildfires. The BC Wildlife Federation, Region 5 noted that herbicides commonly used to clear areas for tree planting have a tendency to kill deciduous vegetation, such as aspen, that is vital to mitigating the growth of wildfires. They suggested government address the amount of woody debris left after logging. Climate Action Now! similarly noted that both clearcutting and use of herbicide sprays have increased the intensity of fires. They suggested that adjustments to logging practices as well as increased collaboration with First Nations.

INVASIVE SPECIES

Several organizations from across the province, including the Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society, East Kootenay Invasive Species Council, Invasive Species Council of BC, and the Lillooet Regional Invasive Species Society, described the need for significant investments in invasive species prevention, monitoring, response, and education. Many of these organizations noted the negative economic and social impact of invasive species which, without proper regulation, will impact ecosystems, tourism, drinking water quality, and hydro power resources. The Invasive Species Council of BC stated that invasive species are the second-biggest threat to healthy environments. They further highlighted that this threat has been exacerbated by climate change while in turn, invasive species make extreme weather events worse. The council emphasized that regional organizations need more funding and support for field surveillance, and increased enforcement and regulation. The Okanagan Basin Water Board specifically stressed the need for more funding for inspection stations for contaminated boats, adding that if invasive mussels were introduced to the lakes, they would cause significant damage.

PARKS AND RECREATION

The Committee heard from a number of organizations, including the Shuswap Trail Alliance, the Horse Council BC, the

BC Snowmobile Federation, and Western Canada Mountain Bike Tourism Association, about the need to substantially increase funding for Recreation Sites and Trails BC. They noted that Recreation Sites and Trails BC manages over 2,500 sites or established trails and over 900 unestablished trails across BC with only around 50 permanent staff. They highlighted how recreation trails help generate awareness for the environment and climate change, build relationships with First Nations communities, boost tourism, and improve health and well-being.

The Shuswap Trail Alliance shared that the lack of staff has meant it is difficult to get proper authorization permits to construct, rehabilitate, and maintain trails. Other organizations similarly stressed that many trails are in a state of disrepair due to a lack of funding for maintenance. The Shuswap Trail Alliance and Caledonia Ramblers Hiking Club Trail described how maintenance is an ongoing effort that is largely subsidized by volunteers who fundraise and provide their labour and resources. Some organizations, such as the BC Lodging and Campgrounds Association, the Federation of Mountain Clubs of British Columbia, and the Outdoor Recreation Council of British Columbia, suggested that a parliamentary secretary for outdoor recreation be created to manage BC's outdoor recreation strategy.

RECYCLING AND WASTE

Zero Waste BC advocated for the development of a zero waste-circular economy strategy, noting that BC and Prince Edward Island are the only provinces that do not have a comprehensive zero waste- circular economy strategy. The Food, Health and Consumer Products of Canada suggested that BC fund innovation initiatives that offer whole-of-industry solutions to encourage a circular economy and support the elimination of plastic waste, including investments in new materials, product design, and material processing technologies. The Canadian Beverage Association noted that collaboration between provinces would increase efficiency in developing advanced extended producer responsibility programs, as well as allow for regional harmonization. They also suggested introducing a proactive education and awareness campaign for consumers as a successful extended producer responsibility program ultimately rests on consumer awareness of recycling and recovery avenues.

The Surfrider Foundation Canada expressed concerns about the lack of recycling in BC, noting that only a small portion

of plastics in BC are recycled, as well as coastal waste. They shared that their volunteers have been documenting an ever-increasing amount of plastic, often from fishing and aquaculture industries, accumulating on shores across the province. They suggested the implementation of a specific marine industry extended producer responsibility system to reduce the amount of plastic waste, as well increased monitoring and regulation of industrial pollution, particularly plastic manufacturing, in the commercial fishing and aquaculture industry.

WATER

Many organizations, including Living Lakes Canada, the Okanagan Basin Water Board, the BC Watershed Security Coalition, the Outdoor Recreation Council of British Columbia, the BC Freshwater Legacy Initiative, Lake Windermere Ambassadors, and the Rivershed Society of BC, requested significant investments in a watershed security fund. They shared that climate change is increasing the necessity to monitor water in the province; however, BC currently lacks monitoring capabilities. They stressed that without a proper monitoring system, BC will run out of clean water and have to make hard choices about how to limit its use and where it will be allocated. To illustrate the challenge, Lake Windermere Ambassadors highlighted how the glacier that has been resupplying the Columbia Water Basin will be gone in the next 20 years. The Canadian Freshwater Alliance noted that water management needs to better incorporate local input, especially First Nations, who must have meaningful decision-making authority.

The Okanagan Basin Water Board advocated for specific funding for a review of the Okanagan Lake Regulation System and Operating Plan. They shared that a result of climate change, Okanagan Lake levels fluctuate more than in the past and that the infrastructure and operating plan are no longer adequate. They anticipate that the review will take five years at a cost of \$1 million per year.

The Real Estate Foundation of BC and Watersheds BC suggested extending funding for the Healthy Watersheds Initiative as a bridge while the watershed security strategy and fund finalized. The Real Estate Foundation of BC noted that such an investment will create jobs, boost the local economy, protect drinking water, protect critical salmon habitat, and strengthen relationships with Indigenous partners. Several organizations noted similar benefits related to broader watershed security with respect to increasing the prosperity of communities by improving health,

fostering stronger partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous British Columbians, and protecting local ecology.

The Committee also heard concerns with respect to legislative provisions for sustainable groundwater extraction from aquifers and streams. The Partnership for Water Sustainability in British Columbia shared that the *Water Sustainability Act* requires all new non-domestic wells to obtain a provincial water license prior to use with historic groundwater users grandfathered in by being given until March 1, 2022 to apply for their license. The organization noted that only one in five users has applied to the program, and that there would be significant social and economic costs should these groundwater users, who are mostly farmers, ranchers, and small business owners throughout rural BC, be shutdown.

Ducks Unlimited Canada discussed issues related to dams, noting that one-third of the dams they manage in the province will need significant maintenance in the next decade, a process made more expensive by recent regulations. They explained that without financial assistance, they will have to decommission or naturalize these dams, and as such, recommended new investments in additional water storage and wetland restorations. The BC Cattlemen's Association also recommended funding to update existing dams and an exploration of new water storage methods.

West Coast Environmental Law spoke to the importance of establishing a coastal marine strategy in partnership with Indigenous nations, local communities, and the federal government, as part of a Blueprint for the Coast campaign. They shared that marine and coastal areas are home to diverse and productive ecosystems facing a wide range of challenges including climate change, declines in salmon populations, and a loss of coastal habitat, and that local economies that rely on these ecosystems are struggling as a result. They noted that BC is one of the only coastal jurisdictions in North America that does not have a unified coastal strategy or law that directs its management and ties it together.

CONCLUSIONS

Committee Members strongly emphasized the urgency of addressing climate change and were of the view that significant action with an all-hands-on-deck approach is required. They acknowledged that regional and sectoral differences mean that multiple adaptable, flexible, and appropriate solutions are needed to ensure everyone is enabled and supported to do their part to mitigate climate change. For example, they recognized

that opportunities and options for transitioning to clean energy differ between urban and rural communities. Members also discussed evidence-based incentives to encourage industries to research and implement innovative climate solutions and carbon tax rebates for individuals and businesses adopting emissions reduction measures.

With respect to electric and low-emission vehicles, the Committee noted the broad support for the adoption of these vehicles and were of the view that this is one solution many BC families can adopt that will make a real impact on climate action, and as such, incentives in this regard should continue. Members also acknowledged that a continued shift to electric vehicles requires sufficient investments in electrical grid and charging infrastructure. They noted that individualized renewable electricity solutions such as solar panels may help to meet growing electricity demands. The Committee also identified opportunities to support the conversion of commercial vehicle fleets to low- and zero-emission vehicles.

Committee Members similarly agreed that energy efficiency and building retrofits present another key opportunity for emissions reductions. They noted that retrofitting is an emerging industry and that with proper supports, it can create good paying, skilled jobs and become a robust contributor to BC's post-pandemic economic recovery while at the same time addressing climate goals. The Committee also recognized that improving energy efficiency and retrofitting will require considerations with respect to affordability and localized options, to ensure that incremental changes provide a return in value from an environmental and financial perspective.

As it relates to environmental protection and conservation, the Committee agreed that BC's natural environment is a legacy that needs to be maintained for future generations. Members additionally recognized the interconnectedness of preserving biodiversity as well as the importance of local knowledge to conservation, environmental protection, and fire mitigation. They supported collaborative, science-based solutions and increased funding for conservation and management, as well as a dedicated fund for fish, wildlife, and habitat management.

The Committee expressed significant concern about the state of water security. Members noted that water was long considered a limitless resource, but it is increasingly threatened

by climate change, and further, that the future of water security is vital to health, the environment, and economic growth. They agreed that increased funding is needed for water security and particularly took note of the issues surrounding Okanagan Lake. The Committee also discussed issues with groundwater licensing registration and acknowledged that this needs attention. Members also discussed the importance of updating dam infrastructure, noting that many dams across the province are aging and could lead to significant damage if they fail.

Committee Members also expressed serious concerns about the threat posed by invasive species, agreeing that this is a priority, and noted that issues related to invasive species have been highlighted in previous consultations. They particularly noted the importance of addressing invasive species and noxious weeds in areas that experience wildfires, including examining air seeding in agricultural areas. As such, they were of the view that funding needs to be significantly increased for invasive species prevention, monitoring, regulation, inspection, investigation, and response.

With respect to parks and recreation, the Committee reflected on input describing underfunding and understaffing of parks, recreation, and trails. Members acknowledged the significant uptick in the use of parks and trails during the pandemic as British Columbians strive to be outside, and how this increased use has resulted in undermaintained trails being further eroded due to staffing shortages and an operational reliance on volunteers. They noted that many organizations were asking for modest supports to be able to continue their volunteer trail maintenance programs and were of the view that these organizations should be supported and empowered to be stewards of the land.

Committee Members agreed that waste is a significant issue in the province, noting that British Columbians produce large quantities of garbage. They recognized that as with emissions reductions, recycling is an area where there are significant differences between municipalities. Members agreed that more can be done to simplify recycling by encouraging harmonization of recycling programs across municipalities. The Committee also noted that in addition to recycling, an emphasis on reducing waste and packaging, and reusing products is important.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Climate Change and Clean Energy

43. Urgently address the climate crisis by mobilizing all levers of government and establishing a cross-ministry climate preparedness and adaptation taskforce to implement scientifically-informed solutions developed by and in consultation with Indigenous peoples, local governments, community organizations, and businesses.
44. Ensure BC's climate measures are actionable, adaptable, and flexible to address the needs and circumstances of different industries, communities, and regions, and result in meaningful reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.
45. Continue to incent and invest in clean and renewable energy sources to expediate the transition to a net-zero economy.

Electric and Low-Emission Vehicles

46. Maintain full funding for Clean BC's Go Electric BC Program and carefully examine hydro infrastructure to ensure that BC's electric grid will be able to support the transition to electric vehicles.
47. Support opportunities to convert commercial vehicles to zero- and low-emission fleets, including encouraging research and leveraging opportunities with respect to hydrogen.

Energy Efficiency and Buildings Standards

48. Examine existing incentives, programs, and job training programs, and engage building professionals, to ensure that BC has all the resources necessary to meet the retrofitting targets outlined by CleanBC while also alleviating high energy costs for those most in need.

Environmental Protection and Conservation

49. Better integrate science-based approaches, including local and Indigenous knowledge and practices into conservation, protection and predator management efforts, including wildlife conservation and management and fire mitigation practices.
50. Establish a permanent and sustainable fish, wildlife, and habitat management fund to support conservation activities by government, community organizations, the private sector, and Indigenous peoples.

Invasive Species

51. Significantly increase funding for invasive species prevention, monitoring, regulation, inspection, and mitigation as well as for preventing and responding to invasive species and noxious weeds incursions that arise as a direct result of wildfires and climate change.

Parks and Recreation

52. Provide increased funding for parks, recreation and trails to address gaps in maintenance and staff, including dedicated funding to community-based organizations for trail maintenance and development.

Recycling and Waste

53. Explore opportunities to establish a comprehensive province-wide waste management program that focuses on increased public awareness, local recycling of plastic and aluminum materials, and reducing waste, including mandating recycled content standards for all plastic products and packaging.

Water

54. Increase funding for watershed security to advance maintenance, conservation, and protection of BC's watersheds.
55. Update and modernize dams to meet safety standards and explore new ways to store water, such as small dams on tributaries.
56. Provide \$1 million per year over five years for the review of the Okanagan Lake Regulation System and Operating Plan.

FISCAL AND REGULATORY POLICY

BUDGETARY AND TAXATION POLICY

A number of organizations highlighted different approaches and considerations with respect to overall fiscal policy. Some discussed the importance of reducing debt and returning to balanced budgets. The Chartered Professional Accountants of British Columbia noted that BC's debt as a percentage of GDP is expected to reach 27 percent over the next three years. While BC's credit ratings remain relatively strong, they expressed concerns that recent downgrades will put upward pressure on debt servicing costs and recommended creating a costed plan to return to balanced budgets in the medium term. The Business Council of BC pointed out that government's First Quarterly report projected a smaller deficit due to economic recovery and stronger than expected growth, and was of the view that balancing the budget in the nearer term is attainable with prudent fiscal management. In Question 2 of the survey, respondents were asked about views regarding a return to balance; 55 percent selected returning to balance over the long-term with minimal cuts, 33 percent selected returning to balance over the medium-term, and 12 percent selected returning to balance quickly.

Canadian Union of Public Employees British Columbia encouraged the use of a progressive lens when analyzing the current structure. They explained that a better system of progressive taxation can provide the resources necessary to enact social spending essential to economic and social recovery. MoveUP and the Living Wages for Families Campaign also advocated for a more progressive tax system to address inequity. Both organizations described how the pandemic has exacerbated inequity with MoveUP highlighting that revenue derived from a more progressive system can be directed to income supports, anti-racism, and reconciliation. The BC Teachers' Federation also referenced the disproportionate impact of the pandemic in advocating for a just recovery guided by intersectional, gender, equity, and social justice lenses.

The Committee also heard about a need to increase overall public spending to address urgent social needs. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives stated that long-term, planned

levels of public spending are too low to address challenges such as scarce and unaffordable housing, unaffordable childcare, poverty, and the opioid crisis. They noted that BC's level of taxation is lower compared to other provinces, and as such, there is room to raise taxes to increase public spending while remaining competitive.

Several organizations discussed the need to reduce the tax and regulatory burden on businesses. The BC Chamber of Commerce highlighted how the pandemic has taken an emotional and financial toll on businesses and their employees, and how it will take time for business revenues to return to pre-pandemic levels; however, tax burdens have returned to pre-pandemic levels. They were of the view that inclusivity, innovation, and competitiveness should be the top priorities to ensure a sustainable economy - one that is environmentally sustainable, healthy, balanced, fair, creates good-paying jobs, enables businesses, and attracts investors. They also recommended establishing an independent prosperity and productivity commission to ensure policy and regulatory provisions are viewed through a productivity and prosperity lens and to advise on reforms that could increase productivity and wages.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business similarly urged continued commitment to lowering the regulatory burden on small businesses, emphasizing that red tap reduction remains a low cost and efficient way to support small businesses. The Chartered Professional Accountants of British Columbia also identified the regulatory environment as an impediment to growth and productivity, and suggested tax modernization and reform, including continued efforts on improving tax administration, accessibility, and information sharing. Reforming BC's finance, budget and tax structure to support and encourage economic activity was also supported by the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade.

CO-OPERATIVES

The BC Co-op Association recommended provincial support for building capacity and scaling co-op development partnerships.

They noted that co-ops have traditionally been market leaders in the adoption of green and alternative energy sources, equitable workplaces, and fair and ethical business practices, and that making BC the most co-op friendly jurisdiction in Canada would stimulate the local co-operative sector and help raise the profile of BC as a good place to live and invest. Further, they indicated that investments to build capacity in the co-op sector would accelerate equitable development by: creating meaningful employment opportunities for youth and precarious workers; promoting business succession through transition to co-operative ownership; increasing the competitiveness of small businesses and farming operations; supporting community control of resource assets; creating vehicles for local communities to invest in local enterprises; reducing living costs and environmental impact; and building green energy infrastructure.

COVID-19 MEASURES AND RECOVERY

The Committee heard how the pandemic continues to have a significant impact on many areas of the economy. The Retail Council of Canada shared that the retail sector has been particularly hit hard, pointing to the number of businesses that are highly dependent on tourism; however, many were not eligible for COVID-related programs. They recommended providing refundable tax credits to support recovery. The Kelowna Chamber of Commerce similarly urged targeted support for those impacted most by the pandemic, including restaurants, pubs, the service sector, tourism, and aviation. They explained that many local businesses are continuing to operate on a reduced basis, with reduced staff, reduced income, and reduced customers due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They further emphasized that small- and medium-sized businesses need tax relief and urged support for worker support programs. Other organizations, including the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade and the British Columbia Trucking Association, encouraged continuation and renewal of various provincial recovery and support programs such as the Small and Medium Sized Business Recovery Grant, the Major Anchor Attractions Programs, and the Launch Online Grant.

In Question 4 of the survey, respondents were asked about how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected financial well-being. Forty-seven (47 percent) selected significantly or somewhat while 51 percent selected not much or not at all.

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

A couple of submissions discussed challenges with the local government financial system and infrastructure investments. The City of Vancouver stated that municipalities have been faced with expanded mandates such as affordable housing, child care, overdose crisis response, and climate change, as well as a widening infrastructure deficit and increased public expectations. They suggested moving forward with recommendations from a Union of BC Municipalities policy paper *Ensuring Local Government Financial Resiliency: Today's Recovery and Tomorrow's New Economy* to improve the financial system. Canadian Union of Public Employees British Columbia recommended investigating progressive models of taxation and revenue generation for municipalities to support service delivery and infrastructure needs in municipalities.

With respect to infrastructure, Metro Vancouver described a need to expand core utility services and regional services to respond to new growth. They also shared that existing critical infrastructure needs to be maintained and replaced to meet current and future service needs and to be resilient to the effects of climate change and natural disasters, including impacts from severe weather events and flooding, wildfires, power failures, and seismic events. They recommended predictable, equitable cost-sharing with local governments on critical infrastructure projects, highlighting that provincial funding for infrastructure that prioritizes emissions reductions and resiliency is particularly essential as green infrastructure projects represent an immediate opportunity to achieve shared goals. Canadian Union of Public Employees British Columbia also advocated for increased funding to address infrastructure deficits and climate resiliency.

PROMPT PAYMENT

The BC Construction Association urged the introduction of prompt payment legislation, stressing that a lack of prompt payment costs government in excess of \$3 billion per year. They explained that most businesses in BC's construction industry employ fewer than 20 workers and that too often construction contractors are not being paid for the work that they do. As a result, small businesses end up carrying loans, credit card debt, second mortgages, and lines of credit when they do not receive timely payment for their work. They explained that prompt payment legislation is a meaningful tool to help ensure that

the billions of dollars spent on publicly-funded infrastructure projects make it to the tradespeople and the small contractors who have earned it.

SPECIFIC TAXATION MEASURES

The Committee received a number of submissions describing issues with a range of specific taxation measures. With respect to commercial property taxes, many organizations focused on challenges resulting from assessment categories and development potential, with several boards of trade and business organizations supporting changes to address the issue. The Heights Merchants Association, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, and the Building Owners and Managers Association of BC described how commercial property taxes are unsustainably high due to properties being assessed based on the highest and best use rather than current use. They recommended creating a property sub-class, such as a split-assessment category, for the development potential portion of commercial properties at a lower rate. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business also recommended extending provincial school tax relief in the short-term and addressing how the tax is distributed. They explained that the school tax is a significant portion of the overall tax bill for business owners and that the relief provided during the pandemic has been much appreciated. The BC Humanist Association recommended repealing the statutory property tax exemptions for places of public worship, noting that these exemptions are a special privilege that are not extended to non-religious and secular organizations and that ending these exemptions would allow municipalities to provide direct property tax relief for homeowners and small business owners.

The Resource Municipalities Coalition discussed issues related to PST compliance by non-resident entities. They shared that BC-based companies experience difficulty competing with companies based in Alberta and other provinces, largely because non-resident companies are not complying with BC tax laws for the payment of PST. They noted that not-resident companies may be unaware of PST obligations or may be choosing to not comply with reporting and payment obligations. They were of the view that amendments to legislation, increased awareness and education, increased public reporting, and increased monitoring and compliance could reduce the incidence of non-compliance. The Retail Council of Canada also supported enhanced collection of PST as well as eco-fees from non-resident companies selling in BC. The council focused on

e-commerce which has increased substantially over the last year and largely benefited companies who may be located outside BC and Canada. In addition to not charging or remitting PST, they pointed out that these companies often pay no eco-fees, yet the packaging for their shipments and products, as well as the products themselves at end of life, are discarded into BC's recycling system.

Several submissions also touched on PST exemptions and application. The Business Council of British Columbia urged government to broaden PST exemptions for business investment in machinery and equipment. They shared that providing more widespread exemptions for capital spending on technology and other equipment would reduce the overall tax burden and boost productivity and real wages. They were of the view that government's objective should be to eliminate the PST on business purchases of all inputs and to extend exemptions to all sectors. Teck Resources Limited, the Mining Association of BC, and the Canadian Home Builder's Association of British Columbia similarly recommended removing the PST on additional machinery and equipment in their sectors while the Wine Growers BC and the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade recommended extending the rebate on machinery and equipment. The Chartered Professional Accountants of British Columbia focused on streamlining the structure and administration of the PST with the added consideration that BC should move toward a broad, value-based tax aligned with other jurisdictions.

Several organizations expressed ongoing concerns about the structure of the employer health tax and its impact on businesses with most recommending that the thresholds be amended to exempt more businesses. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business noted that BC's threshold of payroll over \$500,000 is lower than the Ontario model. The Burnaby Board of Trade noted that with increases in minimum wage and inflation, more businesses are in the taxable range. The Canadian Taxpayers Federation reported that small businesses are ensuring they stay under the payroll cap to avoid paying the tax and recommended the tax be cancelled.

The Committee also received varying input with respect to personal and corporate income taxes. Some organizations and individuals recommended increasing these taxes. With respect to the survey results, increasing the corporate income tax was the top selection to Question 3 regarding tools government can use to reduce provincial debt over time. The Health Sciences Association of BC stated that income taxes represent one of

the most progressive taxes available to fund public services. The Chartered Professional Accountants of British Columbia suggested reviewing personal income tax rates to ensure competitiveness with nearby jurisdictions, particularly for industries most susceptible for inter-jurisdictional mobility. The Business Council of British Columbia similarly suggested refraining from further increases in personal income tax rates as these rates are undermining the ability of employers to attract highly skilled individuals for whom top marginal rates matter. The council also recommended graduating the corporate income tax rate between small and large companies. They explained that the large increase from two to 12 percent on business income over \$500,000 is a disincentive to grow and a graduated rate would support firms to scale up.

The Global Automakers of Canada and New Car Dealers Association of BC encouraged a re-examination of the luxury tax. Both organizations shared that the current threshold does not take into consideration the cost of technology, lighter body materials, and safety systems which result in more expensive vehicles, thereby subjecting them to the tax, and also leads to pick up and work trucks being taxed as luxury vehicles. The Global Automakers of Canada particularly emphasized that electric vehicles should be exempt to encourage consumers to choose a lower emitting option when they do not qualify for incentive programs. The New Car Dealers Association of BC also noted that there are ways around this tax such as purchasing vehicles in Alberta which reduces PST revenue.

Two organizations recommended eliminating the insurance premium tax. The Insurance Bureau of Canada and the Canadian Life and Health Association stated that the tax, which is applied to insurance premiums, makes insurance more expensive for families and businesses. The Canadian Life and Health Association explained that the tax causes employers to provide fewer benefits to their employees and drives individual consumers to purchase less protection than they would in the absence of this tax.

TOBACCO AND CANNABIS

Imperial Tobacco Canada Limited advocated for increased enforcement of illegal tobacco. They explained that illegal tobacco is driven by supply and demand dynamics, and that legal tobacco in BC more than five times the cost of illegal tobacco. They noted that illegal tobacco consumes a significant portion of market share and results in lost revenue for government and that reports from law enforcement and other agencies link

illegal tobacco to other criminal activities. The company also requested that the provincial government work with the federal government on vaping regulations and costs to ensure vaping remains an affordable and accessible alternative for smokers.

Canopy Growth Corporation recommended reviewing and repealing the application of the vapour product tax on cannabis products. They explained that legal cannabis vaping products are restricted to age-gated stores and that when the added taxes and costs are calculated, cannabis vaping products are taxed at a greater rate than nicotine vaping products; the company was of the view that this will lead to consumers purchasing unregulated, lower-priced products. They additionally noted that BC is the only jurisdiction to not exempt cannabis vaping products from the PST.

CONCLUSIONS

The Committee reflected on the significant barriers, gaps, and inequities exposed by the pandemic, as well as challenges with the increasing cost of living and inflation. Members acknowledged there are many areas of priority and critical issues that require up front public investment, and that taxation policies need to be examined from multiple lenses, including reconciliation, climate change, innovation, equity, and quality of life. They agreed that a thoughtful approach to fiscal policy is needed which recognizes how social spending and a competitive business and investment environment feed into one another. Committee Members also recognized that confidence in government's finances and deficit management is critical to enabling social and capital investments, and that a costed plan to return to a balanced budget is required within the context of continuing to respond to the impacts of the pandemic, as well as an exploration of alternatives to taxation for funding.

As it relates specifically to pandemic recovery, Committee Members appreciated that there are many businesses and individuals in need of supports. They agreed that some measures, such as the Small and Medium Sized Business Recovery Grant and the Major Anchor Attractions Programs, may need to continue or need to be adapted with specific consideration to the needs of businesses who did not qualify for previous supports as well as new businesses that have opened up since the pandemic started. The Committee was also of the view that the effectiveness of pandemic recovery support programs need to be evaluated with a view to ensuring that they are providing the intended support needed to businesses; this will require

ongoing monitoring and adjustment of support programs as necessary.

With respect to specific taxation measures and potential changes, Members discussed the need to examine these with a view to ensuring fairness, spurring economic development and innovation, and ensuring competitiveness and comparative advantage. They acknowledged that assessing property values based on development potential is negatively impacting small businesses and addressing it by re-evaluating commercial property assessment categories is a matter of fairness. The Committee also recommended examining non-compliance in the collection and remittance of PST to ensure a level playing field for BC-based businesses.

As it relates to the employer health tax, Members discussed how the tax has been in place for some time and that it may be time to examine what adjustments, if any, may be needed, particularly with respect to the thresholds. The Committee also

supported a review of the luxury tax, noting that the current structure makes assumptions about what constitutes a luxury item based on price when an alternative approach may be more appropriate for making this determination.

The Committee was additionally interested in a graduation of the corporate income tax from the small business tax rate to the large corporation rate as a means of supporting small businesses to grow. Members also recognized prompt payment as a significant challenge for subcontractors, noting how this has also been an issue with respect to wildfires and delivery equipment. Accordingly, they urged the introduction of prompt payment legislation.

Committee Members also discussed the need to increase enforcement efforts against illegal tobacco and cannabis. They noted that contraband products impact provincial revenues and do not help with achieving goals related to reducing smoking.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Budgetary and Taxation Policy

57. Ensure BC's budgetary and taxation framework enables proactive public spending to address urgent challenges, supports a healthy and sustainable economy, enables competitiveness and innovation, and supports equality while ensuring confidence in the province's finances.

Co-operatives

58. Support the co-operative sector by investing in capacity-building and scaling of existing co-operatives and investing in the development of new co-operatives and community-based enterprises.

COVID-19 Recovery and Measures

59. Evaluate and adapt pandemic-related supports for individuals and small- and medium-sized businesses to ensure they are responsive to need, and support short- and long-term recovery.

Prompt Payment

60. Prioritize the introduction of prompt payment legislation.

Specific Taxation Measures

61. Re-evaluate commercial property assessment categories with a view to alleviating the impact of development potential on property assessments and associated taxation.
62. Examine and address non-compliance in the collection and remittance of PST by non-resident companies.

63. Evaluate and review opportunities to adjust the employer health tax thresholds.
64. Examine graduating the corporate income tax rate between small and large companies.
65. Review the luxury tax structure, thresholds, and policies to ensure it applies only to luxury items.

Tobacco and Cannabis

66. Ensure robust enforcement of illegal tobacco and cannabis.

CHRONIC DISEASES AND COMPLEX CONDITIONS

The Committee heard from a number of organizations with respect to the need to invest in supports and services for British Columbians living with chronic diseases and complex conditions. The Arthritis Society advocated for improving access to arthritis care and treatment, including reducing wait times for joint placements. They noted that wait times lead to unnecessary pain and suffering and that it is vital that a range of treatment options be available as individuals with arthritis respond differently to different treatments.

The Cridge Centre for the Family requested funding for specialized services for women with brain injury. They referenced research showing that 90 percent of victims of intimate partner violence are living with a brain injury resulting from violence, and that there is a need for improved screening and training for professionals in recognizing brain injury from intimate partner violence.

The Committee also received submissions related to diabetes. Abbott Laboratories Diabetes Care specifically advocated for coverage of FreeStyle Libre which eliminates the need for needle pokes and enables individuals to test frequently and anywhere. Diabetes Canada emphasized the complexity of the disease and how management plans should be individualized to address need. They shared that better coverage and access to various insulin pumps and drugs can reduce financial burden and enhance individual choice thereby allowing for better maintenance and control of glycemic control. They also discussed the need for a comprehensive diabetes strategy to alleviate the burden of diabetes on individuals, communities, and the health system. The BC Lung Association recommended the implementation of a comprehensive provincial lung health strategy, noting the need to address issues such as vaping, long COVID-19, and infectious diseases such as the flu.

Down Syndrome Society of British Columbia requested the creation of a Down syndrome funding program to provide

individualized direct funding to every British Columbian with Down syndrome to spend on registered therapy providers. They explained that all persons with Down syndrome will need and benefit from the support of occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech language pathology services; however, access is limited and inconsistent through the province. They shared that individualized direct funding results in more effective and better-quality services.

The BC Lymphedema Association recommended providing diagnostic services and initial basic care for individuals with lymphatic disorders as well as funding for compression garments. They shared that individuals with lymphedema must currently pay for private specialized therapy and education, and that many are on a limited income and cannot afford treatment or the necessary compression garments. They noted that general practitioners do not often have the necessary training to differentiate lymphatic disorders from other forms of chronic edema, and that specialized outpatient clinics in each health authority could generate substantial cost savings to the health care system by providing early intervention, thereby reducing emergency-room visits and lengthy hospital stays.

Several organizations made submissions related to investments in cancer prevention, diagnosis, and treatment. The Canadian Cancer Society stated that not enough investment is going toward preventing cancer, and supporting those with cancer and those who survive. Noting that four in 10 cancers are preventable, they were of the view that cancer prevention should be a key component in BC's cancer plan. They also specifically recommended coverage for the prostate-specific antigen test for asymptomatic individuals, when ordered by a physician. The society explained that BC lags behind most other provinces in early detection of prostate cancer and providing coverage removes an important financial barrier for detecting it in its early stages. The British Columbia Dental Association discussed oral cancer and how patients in remote areas are often required to travel to Vancouver for diagnosis; as such, they recommended the introduction of a remote oral screening

program to expedite the triage of potential oral cancer patients in remote areas. Dense Breasts Canada advocated for better tools and clinician training to screen for cancer in dense breasts. They explained that dense breast tissue masks the appearance of tumors visible from a mammogram and can result in late diagnoses. They shared that adding ultrasounds to mammograms can help with detection; however, women are unable to get ultrasounds in a timely manner as there is only one clinic in the Lower Mainland offering them. They noted that the automated breast ultrasound is better suited for dense breast tissue, and that a mammogram and ultrasound could be done in one appointment, and recommended that this machine be available in every hospital and clinic that has a mammogram, along with appropriate training for technicians.

The Myalgic Encephalomyelitis and Fibromyalgia Society of BC described issues with supports and services for individuals with myalgic encephalomyelitis, including challenges with getting a diagnosis, a lack of awareness among physicians and primary clinicians about the condition, and gaps in clinical care resources. They suggested developing a Medical Services Plan billing code for myalgic encephalomyelitis to enable diagnosis and treatment, as well as myalgic encephalomyelitis-specific continuing medical education credits.

COMMUNITY CARE AND SENIORS

The Committee heard from a number of organizations about issues and concerns related to long-term care, assisted living, and home care. The Hospital Employees' Union made several recommendations to improve the regulation of care facilities, including implementing accountability measures, standardizing reporting, and establishing staff to client ratios, along with inspection and enforcement. They also suggested conducting a review of long-term care in partnership with key stakeholders, and health policy and residential care experts. Specific to labour standards, such as working conditions, care levels and compensation, the union highlighted the critical importance of wage levelling and single-site staffing introduced at the onset of the pandemic. They noted that the wage discrepancy between long-term care employers can vary by more than eight dollars per hour for the same work which is a contributing factor to frequent staff turnover and employment at multiple facilities. CanAge and the Society for the Protection and Care of Seniors also highlighted the need to improve staff retention and continuity of care, and pointed to equal compensation and staff standards across private and public care facilities as ways to address these issues. Referencing a 2009 Ombudsperson

recommendation and a 2020 recommendation from the Office of the Seniors Advocate, the Family Councils of BC Steering Committee discussed the importance of including the voice of long-term care residents and families in provincial decisions and recommended establishing an advisory council on long-term care.

Other organizations advocated for increased accountability and requested video surveillance of common areas to enable families to learn how accidents occur and how they could be prevented, monthly unannounced inspections of care facilities, and mandated health and safety regulations, including air quality and a maximum temperature limit. Several references were made to the care hours per patient, with BC averaging 3.36 hours of direct care per day (an increase from 3.11 in 2017), while standards in the United States dictate four hours as the minimum daily requirement; the BC Care Providers Association estimated that increasing daily care to four hours would require an investment of \$650 million over three years.

The BC Care Providers Association made additional recommendations with the aim of improving safety and care quality, and addressing workforce shortages, including: funding for culturally appropriate care training, education and menu design; funding for equipment such as lifts, beds, urgent-response systems and infection control systems through the EquipCare BC program; and funding to streamline education and certification processes for internationally educated health care professionals. They also discussed the rising demand and unmet need for long-term care spaces, and urged investment in the building and operation of 5,000 new long-term care beds by 2027, as well as a refundable tax credit for seniors to offset the costs of family-directed home care or independent living spaces. Several senior service organizations shared similar concerns about the need for additional spaces, protective equipment, and staff. To illustrate the challenge, one Vancouver Island resident described how seniors are often being cared for in acute care settings as a result of a shortage of long-term care spaces and how this practice contributes to hospital overcrowding with patients routinely being cared for in corridors and lounge areas.

The Hospital Employees' Union encouraged efforts with respect to returning contracted services to the public sector, including ending subcontracting of care and support services by long-term care and assisted living operators. They also discussed for-profit providers in seniors care and referred to a 2020 report of the Office of the Seniors Advocate which found that for-profit providers did not deliver over 200,000 direct care hours. The

Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations and the BC General Services Employees' Union advocated for removing profit from long-term care ownership and bringing seniors care under public management and ownership. The Hospital Employees' Union was of the view that public management provides for safer, more consistent, and stable care. The Victoria Community Health Co-operative suggested multi-stakeholder co-ops with board oversight could provide efficient and holistic care services within care facilities and through community home care.

A number of submissions discussed opportunities to better support seniors to age in place and reduce the demand for long-term care, such as HomeShare projects, co-housing, and low-income or affordable seniors' housing coupled with increased community-level support. The Seniors Advocate reported that 40 percent of all seniors admitted to long-term care could live at home or in assisted living with greater support; however, the current system incents a move to long-term care due to cost. The advocate explained that the home support co-payment is too expensive for many as an individual with an annual income of \$28,000 would need to pay \$8,000 or 30 percent of their income to receive one home care visit per day while long-term care is more heavily subsidized at greater cost to government. Several other organizations, such as the Society for the Protection and Care of Seniors, described a general need to improve the availability, hours, and scope of home care services.

The Alzheimer's Society of BC highlighted that there is no provincial standard for dementia care training and that many workers in long-term or assisted care settings may not have any dementia training. The society noted dementia can increase the risk of staff injury and requested \$396,000 over three years to deliver education to care workers, as well as a continuation of funding for programs and services for people living with dementia.

Several organizations highlighted opportunities to improve community programs and supports. The 411 Seniors Society recommended core, sustainable funding for community-based non-profit seniors' centres. They highlighted their work in assisting seniors with access to information, programs, and services, and how the digital shift disadvantages many seniors. Chilliwack Healthier Community discussed how isolation and loneliness puts seniors at risk of increasing morbidity and earlier mortality, and stressed the importance of access to social activities to support mental and physical health in seniors. They pointed to door-to-door transportation as a means of increasing mobility to facilitate social connection. The Victoria

Community Health Co-operative suggested supporting active seniors by creating a tax credit for volunteer work and by encouraging young people to provide intergenerational tech-training to seniors. Concerns were also raised about elder abuse and neglect, with CanAge reporting that the financial constraints, isolation, and confinement during the pandemic have contributed to a rise in incidents.

HEALTH HUMAN RESOURCES

The Committee received a range of submissions describing capacity challenges across health professions. The Kamloops Chamber of Commerce reported a waitlist of 30,000 patients in need of a family doctor in a catchment area of 120,000. They estimated one in five emergency room visits were for non-urgent, non-emergency issues that could likely have been addressed by a family doctor or primary care provider and estimated that government could save \$127 million annually by redirecting people from emergency rooms. The chamber explained that the inability to access primary care and a family doctor has impeded new businesses from starting and impacted the availability of labour supply.

The Health Sciences Association of BC reported that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought BC to a tipping point of staff shortages, citing heavy workload and burnout, lower wages compared to other provinces, limited provincial post-secondary training capacity, and a lack of private-practice and public sector leadership opportunities as core recruitment and retention challenges. Among acute public sector shortages, the association reported challenges with filling the demand for therapists, diagnostic medical sonographers, medical laboratory technologists, and medical imaging technologists.

For rural and remote areas, physician recruitment and access to screening services, including medical radiation imaging, ultrasound, and computerized tomography (CT) scans, continue to be primary challenges impeding access to health services. Submissions from the Kootenays, Thompson-Nicola, and Northern regions recommended providing incentives to health professionals to practice in rural areas. Examples included: student loan forgiveness; recruitment bonuses; part-time opportunities; increased local post-secondary training opportunities; improved recognition of credentials for internationally trained professionals; and better access to permanent residency for health care aides through the Provincial Nominee Program. Additionally, the Midwives Association of BC recommended expanding midwifery to meet

increasing demand, reduce pressure on hospital resources and help expectant parents in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities avoid long travel to give birth.

The Resource Municipalities Coalition detailed several concerns with respect to retention challenges within the Northern Health Authority. The coalition explained that registered nurses and nurse practitioners are relied upon to practice as 'expert-generalists', which requires a broader skill set than their urban counterparts. Nurses are also working beyond their set hours to keep up with increased workloads, leading to burnout, mental health issues, and possible departure from the profession. They recommended improving access to rural and remote education, and working with Northern Health to address recruitment and retention challenges.

Several submissions focused on opportunities to improve access to care by fully leveraging the talents and expertise of nurses and nurse practitioners. The Kamloops Chamber of Commerce recommended expanding the Medical Services Plan billing code to reflect services within the current scope of practice of nurses and nurse practitioners while the Resource Municipalities Coalition suggested developing structures and policy to optimize nurses' use of technology in the consultation, delivery, and referral practices of rural and remote nurses. The Victoria Community Health Co-operative advocated for an expansion of the scope of practice of registered nurses to order referrals, tests, and medication refills, as well as a general expansion of the role of nurse practitioners.

The Canadian Association of Physician Assistants stated that BC lags behind other provinces and countries by not integrating physician assistants into the health system. They explained that physician assistants have a broad scope of practice, including assisting with emergency services, women's health, mental health, and chronic disease management. They further noted that military physician assistants are already working in BC under federal jurisdiction. The association recommended regulating the profession through the College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia, developing an education program through the University of British Columbia, and providing funding to health authorities to hire 50 physician assistants over the next three years.

The BC Pharmacy Association and Neighbourhood Pharmacy Association of Canada identified opportunities to expand the role of pharmacists to help create capacity in the health care system and improve quality of care. Both organizations

recommended expanding the role of pharmacists to prescribe medications for select ailments as well as examining how pharmacists can assist with managing the opioid crisis. The Neighbourhood Pharmacy Association of Canada also noted that community pharmacies could play an expanded role in the provincial immunization strategy beyond the annual influenza program.

The BC Anesthesiologists Society recommended maximizing the use of rural surgical sites to assist with health system capacity. They brought attention to a survey of rural sites that found 16 BC public hospitals are underutilizing daytime operating rooms; the society estimated that fully utilizing this space could add an average of 444 surgical hours per week, allowing for thousands of additional surgeries. They reported that family-practice anesthesiologists are staffed at these sites and are equipped to contribute to surgical capacity.

With respect to other health professions, the Committee heard requests to exponentially expand the number of post-secondary seats and training programs for speech pathology, physiotherapy, and geriatric psychology. The Canadian Society for Disability and Oral Health highlighted a need to better train dental professionals on how to treat adults with developmental disabilities under general anesthesia. The British Columbia Dental Association advocated for providing PharmaNet access to dentists so dentists can verify a patient's drug history. The Committee also heard concerns from the Society for the Protection and Care of Seniors about community blood collection services. The organization cited a gap with doctors' requisitions not feeding directly into laboratory systems as well as restrictive 'home bound' criteria for blood collection services as inefficiencies within the health system.

HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE

Victoria Hospice noted that by 2031, almost one in four people in BC will be over the age of 65, and that this shift will result in new and increased demands on palliative and end of life care programs and services. They shared that BC has more than 66 not-for-profit hospice societies that provide care to adults, youth, and children affected by life-threatening illnesses; however, there are no provincial standards or accreditation for hospice care. In addition, there is a lack of common terminology, few opportunities for consistent data collection, and little clarity around what client outcomes best indicate the successful provision of hospice care. They recommended developing

provincial standards and establishing an accreditation program for hospice care.

The BC Hospice and Palliative Care Association recommended the establishment of a provincial database for hospices for metrics and reporting capabilities to identify referral pathways, and gaps and barriers to access to improve support for people receiving palliative care and their families and care providers. They additionally highlighted gaps in the provision of grief and bereavement programs and education. They explained that on average, one death directly impacts nine people, amounting to nearly 16,000 British Columbians experiencing bereavement from COVID-19 deaths alone as of July 2021. The Vancouver Island Federation of Hospices described how sudden deaths such as drug poisoning, suicide, and homicide can socially isolate those grieving, leading to unhealthy coping mechanisms, challenges to mental health and well-being, or increased use of the health care system. Both organizations made recommendations to improve funding, supports, and services for grief and bereavement programs.

Unique to pediatric palliative care, Canuck Place Children's Hospice requested funding to continue their 24-7 specialized care for newborn children and youth up to 19 years of age. They described the spectrum of services they offer, from pain and symptom management to medical respite, at two hospice facilities as well as through home, hospital, and community care programs across the province. Over the past five years, the organization recorded a 34 percent increase in the number of children and families accessing their programs. As the provincial contribution to its operations is fixed, Canuck Place is reliant on donors to meet changes in demand.

MEDICAL COVERAGE AND SERVICES

Several organizations submitted recommendations to expand the scope of medical coverage for medically required aids and prostheses and to include a greater range of prevention, rehabilitation, psychology, chiropractic, and dental services. Citing prohibitive cost barriers, organizations reported that many British Columbians do not receive the care they need, which leads to escalating health conditions or complications. The Prosthetic and Orthotics Association of British Columbia outlined that BC is the only province that does not fund orthotic devices for adults with physical impairments and estimated that 45,000 BC residents require prosthetic and orthotic care each year. Of prosthetics that are covered, the association recommended an increase to the limit for emergency device

repairs and asked for the coverage limit to be set per limb, rather than per person, to enable individuals with multiple prostheses to receive equitable support.

Eyeglasses, hearing aids, and mobility-assistive devices were also identified as items unattainable by people without extended coverage, particularly seniors. As a mitigation effort, the 411 Seniors Centre Society has facilitated referrals to businesses that offer low cost or refurbished items; however, they reported that the system is inconsistent and fails to meet need. Speech and Hearing BC stated that ten percent of British Columbians experience some form of hearing loss and very few seek assistance as hearing aids are not covered under the Medical Services Plan. The organization also reported that the lack of coverage for rehabilitation contributes to many British Columbians not receiving treatment for communication and swallowing disorders.

The BC Chiropractic Association proposed that chiropractors could play a greater role in rehabilitation through spine, muscle, and joint pain management. They recommended increasing coverage of the Medical Services Plan supplementary benefits program as well as integrating chiropractors into primary care to help reduce reliance on opioid use for pain management, citing the effectiveness evaluated in initial community programs. Other rehabilitation recommendations related to establishing provincial post-stroke spasticity standards and referrals, and expanding rehabilitation capacity and infrastructure at hospitals and outpatient care.

Dyslexia BC requested coverage of psychology services through the Medical Services Plan to enable accessible diagnoses for dyslexia and other learning disabilities. Several organizations supporting poverty reduction recommended incorporating psychologists into the Medical Services Plan program and allocating a set number of covered appointments per year. The BC Psychological Association recommended integrating psychologists into primary care networks, estimating integration would require an investment of \$18 million over three years. In addition to treating mental health conditions, they shared that primary care psychologists can help patients manage chronic pain and diabetes as well as support patient adherence to medication and long-term healthy behaviours.

Dental coverage was raised by a number of poverty reduction, community service, and seniors' groups. The BC Dental Association reported that the rates for the disability and social assistance dental plan have not been increased in more

than 14 years and that a fee increase could directly improve the sustainability of not-for-profit dental clinics and enable more low-income individuals and families to access dental care. The association also recommended extending coverage to low-income seniors as this would relieve pressure on the public health care system. The BC Federation of Retired Union Members noted that most seniors do not have access to dental care because they do not have employer-provided post retirement extended benefits or they cannot afford the monthly premiums, and that many extended plans do not include dental coverage. Chilliwack Healthier Community described how a lack of coverage results in medical and social costs, including inadequate nutritional intake, development of more serious health conditions, and increased isolation.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Access to mental health services was the fourth most selected option in response to Question 1 in the survey regarding priorities, followed by health care. Several organizations reported an increased demand for mental health services. The Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division reported increases in the number of calls to the crisis line network, particularly for issues related to drug toxicity and suicide ideation, and the BC Psychological Association shared that a significant portion of appointments with primary care physicians are related to behavioral, emotional, or psychological concerns. The BC Psychological Association also described the interconnection between physical and mental health, noting that heightened stress and emotional suffering increases the risk of physical illness.

Several organizations requesting reliable funding to provide low-cost and low-barrier clinics through community counselling. Vancouver Island Integrated Community Counselling and Community Services described community counselling as the third layer of the health system: when an individual is discharged from emergency, community counselling can provide immediate crisis support without a waitlist. The organization explained that only a fraction of community counselling agencies receive provincial support and recommended a review of the existing approach to distribution with a lens to service provider capacity and scope. The Community Connections Society Southeast British Columbia shared that as a result of underfunding, they recently had to close a walk-in counselling clinic that previously provided free and immediate single-session therapy.

The Committee also heard a demand for more extensive mental health services with integrated employment, health, housing, and rehabilitation support. The Realistic Success Recovery Society described how people experiencing homelessness often have serious and complex health challenges, including mental health conditions, substance use disorders, chronic medical conditions such as diabetes and hypertension, and communicable diseases, including HIV, AIDS, Hepatitis C, and tuberculosis. The society indicated that it can be a challenge to discern symptoms of mental health disorders and substance use disorders and advocated for free psychological assessments following a period of sobriety. They also identified the cost of long-term psychiatric facilities as prohibitive to vulnerable populations in dire need of extensive support. Our Place Society shared that individuals who are the most unwell and vulnerable, and require significant complex care, may require a period of involuntary care to effect stability, health, and informed self-determination and to help these individuals with accepting or maintaining housing support.

Specific to substance use and addictions recovery, there were multiple recommendations to increase investment in recovery programs as well as funding requests for specific programs in every region of the province. A common theme among these requests was that current facilities are at capacity and in need of funding to ensure stability and meet demand.

The Committee also received recommendations for services specific to children, youth, parents, women, caregivers, health care providers, and immigrants and refugees. The YMCAs of British Columbia shared details about their programs and requested funding to expand services. Other submissions requested creating mental health supports for children and youth with disability and accessibility needs, increasing the number of youth care beds, and continuing to fund child development centres to enable access to early-years mental health support. The Parent Support Services Society of BC requested support for parents and caregivers of children and youth with mental illness to enable the development of healthy coping skills. Our Place Society identified there are no women's substance recovery programs on Vancouver Island, and Canadian Union of Public Employees British Columbia shared that stand-alone facilities dedicated to transgender women and non-binary persons can increase chances of successful addiction recovery. The Committee also heard requests to increase available mental health services for health care workers to address a recent increase in mental health related benefit claims. The Vancouver

Island Counselling Centre for Immigrants and Refugees brought attention to the unique mental health needs of immigrants and refugees including language barriers and trauma, including imprisonment and torture. The centre reported receiving referrals from across BC noting that language barriers prevent many smaller towns and cities from providing local support.

Noting the complexities of mental health and symptoms of substance use, the Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division recommended establishing mental health crisis response teams, call centres, and stabilization centres to provide a safe space for recovery and service access. The association reinforced that neither the criminal justice system or acute-care emergency settings were designed to appropriately address mental health crises and was of the view that specific stabilization centres and response teams could provide more appropriate care and divert emergency visits. Related to this harm reduction approach, several other organizations supported the provision of a safe supply of drugs, testing facilities, and safe injection sites.

PHARMACEUTICALS

Submissions relating to pharmaceuticals provided varying recommendations on how to achieve affordability. Some recommended greater coverage of prescription costs for individuals, while others supported the approach collaborating with the pharmaceutical industry or provincial and federal governments on bulk pharmaceutical pricing. The Living Wage for Families Campaign provided context for affordability, citing the findings of a national cross-sectional study which found one in five people did not take their prescribed medications because of prohibitive costs.

Among general requests to improve affordability for individuals, there was a specific request to remove the PST on the sale of medical cannabis. Medical Cannabis Canada and the Arthritis Society reported that the cost of medical cannabis can be prohibitive for patients using cannabis for pain and joint management.

Merck Canada and Innovative Medicines Canada recommended the provincial government intervene with respect to the federal government's regulatory changes of the patented medicines prices review board. Innovative Medicines Canada was of the view that the federal regulatory changes risk stifling innovation, hindering research opportunities, and limit early access to new medicines and vaccines while Merck Canada expressed concern

about early market access for new medicines. Innovative Medicines Canada encouraged continued collaboration with industry on health policies in the interest of improving access to innovative medicines and treatments.

PUBLIC HEALTH

The Public Health Association of BC recommended improving public health data collection, investing in system capacity, and applying a public health lens to all policies to support improved population health. They estimated that public health currently accounts for only three percent of current health care spending and recommended increasing the amount to six percent, noting that every additional dollar of investment could recover 30 dollars of productivity and social costs. Additionally, the association highlighted new public health challenges created by the pandemic, including: unprecedented levels of antagonism and underutilization of public health expertise which has impacted professional performance and morale; increased levels of public binge drinking, cannabis use and a record number of overdose deaths; and service disruptions which have contributed to the deterioration of chronic conditions.

The BC Alliance for Healthy Living Society encouraged funding for the second phase of the provincial physical activity strategy as well as control measures on products such as sugary drinks, vapes and tobacco, and alcohol. They noted that alcohol is a significant risk factor for multiple chronic diseases and that pricing, hours of operation, and locations of sale are directly linked to public health impacts. The society also highlighted the inconsistency of the PST exemption for non-carbonated sugary drinks, stressing that it is not carbonation but the amount of added sugar that is contributing to adverse health outcomes, and recommended that the PST be applied to all sugary drinks. The Canadian Beverage Association disagreed with a taxation approach and instead recommended collaboration with industry to improve education around smart portions and healthy lifestyles.

Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada advocated for measures to address the public health burden caused by tobacco. They explained that tobacco companies have designed new structures and programs such as preferential pricing, loyalty programs, and incentives to reward retailers for promoting products and achieving high sales. Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada, along with the Heart and Stroke Foundation, Canadian Cancer Society, and Public Health Association of BC advocated for measures recommended increasing accountability for producers and

retailers through measures such as: an annual cost recovery fee on tobacco manufacturers based on their share of the provincial market; a producer regulatory fee for tobacco waste; and a fee for provincial tobacco retail authorization permits to recover the public cost of administration and enforcement of tobacco vendors. These organizations, along with the BC Lung Association, also made additional recommendations to invest or direct recovered revenue toward addressing youth vaping, nicotine, and tobacco addiction.

A number of the same organizations highlighted to need to improve the availability of smoke-free housing. Recommendations included: provincial support for tenants and residents unwillingly exposed to smoke in multi-unit buildings; amendments to strata and tenancy legislation to disclose smoking status; incentives for landlords to establish smoke-free housing; funding for public education through BC's smoke-free multi-unit housing website; and continuation of the wood stove exchange program to mitigate high exposure to wood fire smoke.

The BC Women's Health Foundation advocated for a women's health strategy to address inequity. They highlighted the impact the pandemic has had on women and their health, and how women's health is an economic issue. They stated that such a strategy is needed to ensure equal treatment, representation, and access to all health services, and that it should start with a comprehensive sexual and reproductive health framework. AccessBC Campaign for free prescription contraception recommended providing no-cost prescription contraception. They explained that cost is a significant barrier to accessing contraception and that removing this barrier would improve health, social, and economic outcomes for women, parents, and infants. First Call: Child and Youth Advocacy Society supported investments in maternal health and healthy infant development, with an emphasis on support for low-income families.

Another key theme was virus and bacteria transmission. The Committee received recommendations to expand specific vaccine access, enhance infection control and personal protective equipment in health care settings, and explore the use of antimicrobial copper in high-touch settings as a method to limit transmission. Specific vaccine requests included: full coverage for a high dose flu vaccine, pneumonia vaccine and the Shingrix vaccine for seniors; implementation of a catch-up program for children that missed school-based vaccinations within the last two years; and prioritization of a plan to eliminate the Hepatitis C virus by accelerating therapy approvals.

RESEARCH

Genome BC recommended continued support for genomics research, noting that their research projects, technology platforms, and innovation initiatives have contributed to BC's globally competitive life sciences sector. They highlighted that Genome BC funding to the BC Centre for Disease Control contributed to enzyme validation necessary to perform the SARS CoV-2 test (COVID-19), thus helping triple testing capacity during the pandemic. They also highlighted that genomic tools have helped tree breeders understand the types of trees most resistant to heat, drought, and disease for new climates.

TRIUMF discussed their development of laboratories to provide space for pre-clinical and clinical research as well as the development of specialized pharmaceuticals, medical isotopes, and other agents. They explained that one of their objectives is to provide BC with isotope security, develop next-generation cancer therapies and enable clinical trials to improve patient outcomes. They recommended investments to add capacity to BC's health system, increase health systemic resiliency, enable innovation, and create new skills and education opportunities.

The BC Women's Health Foundation noted that improvement in women's health research could have a dramatic effect on Canada's economic recovery efforts, citing a report which claimed up to \$2.6 billion could be saved annually from work productivity if women were able to stay healthy. They emphasized the need for sex and gender to be fully considered in scientific studies, policy, and practices, and recommended funding for women's health research.

RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH CARE

Access to health care in rural and remote BC was a key theme. The Fort Nelson & District Chamber of Commerce explained that access to health care is necessary to attract and retain industry, business, and employees; however, rural residents often have to travel for specialized care, including to birth a baby. They also emphasized a need to improve the provision of emergency transportation to ensure timely access to critical care as well as a need to address the costs of return travel.

Specific to the northern region, the Committee received a recommendation to prioritize upgrading acute care and outpatient services at the University Hospital of Northern BC. The City of Prince George stated that the University Hospital uniquely services half of the geographical area of the province and that the region has higher rates of morbidity and mortality.

The city estimated that the population of the Northern Health Authority will continue to increase, and that by 2040, the proportion of residents aged 70 is expected to increase by 142 percent, further demonstrating the need for regional health service investment.

The BC Schizophrenia Society supported expanding mental health services through technology to rural and remote areas to enable families and individuals to access support and strategies that may not be available in their local communities. The society, as well as Coast Mental Health, noted that some populations and regions are not able to connect with support systems due to a lack of technology infrastructure and tools or a limited understanding of how to effectively use technology. Other digital health recommendations included the continuation of third-party complimentary health services through group insurance benefits and funding the cost of telemedicine consultations.

CONCLUSIONS

The Committee observed that there are many opportunities to improve prevention and early intervention, as well as provide access to better and more appropriate care, across the health continuum. Members emphasized that upfront investments and early intervention improves quality of life while also providing significant returns with respect to preventing complications that require more costly care and intervention down the line.

The value of prevention, early detection, and access to care was evident as the Committee reviewed input related to chronic diseases and complex conditions. Members recognized the value and benefit of the recommendations put forward by many organizations. For example, they noted that funding lymphedema support, especially compression stockings, could allow individuals to manage their lymphedema at home and prevent serious complications such as the development of extreme leg ulcers and amputations. Similarly, they noted that the cost of diabetic supplies can be prohibitive to individuals managing their blood sugar putting them at risk for renal failure and associated complications. The Committee additionally recognized the importance of diagnosis, treatment, and education for conditions such as cancer and myalgic encephalomyelitis. They supported funding for the prostate-specific antigen test for at-risk asymptomatic individuals as well as strategies specific to cancer prevention and lung health. Members were of the view that strategies should encompass public education and promotion of cancer and respiratory risk

factors to improve long-term population health outcomes and fully realize the economic savings from disease prevention.

The Committee also identified expanding coverage for medical aids, prostheses and particular medical services as opportunities to provide preventative and more appropriate care. Members noted that such investments could yield meaningful social savings through improved quality of life and community and workforce participation. Illustrating the social impact, the Committee discussed how a lack of medical aids, prostheses and dental treatment can trigger stigma and prevent people from working, contributing to their community, or caring for themselves and their families. The personal financial cost was also considered with Members referencing the increasing difficulty of dental and joint maintenance with age and how management services or supportive aids can be financially onerous or prohibitive for seniors. Rehabilitation was another service the Committee discussed as not widely available and in need of dedicated facilities.

As a component of medical coverage and accessibility, the Committee noted that the provincial government and federal government have worked together to negotiate pharmaceutical pricing in an effort to lower prescription costs. The Committee recommended prioritizing a comprehensive pharmaceutical plan to improve affordability, accessibility, and safety of prescription medication and innovative medicine for British Columbians.

Further to the theme of preventing, treating, or reducing the impacts of disease and health ailments, Committee Members reflected on COVID-19 related research, and agreed that research is a necessary component of this and that it requires reliable and consistent funding. They also acknowledged the value of investing in prevention measures, such as initiatives designed to encourage physical activity and wellness, as well as opportunities to use taxation to incent healthy behaviour, particularly with respect to tobacco and non-carbonated sugar-sweetened beverages. At the same time, the Committee noted that consideration needs to be given to the potential disproportionate impact of these taxation measures on low-income British Columbians.

With respect to the provision of care, the Committee recognized the shortage of health professionals across disciplines as a significant issue, and as part of a solution, supported efforts by colleges and the health system to better bridge and streamline the credentialing process for internationally trained

health science professionals. Members additionally discussed opportunities to work with advanced education to increase training capacity. The Committee also supported leveraging existing health human resource capacity by dismantling health service silos and enabling health professionals to work collaboratively and to their full scope of practice. As examples, the Committee was interested in ideas such as providing nurse practitioners access to Medical Services Plan billing codes and expanding the role of pharmacists in community-based care as ways to enhance system efficiency and provide British Columbians with timely and personalized health services.

Committee Members discussed integrating additional professionals into primary care networks as another opportunity to improve the health system. Committee Members cited proposals for including psychologists in primary care to better support treatment for mental health and addictions and including chiropractors to assist with chronic pain management to help reduce opioid reliance as examples. With respect to specific logistics-focused recommendations, such as permitting access to BC PharmaNet for dentists and ensuring requisitions feed directly into laboratory information systems for blood collection, the Committee was of the view that these areas and others related to efficiency, should be explored to determine if they could help prevent system errors and ease some of the burden on the health care system.

With respect to community care and seniors, the Committee reflected on how the COVID-19 pandemic illuminated challenges within long-term care, specifically inadequate staffing levels, and issues of care quality and staff safety. Members also discussed health and safety standards, noting the compounding challenge of this year's unprecedented heat wave and the absence of facility air conditioning. Across the continuum of long-term care to home care, the Committee stressed the need to define standards, and significantly improve oversight and accountability through measures such as unannounced inspections, to ensure reliable services, adequate staffing, quality care, staff safety, client hygiene, and nutrition. Members additionally highlighted that diversity needs to be better reflected in long-term care options, particularly with respect to cultural food and staff understanding customs. They also acknowledged a need for more housing and care options for seniors, and more long-term care and assisted living spaces to reduce the number of seniors in acute care settings or living without appropriate care. Home support also needs to be strengthened to improve reliability, enable seniors to age in place, and prevent premature admission to long-term care.

The Committee was also impressed with innovative dementia programs developed by local groups, such as sensory stimulation rooms, to help expand the vocabulary and communication of those living with dementia.

Committee Members acknowledged that mental health continues to be a health concern. Recognizing the range of diverse mental health needs and waitlists for services across all age groups, the Committee voiced support for a comprehensive long-term plan to address the full spectrum of mental health and addiction-related challenges. The Committee noted that serious mental illness and active addiction can interfere with consent and cooperation with treatment services, posing challenges for community-based social and health services and resulting in some individuals not getting the critical care they need. Committee Members were of the view that investments in this area and across the full spectrum of mental health and addictions care are needed and maintained that early intervention to prevent escalation benefits society as a whole and is also cost-efficient.

Recognizing grief as a component of mental health, Committee Members agreed on the need to increase support for bereavement services as well as fully integrate hospice and palliative care into the health care system. They discussed the value of early grief support, the absence of which could contribute to unhealthy coping behaviours or the development of post-traumatic stress, isolation, and lasting depression. The Committee viewed appropriate palliative and hospice care as matters of dignity and also supported funding for specialized children's care to meet the unique needs of children, young people, and their families.

Committee Members recognized that access to health services, including transportation, is a serious challenge for British Columbians in rural and remote communities, particularly trans and gender-diverse individuals and seniors. The Committee noted the influx of people moving to rural areas from the Lower Mainland and acknowledged the additional demand this places on already limited rural health services. Members particularly identified return transportation as a crucial gap and costly expense for the health system when patients are obliged to extend hospital stays due to a lack of return transportation to their home communities. The Committee also agreed that digital health services may offer a potential solution and that a cross-ministry approach should be actioned to both address digital connectivity and look for innovative ways to increase and improve health services access for rural and remote communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Chronic Diseases and Complex Conditions

67. Increase access to a range of arthritis treatment options, including arthritis-specific primary and community care, and work with stakeholders to reduce wait times for joint replacements.
68. Fund specialized services to support women with both the trauma of intimate partner violence and brain injury, including training and awareness for community-based service providers, first responders and law enforcement to recognize brain injury, and prevention programs aimed at keeping people from becoming either a victim or perpetrator of intimate partner violence.
69. Reduce barriers and enhance coverage of diabetic medications and devices, including new technology such as FreeStyle Libre, and commit the necessary resources to implement a provincial diabetes strategy using the Diabetes 360° framework, as well as fully participate in federal, provincial, and territorial consultations on the development of a nationwide diabetes strategy.
70. Ensure individuals with Down syndrome and their families have access to appropriate services and supports, including access to registered therapy providers.
71. Ensure individuals with lymphatic disorders are able to proactively manage their condition by providing access to diagnostic services, treatment options, and appropriate equipment and supply.
72. Prioritize and fund the development of myalgic encephalomyelitis-specific billing codes for BC clinicians and the development of continuing medical education credits, modules or incentives for BC physicians, medical students, and other medical professionals to attend training about myalgic encephalomyelitis.
73. Implement a comprehensive British Columbia lung health strategy.
74. Establish a Cancer Prevention Strategy as part of BC's 10-Year Cancer plan and continue to support the Canadian Cancer Society's Centre for Cancer Prevention and Support through creating an Innovation Fund for Cancer Prevention.
75. Further invest in cancer care and treatments to meet the growing need from the aging population and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
76. Introduce a remote oral cancer screening program to expedite the triage of the potential oral cancer patients in remote areas.
77. Supply an automated breast ultrasound machine and screening products for every public hospital and clinic that has a mammogram machine and provide training to mammogram technicians to perform automated breast ultrasounds to address the shortage of sonographers, improve the efficiency of breast cancer screening, and improve the early detection of cancer in dense breast tissue.
78. Designate a separate Medical Services Plan code for breast screening ultrasounds necessary for dense breast tissue with a recommended cost to perform the procedure.
79. Expand Medical Services Plan coverage for the prostate-specific antigen test for asymptomatic individuals when ordered by a physician.

Community Care and Seniors

80. Immediately review the continuum of long-term care to home care services to ensure high quality, culturally-appropriate care, including: strongly defining and implementing care, health and safety standards; ensuring robust oversight and operator accountability; ensuring adequate staffing levels and hours of care; and incorporating resident and family voices.
81. Implement a comprehensive plan for the development of affordable long-term care and assisted living spaces to ensure British Columbians receive appropriate care.
82. Support seniors to age in place by increasing home support services and programs, including the Better at Home program, adjusting the co-payment for home support services so it is equitable to long-term care funding, and exploring innovative, affordable aging in place models, such as co-housing, HomeShare projects, and co-operative housing.
83. Increase investments in community supports, caregiver supports, and respite programs, as well as programs and supports for individuals with dementia and Alzheimer's.

Health Human Resources

84. Support education, recruitment, and retention efforts to address the shortage of health professionals, especially in rural and remote areas, by expanding post-secondary training capacity and clinical leadership opportunities, providing incentives, and removing barriers for internationally trained health professionals with respect to bridging and licensing.
85. Leverage existing health human resources to ensure access to timely and appropriate care by addressing administrative and logistical barriers to service provision and access to information, and by ensuring all health professionals are supported and enabled to work to their full scope of practice.
86. Expand and significantly increase funding for multi-disciplinary, integrated, community-based primary care networks, including integrating additional health professionals such as psychologists and chiropractors, into this team-based model.
87. Improve access to effective chronic pain management services by allocating \$2.7 million over four years for a pilot initiative within primary care networks in ten communities for chiropractors to treat, manage and prevent chronic pain conditions, particularly for vulnerable populations with low-income.

Hospice and Palliative Care

88. Increase investments in hospices and palliative care as well as grief and bereavement programs, including developing and implementing provincial standards and accreditation for hospice care, expanding palliative facility space, improving training for hospice workers, expanding grief and bereavement programs, and increasing awareness of the needs of people in grief.
89. Increase annual funding to Canuck Place Children's Hospice.

Medical Coverage and Services

90. Invest in prevention and early intervention of medical conditions, including expanding coverage for medical aids and prostheses, rehabilitation, psychology, and dental care.

Mental Health and Addictions

91. Invest in the continuum of mental health services and infrastructure for all ages recognizing the specificity of support required for different populations and varying degrees of mental health and addiction challenges, including prevention, early intervention, community care, integrated wrap-around support, addictions harm reduction and recovery, and involuntary care.

Pharmaceuticals

92. Implement a PharmaCare strategy to reduce the cost of prescriptions and ensure excellent access to innovative medicines, including working with the federal government on cost, coverage, and access to prescription drugs.

Public Health

93. Support a holistic approach to population health and promotion, including implementing a social determinants of health lens in all policies and actions, investing resources to strengthen capacity and public health data collection, increasing investments in physical activity and wellness, and using available regulatory and taxation tools to incent healthy behaviour.
94. Fund universal access to no-cost prescription contraception.
95. Explore the effectiveness of various methods and practices, such as antimicrobial copper, to reduce the opportunity for virus and bacteria transmission in public spaces.
96. Invest in public health initiatives and professionals to support maternal health and healthy infant development, with special attention to low-income families and those facing other threats to their ability to thrive.
97. Adopt a gendered approach to healthcare, including a Women's Health Strategy that reflects the distinct equity issues affecting women's health and well-being in BC.

Research

98. Provide reliable funding for health science research, including funding for Genome BC and TRIUMF, as well as funding for women's health research.

Rural and Remote Health Care

99. Ensure British Columbians who require ambulatory medical services outside of their home communities receive timely and reliable return transportation.
100. Explore innovative ways to expand health services in communities and through technology to rural, remote, and underserved areas of the province. [See also Recommendation 6 in Equity and Inclusion]

HOUSING

AFFORDABILITY AND SUPPLY

Housing affordability was a predominant housing concern among a vast range of organizations and individuals, including for survey respondents who ranked affordable housing as the second highest priority in Question 1. Multiple organizations, including poverty reduction advocates, chambers of commerce, and municipalities across all regions of the province, cited the extenuating consequences of unaffordable housing for individuals, families, businesses, and community services. In particular, housing was named as a growing source of socioeconomic inequality and a contributing factor to ill health, a workforce shortage, community displacement, and strain on transportation infrastructure. The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade reported that the high cost of living has impacted the ability of 60 percent of businesses to recruit and retain workers in Metro Vancouver while the BC Alliance for Arts + Culture highlighted how unaffordable housing is a troubling threat to the arts and cultural sector.

Archway Community Services described how unaffordable housing disproportionately impacts vulnerable populations, including new immigrants, seniors, youth, single parent and Indigenous households, and individuals with disabilities, mental health, or addiction challenges, and further noted that it has created an environment that allows landlords to exploit renters. Ishtar Women's Resource Society highlighted that the rampant cost increase in both the owners' and renters' markets consistently prices middle- and low-income women out of the private market. They further explained that while subsidy cash-transfer programs and income and disability assistance are helpful, it does not position them to secure housing in a market of rising prices and low supply. For women experiencing violence, the society noted that housing is especially significant as women who leave abusive partners are five times more likely to live in poverty, and the quality and stability of housing could jeopardize their ability to maintain guardianship of their children. With respect to seniors, the BC Federation of Retired Union Members and the 411 Seniors Centre Society reported that many seniors are paying more than 30 percent of their

income on rent, and they, along with the Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC, provided regional examples of the Shelter Aid for Elderly Residents rental subsidy for low-income seniors falling hundreds of dollars short of the average monthly rent for a one-bedroom apartment. The Disability Alliance BC and Inclusion BC shared that affordable housing is a particular challenge for individuals with disabilities or mobility constraints, emphasizing that there are finite options for wheelchair-accessible living spaces.

As potential solutions to the affordability crisis, several organizations recommended an array of housing and rental rebates or subsidies. Some suggested using revenue from the property transfer tax to support land lease renewals, affordable rental, or co-operative housing projects, while others sought economic supports based on income, a cross-subsidy to diversify rent within buildings, subsidies for accessibility retrofits, and increased allotments for the Shelter Allowance for Elderly Renters and Indigenous Housing Fund. Specific funding support for affordable housing projects was also requested by Habitat for Humanity, Gingolx Village Government, City of Vancouver, Metro Vancouver, BC Poverty Reduction, and Ishtar Women's Resource Society.

The Committee also heard how a lack of housing supply is a key factor to the escalating challenge of housing affordability. Recommendations from a number of organizations, including real estate, builders, and mortgage industry boards and associations, as well as the Campbell River and District Coalition to End Homelessness, focused on increasing housing supply by improving the development process. They suggested a range of measures, including: implementing building code changes or blanket zoning across the province to increase density and a mix of housing types; requiring municipalities or developers to develop housing that meets regional housing needs; amending the public hearing process and offering alternative methods to collect public input; making provincial funding for housing initiatives contingent on output meeting provincial housing targets; and implementing the recommendations of the

Canada-British Columbia Expert Panel on the Future of Housing Supply and Affordability.

Among the submissions related to developing, there was a common theme and concern that the existing municipal development process can interfere with supply, in turn affecting affordability. As examples of some existing challenges, the Victoria Residential Builders Association spoke to the lack of planning continuity in the Capital Regional District, an area of extreme unaffordability and low inventory, with some municipal councils banning duplexes and secondary suites and others only processing a small fraction of development proposals, as well as an absence of a regional housing plan tied to transit demand. Submissions from the BC Real Estate Association and a town councillor expanded on municipal barriers with the perspective that the current municipal public engagement process for housing development is often dominated by a vocal minority, adding cost and time delays, or obstructing a municipality's ability to meet its capital plan or community housing demand. From an environmental perspective, the Sustainable Environment Network Society was concerned with the increasing size and energy waste of new single-family homes and recommended actions to increase the construction of multi-generational apartments built to capture and return energy and include inner courtyards to provide residents access to green space.

Additional recommendations to improve affordability included various amendments to the property transfer tax and first-time home buyer's program. Mortgage Professionals Canada and the Canadian Home Builder's Association British Columbia suggested increasing the first-time home buyer's qualifying value for a full property transfer tax exemption to \$750,000 to reflect the increase in home values. Other organizations and individuals stated that the property transfer tax is compounding challenges for first-time home buyers trying to save enough money to purchase a home given the already difficult task of saving for a down payment due to the current cost of living. The BC Non-Profit Housing Association noted that the property transfer tax places a serious financial burden on co-ops and non-profit housing providers and that this is especially concerning for many community housing sector land leases that are set to expire this year.

COMPLEX CARE, SUPPORTIVE AND SOCIAL HOUSING

The Committee also heard about the need for housing integrated with support services to meet the physical, mental, and social complex care needs of people with disabilities and mental health conditions, populations at risk of or experiencing homelessness, individuals recovering from addiction, or those in need of transition support after leaving violence or abuse. Organizations highlighted that the current demand for shelter or supportive facilities exceeds available capacity and that investment in complex care housing is a cost-effective use of public funds when the broader costs of health care and public safety response are considered.

A Way Home Kamloops and Covenant House Vancouver reported a need and high demand for youth specific housing with wrap-around support. A Way Home Kamloops expressed that a housing unit on its own or adult housing is not suitable for many youth who need support developing life skills, such as cooking, hygiene, learning to drive, transportation to education, and access to food, clothing, and counselling or youth-focused addiction detox and recovery. They recommended facilities implement 24-7 staffing with a ratio of one case manager for every seven youth. Citing a 2020 homeless count, Covenant House Vancouver estimated that nine percent of BC's homeless population are youth. The Campbell River and District Coalition to End Homelessness referenced their 2021 homeless count which found that 45 percent of their surveyed homeless population had been in foster care, a youth group home, or under a youth agreement. Covenant House Vancouver estimates early prevention and intervention with homeless and at-risk youth could yield \$25 million in savings from diverted emergency care visits, encounters with the criminal justice system, and opportunity cost in the labour market.

With respect to adults experiencing homelessness, the Committee received recommendations to fund clinics that assist these individuals to acquire personal identification, which may be necessary to access essential services, as well as a secure place to store their identification. The Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness, BC General Services Employees and others also sought to address the vast overrepresentation of Indigenous people experiencing homelessness. Scott Harrison, a town councillor for Qualicum Beach, spoke to the current inconsistency in data collection for point-in-time homeless

counts, noting that this likely results in underreporting in some communities, and requested support to improve local data collection, especially in smaller communities. The Cranbrook and Kelowna Chambers of Commerce and the Heights Merchants Association shared concerns about the rise in homelessness, associating this with added costs to businesses resulting from vandalism, cleaning human waste and drug paraphernalia, and increased levels of petty crime.

Archway Community Services, the BC Society of Transition Houses, and Ishtar Women's Resource Society advocated for expanding the supply and options for transition and second stage housing to support individuals to leave unsafe living environments and gain independence. Submissions from these organizations described long-term second stage housing as particularly important for women and children experiencing abuse, to free up transitional housing space and ensure stability in a time of immense psycho-physiological distress and economic hardship. They noted that the highly competitive private market and existing patch-work system of short-term transitory housing options can perpetuate distress, impair stabilization, and increase the likelihood of individuals returning to abusive environments. The BC Society of Transition Houses described how their Homeless Prevention Program supports women in securing market rental housing and explained that if funding was increased to \$16 million, the program could be expanded to all regions of the province.

Recommendations related to complex care, supportive housing, and social housing recognized the critical role of charities, non-profit service providers, and affordable housing operators. Several organizations emphasized the need for stable funding or an increase to gaming grants, noting them as a source of core organizational funding. There was also a request to review the criteria that the BC Housing Management Commission and federal government use to determine a non-profit's eligibility for tax rebates on social housing projects, with a view to addressing inconsistencies. The Committee received a number of unique requests to increase the amount of social and subsidized housing.

MONEY LAUNDERING, MORTGAGE FRAUD, AND DATA

The Mortgage and Title Insurance Industry Association of Canada recommended investing in public education campaigns, strengthening enforcement, and increasing penalties for mortgage fraud and real estate crime as money laundering

and related criminal activities pose a risk to homeowners and buyers and have an adverse effect on affordability. They were of the view that a lack of sufficient resources specifically allocated for enforcement of these issues contributes to challenges in detecting and prosecuting mortgage fraud, and that public education could help protect consumers by decreasing the likelihood that they will become an unwitting participant in a fraud attempt.

The British Columbia Association of the Appraisal Institute of Canada requested improved access to BC Assessment data for appraisers. They explained that appraisers can help mitigate and detect fraudulent activity through property research by identifying abnormal behaviour, inflated prices, false transactions, frequent and rapid transactions, straw buyers, counterfeit documents, data manipulation or mortgage fraud. The association presented concerns that a fragmented data system, limited access to real estate data, and the cost of a title search undermines the integrity of the property appraisal process.

REALTORS AND MORTGAGES

The BC Real Estate Association expressed concerns about limited opportunities for realtor licensee engagement and recommended that the BC Financial Services Authority produce quarterly reports with mechanisms for stakeholder feedback, continue to meet regularly with the association, and consult the association on any upcoming sector changes. They also requested the creation of a professional realtors committee similar to the model of the BC Teachers' Council.

With respect to mortgages, Mortgage Professionals Canada recommended: providing access for first-time home buyers to mortgage amortization periods of up to 30 years for insured mortgages; working with the federal government to make the mortgage stress test more equitable; and implementing a moratorium on increasing fees for mortgage professionals until the pandemic concludes. In support of their recommendations, the organization expressed that many British Columbians are penalized by the stress test, particularly people who are single, by choice or circumstance, exacerbating wealth inequality and preventing independence through home ownership.

RENTAL REGULATIONS

The Committee received several submissions that highlighted issues with rental regulations for both tenants and landlords. The Richmond Poverty Response Committee shared that Richmond

does not have enough non-market rental housing supply for the people who need it and that residents are put in a position of relying on unstable, market-driven rental accommodation. They were of the view that attaching rent to the unit rather than the tenant would address affordability challenges. This view was shared by several other organizations who also recommended attaching rental rates to the unit with the Together Against Poverty Society highlighting that such a measure would take away the incentive for landlords to evict people.

LandlordBC advocated for a long-term funding strategy for the Residential Tenancy Branch for more trained arbitrators and compliance units as the branch currently lacks the necessary complement of staff to provide timely access to justice for both renters and landlords. They also highlighted issues with the annual allowable rent increase not keeping pace with increases in property tax or rising insurance costs, resulting in owners not being able to make necessary unit upgrades or in some cases, secure adequate insurance. LandlordBC additionally expressed concern that municipalities are increasingly using business licensing bylaws to develop their own tenancy regulations thereby creating inconsistency and complication for owners and threatening investment in new and existing rentals.

STRATA

The Insurance Bureau of Canada recommended improving the risk management and maintenance of strata corporations to improve the affordability of strata insurance noting challenges for stratas with a history of claims or higher risk exposure. The Co-operators also detailed the associated impact of the hardening strata insurance market on individual unit owners. They shared that the root cause of the issues affecting strata corporations and unit owners is related to the frequency of claims due to undermanaged building maintenance and repairs. They were of the view that education for strata board members, property managers, and unit owners on the important roles of insurance and risk management would help raise awareness about the need for adequate coverage. In addition, the Co-operators expressed their support for the findings presented in a BC Financial Services Authority's Strengthening Foundations report and requested measures to ensure strata corporations have adequate insurance coverage and are legally compliant with insurance regulations.

CONCLUSIONS

To address the spectrum of issues related to housing affordability and development, Committee Members agreed that immediate, bold provincial action is absolutely necessary, particularly with respect to increasing housing supply. Members recognized that the number and range of submissions from a variety of organizations highlight the housing crisis and were of the view that each provided a unique perspective that will need to be connected as part of a provincial strategy. They stressed that there is no singular solution to the housing crisis; rather all provincial policy levers must be used to address the issue.

The Committee emphasized the extenuating economic costs of unaffordable housing as high prices disproportionately affect low-income and marginalized populations, restrict household spending, make it difficult for businesses to find workers, create longer commutes and traffic congestion, and distort local markets through outflow from urban centres. Members anticipated the housing problem will become even more pronounced as international immigration increases following a pause during the pandemic. With a focus on supply, Members discussed the interrelated factors impacting development, including municipal zoning, permitting, approvals, time delays at various stages of development, the capacity of the construction labour force, environmental impacts, and how the current housing needs of a growing population have evolved beyond the traditional model of single-family homes. It was clear to the Committee that the development process needs to be simplified wherever possible and that a fundamental change of approach to development planning is needed to meet the housing needs of British Columbians.

Members agreed that all housing-related regulations including rentals, taxation, and strata governance should be reviewed from a holistic lens of housing affordability. With respect to rental regulations, Committee Members noted that current and future rental regulations should be designed to increase long-term rental supply and must be carefully examined and evaluated to prevent unintended consequences of dissuading the creation of new rental units or impacting the ability for units to be properly maintained and updated. Recognizing the concern that the property transfer tax can impede the transition to home ownership or moves within the market, the Committee discussed ways to adjust the tax to support market entry, such as consideration for geographic thresholds, provisions for growing families, or a lower property transfer tax for lower-income residents. For unit owners within stratas, Committee

Members noted the need for a comprehensive analysis and provincial policy amendments or guidance on strata governance, insurance, spending accountability and oversight, as well as education and training for unit owners and strata corporations. Co-op housing in particular was supported as another piece of the solution with the potential to provide both housing and community benefits. Committee Members also identified stronger regulations on short-term rentals as a solution.

To address external issues impacting the market, the Committee acknowledged that money laundering, mortgage fraud and other related criminal activities exacerbate unaffordability, particularly in the current environment of high demand and unattainable housing prices. While control of capital entering the country is a federal responsibility through the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada, the Committee was of the view that public safety officers should be empowered to increase enforcement of illegal activities. Committee Members additionally recognized the value of access to information, data-sharing, and transparency with respect to housing, and were interested in opportunities to better share real estate information, including as it relates to appraisals.

Specific to complex care, supportive and social housing, the Committee recognized ongoing initiatives focused on increasing the availability of social housing and acknowledged a need to improve the provision of complex care housing with Members drawing connections to public safety, health, seniors, and long-term care. Committee Members reflected on the critical importance of diversity and culturally appropriate care for racialized populations, youth, seniors, Indigenous peoples, individuals leaving violence, and individuals with disabilities, in recovery, or at risk of or experiencing homelessness. For women and children experiencing violence or unstable living environments, the Committee acknowledged that appropriate supportive housing is consequential and that many women will not leave an unsafe home without a culturally safe place to go. To ensure appropriate understanding of complex care needs, the Committee discussed opportunities to address data barriers by providing guidance, tools, and standardized metrics to capture the housing needs of vulnerable populations; this could ensure data collection is consistent across the province and accurately reflects local needs. Members also highlighted that data continuity is integral for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of policy interventions and support programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Affordability and Supply

101. Prioritize and take immediate action to increase the affordability and supply of housing by seriously examining all provincial policy levers, including: blanket zoning; municipal incentives to increase density and address development and permitting processes and timelines; taxation; co-op housing; short-term rental regulations; and development incentives and other creative solutions and partnerships.

Complex Care, Supportive and Social Housing

102. Ensure all complex care and supportive housing initiatives across the province incorporate culturally diverse and appropriate care, including specific supports for women leaving violence, Indigenous people, youth, seniors, individuals with disabilities, and those at risk of or experiencing homelessness.
103. Develop provincial guidance on the methodology for community level housing data, such as point-in-time homeless counts, to establish consistent data collection, support the capacity of smaller communities, and to better inform housing and program decisions at all levels of government.

Money Laundering, Mortgage Fraud and Data

104. Combat mortgage fraud and money laundering in the real estate market, including strengthening enforcement and penalties for crime, and improving education for the public and enforcement agencies.

Rental Regulations

105. Ensure new and existing rental regulations are meeting the objective of increasing and protecting the supply of properly maintained rental availability, including balancing the rights of both landlords and tenants, and provide adequate funding to the Residential Tenancy Branch to enforce regulations.

Strata

106. Reform strata governance and implement structured regulations to address issues related to building maintenance plans, insurance coverage, the definition of a unit, and transparency for current and future unit owners, including providing education and training to unit owners and strata corporations on their roles and responsibilities.

K-12 EDUCATION

CAPITAL FUNDING

Several school districts and associations recommended increasing capital funding for K-12 education. The BC School Trustees Association noted that school districts are not funded for numerous capital items, including IT infrastructure, portables, classroom furniture, retrofits, or administrative or maintenance facilities. School District No. 41 (Burnaby) referred to a 2020 BC School Trustees Association report, which indicated that the routine capital program totaled \$204 million; however, the estimated cost of repairs and maintenance recommended by building system engineers was more than double that at \$441 million. School District No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay) highlighted the need to address aging infrastructure, noting that the cost of maintenance increases as schools age, pointing to maintenance challenges with Mount Baker Secondary which is over 70 years old. Similarly, School District No. 60 (Peace River North) shared that 78 percent of their buildings received a poor or critical rating upon assessment. Two school districts emphasized the need to decrease the environmental impact of schools; School District No. 42 (Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows) stated that significant investments in retrofitting schools need to be made to achieve greenhouse gas emission reduction goals.

Some school districts focused on funding for maintenance and recommended increasing the Annual Facility Grant. School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) noted that the increased cost of building supplies due to the pandemic has put pressure on Annual Facility Grant resources. They also stated that the grant remains a fixed amount and is not dependent on the age of a school and level of maintenance required. Other school districts including School District No. 57 (Prince George) cited buildings in poor condition and aging infrastructure as rationale for increasing the grant. School District No. 42 (Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows) explained that not completing necessary facility renovations at the time of seismic upgrading is inefficient and will add to the overall cost if completed separately.

The Committee also heard about the need for capital funding related to COVID-19. School District No. 41 (Burnaby) emphasized the importance of ventilation for infection prevention and exposure control and noted that funding is needed for many older classrooms and classrooms that are not connected to ventilation systems. Similarly, the BC Teachers' Federation stated that improving air quality in BC schools would have an immediate impact in reducing the total number of cases of COVID-19 as well as long-term benefits in decreasing transmission of other common respiratory viruses such as influenza.

With respect to capital funding policy, two school districts remarked on the requirement to have school districts contribute up to 50 percent of the total cost of capital projects for new space. School District No. 43 (Coquitlam) stated that this practice redirects funds away from student needs to capital projects which is cross-purpose to successful education. School District No. 73 (Kamloops-Thompson) noted that due to rapid growth, they have exceeded capacity and are obliged to make decisions about students being taught in portables or moving students outside of their neighbourhoods. School District No. 41 (Burnaby) also remarked on the needs of growing districts and recommended providing additional funding to acquire and setup necessary portable classrooms to accommodate student enrolment growth when districts can demonstrate no alternative solution exists.

Three submissions made recommendations related to funding for seismic upgrades. The BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils cited a September 2021 Ministry of Education report which stated that only 38 percent of schools have had the seismic mitigation process completed, while School District No. 38 (Richmond) noted that 37 of their schools were identified as having at least one high-risk building section needing to be addressed.

DISTRIBUTED LEARNING AND INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

The Committee heard a presentation from Self Design Learning Foundation regarding their independent online school which they state is the largest school of record for students with special needs in BC. They note that in 2020, the Ministry of Education decreased the per student funding amount to independent online schools which has negatively impacted all online students, and especially students with special needs. Further, they state that the Ministry has proposed additional funding changes to provincial online education which has created a high level of uncertainty for families with children with special needs who require a high level of care and continuity. They recommended maintaining funding and ensuring that the proposed changes to online education do not disrupt the continuity and support provided to students.

With respect to private schools, the BC Humanist Association recommended phasing out funds currently spent on funding private education and using that funding to support innovation and students with special needs within the public school system. According to the association, private school funding increases have outpaced increases for public school funding. The BC Teachers' Federation and Canadian Union of Public Employees British Columbia focused specifically on elite private schools, noting that these schools, in addition to receiving funding growth, also benefit from tax breaks for both schools and parents.

OPERATIONAL FUNDING

Some organizations called for general or overall increases to operational funding. School District No. 36 (Surrey) noted a growing reliance on portables for which there currently is no additional funding allocated to school districts. They advocated for a modified funding model or a specific grant to cover the cost of acquiring, moving, operating, and maintaining portables for those districts without sufficient school capacity to accommodate all students appropriately. First Call: Child and Youth Advocacy Society spoke to the need for increased investment to restore lost programming and address the inequities created by relying on parent fundraising. School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) noted the need for resources to develop and operationalize strategic plans to meet the Ministry of Education's goals in the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning as many districts do not have robust data collection tools for measuring outcomes. Other recommendations

cited the need for increased funding to address the cost of implementing the new curriculum, inflationary pressures, and enrolment growth.

With respect to the funding formula, the BC Teachers' Federation noted that the current model for funding public education is based on enrolment which they stated has led to some austerity budgets and inadequate funding. They proposed a funding model that follows from the vision for what public education should be, and that is firmly connected to the identified needs of students. School District No. 60 (Peace River North) referred to changes in the calculation of transportation funding, noting that it resulted in an immediate funding reduction of \$541,000 to their district, and recommended that this change be reviewed and addressed. Some organizations advocated for actions stemming from the Funding Model Review Panel Report with respect to reserves and the annual budget process.

A few submissions remarked on the shortfall in international student tuition due to the COVID-19 pandemic; for example, School District No. 41 (Burnaby) explained that the pandemic resulted in a 45 percent decrease in international education students attending their schools, representing approximately \$10 million in tuition grants. Recommendations in this area related to funding and supports for affected school districts.

The Committee also heard about other funding needs stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. Many school districts noted the need for funding for health and safety measures, enhanced cleaning requirements, and learning recovery. With respect to health and safety, Canadian Union of Public Employees British Columbia described the increased demand on custodial workers and stated that understaffing and overwork in this area is a health and safety issue for all staff and students. Similarly, the Institute for Public Education BC stated that school districts should be funded to meet the higher expectations of cleaning from this past year. Some submissions, including First Call: Child and Youth Advocacy Society, also noted the need for funding to respond to student needs resulting from their experiences in the pandemic.

Two school districts called for funding related to compensation, noting that salary and benefits account for a very high percentage of operating costs. School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) shared that staffing is expensive and a long-term, committed cost that requires sustained funding, and explained that districts are reluctant to increase staffing when the funding is unpredictable. School District No. 43 (Coquitlam) explained

that the basic student grant is usually increased to cover teacher and support staff wage increases; however, it has not provided for benefit cost increases, salary increments for administrators and professional managers, or inflationary costs for supplies and services.

Regarding student transportation, recommendations highlighted the environmental impact of diesel buses and personal vehicles used to drive students to and from school. For Our Kids explained that the average diesel school bus emits 20 tonnes of greenhouse gases each year and that diesel buses produce pollutions that are harmful to children and bus drivers. They advocated for electric school buses to comprise 100 percent of new school bus purchases. School District No. 23 (Central Okanagan) stated that they spend an extra \$3.1 million per year on student transportation beyond the \$1 million they charge riders in busing fees. Further, they noted that adding to the number of personal vehicles driving to and from schools would be discriminatory to some families. They advocated for increased funding for the transportation of students.

Some organizations and districts advocated for funding related to programming and curriculum. The BC Teachers' Federation made two recommendations in this area, noting the need for resources to integrate Indigenous ways of knowing across the curriculum as well as resources for professional learning and planning time for teachers. Similarly, School District No. 43 (Coquitlam) explained that implementing the new curriculum requires an increased commitment to staffing at the district level to provide classroom teachers with resources, support, and modern technology. Comox Valley Families for Public Education highlighted the need for education regarding consent, noting that the BC curriculum has no mandatory sexual health education curriculum regarding consent for students in grades 11 and 12 and that the sexual health curriculum is taught through physical education which is not mandatory after grade 10.

Some organizations highlighted the need for funding related to reconciliation and supporting Indigenous learners. School District No. 39 (Vancouver) noted that while significant improvements in outcomes for Indigenous students is evident over the last several years, additional support is essential to continue this pivotal work. Further, they explained that many Indigenous learners who live on reserve attended school virtually last year and require support for the transition back to in-person learning. They advocated for funding to identify and amplify best practices in strategies and pedagogy to service Indigenous

learners. Canadian Union of Public Employees British Columbia called for funding to implement Article 14 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples regarding education, particularly with respect to expanding and adding Indigenous language learning opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The Committee heard that teacher recruitment and retention is a chronic challenge in BC and that more than 20,000 teachers will be needed over the current decade. School District No. 39 (Vancouver) explained that competition between districts as well as with other jurisdictions across Canada leads to challenges in adequately staffing roles to offer programs in French language instruction, tech studies, and special education. They advocated for funding for post-secondary institutions to increase their student intake for teacher training programs.

Recommendations related to compensation called for consistent and predictable funding and flexibility at the local level. School District No. 60 (Peace River North) noted that there are restrictions that make it impossible to adequately compensate existing district staff based on performance which exacerbates recruitment and retention issues. School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast) stated that salary increases for non-union staff are linked to provincially negotiated union wage increases but are not funded which creates a structural deficit resulting in resources being removed from the classroom.

With regard to staff supports, the BC Teachers' Federation referred to a survey which indicated that 40 percent of teachers were more likely to leave education in the next two years than they were before the pandemic. Similarly, the BC Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association explained that the mental health and wellness of their members is deteriorating, and long-term disability claims have been increasing. They also pointed to the need for leadership support and development throughout principals' careers.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Several organizations advocated for increased funding to support students with special needs with some highlighting inclusive education, as well as the need for counsellors, speech and language pathologists, and additional education assistants. With respect to inclusive education, the Down Syndrome Society of British Columbia stated that learners in inclusive education

settings tend to perform better than those in segregated settings. Similarly, Inclusion BC cited research which indicates that diverse and inclusive classrooms benefit all learners; however, they noted that many families of diverse learners are, or are considering, pulling their children from neighbourhood schools because their educational needs are not being met. School District No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay) shared that approximately 14 percent of their student population is identified as having diverse abilities and require additional support to meet their needs and graduate with confidence and purpose.

With respect to the funding model for students with special needs, some recommendations called for needs-based funding while others called for resources for high-cost/low incidence students. BCEdAccess Society stated that the school district or independent school authority is free to use their discretion regarding how to spend funding for students with special needs and as a result, the per-student allocation or supplemental amount may fail to impact the student(s) in question. The BC Teachers' Federation noted that school districts disproportionately spend more money on inclusive education than they take in as they only get about 65 percent of what is needed. They added that about half of students with an identified need have a "high incidence" designation, which is accompanied by no additional funding. School District No. 41 (Burnaby) described a significant increase in the total number of students with disabilities and diverse abilities over the past number of years, especially in the Special Needs Funding Supplement Level 2 Category. They noted that the supplemental funding provided for students in Level 2 does not cover the cost of what the district pays to support these students in the learning environment. Regarding severe learning disabilities, Dyslexia BC explained that the funding category J was taken away in 2002; they recommend bringing this category back, stating a prevalence model is unlikely to include Dyslexia in Ministry of Education funding levels.

Many organizations made recommendations related to identification and assessments, highlighting long waitlists and the need for early identification. The BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils noted that waitlists of three and four years for assessment are common and as a result, many parents opt to have their children assessed privately which creates further inequity in the public education system. Similarly, Cindy Dalgish noted that long waitlists for assessments within the education system impede students' ability to get the support they need in a timely fashion. Dyslexia BC recommended early screening

in kindergarten so that reading remediation can be done as soon as possible; they explain that it takes four times longer to remediate dyslexia if you wait until grade 3 or 4 to start. Both Inclusion BC and BCEdAccess Society suggested a targeted fund to increase the number of educational assessments, thereby reducing waitlists.

There were also a few organizations and individuals who made recommendations specific to education assistants. Canadian Union of Public Employees British Columbia stated that education assistants and aboriginal education assistants can help students make emotional connections to their education to improve their learning outcome; however, insufficient hours are a concern as shifts generally range from just four to six hours per day. BCEdAccess Society explained that there is no professional body governing education assistants in BC and no standardized program requirements in their certification. They added that without standards of practice, it is difficult to assign the role of professional to education assistants. They also discussed the importance of continuity and challenges when a child's relationship with an education assistant abruptly ends, and the emotional and intellectual energy needed to express the student's needs to a new person.

VULNERABLE STUDENTS

The Committee received a number of recommendations with respect to school food programs. Several organizations called for the expansion of school meal programs for low-income students, with many recommending a universal school program and some making recommendations related to specific nutrition programs including those run by the Breakfast Club of Canada and Backpack Buddies. The BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation highlighted the BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program created in partnership with the ministries of Health, Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and Education through which fruits, vegetables, and milk, supplied by over 1,000 BC farmers, are delivered to classrooms a total of 24 weeks in the school year. School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast) noted that for many vulnerable students, time at school presents their only access to healthy meals. Similarly, the BC Teachers' Federation cited the most recent household food security dataset published by Statistics Canada which indicated that less than 70 percent of single-parent families in BC were food secure. The BC Chapter of the Coalition for Healthy School Food stated that Canada remains the only G7 nation without a national school food program and made several recommendations

related to a task force, a school meal program coordinator, and pilot programs. The BC Alliance for Healthy Living stated that a universal healthy school food program could help increase fruit and vegetable consumption amongst children, reducing risk for numerous chronic diseases. The Institute for Public Education BC advocated for funding to be expanded and guaranteed through provincial initiatives, rather than a patchwork of programs.

The need for mental health and student supports was another key theme. Several submissions highlighted the impact of the pandemic on student mental health and the need for counsellors and other supports. CUPE 728 Surrey School District Support Staff stated that the pandemic has both triggered mental health conditions and made existing conditions worse. Similarly, School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) noted that 50 percent of families in the district report needing access to mental health services for their children. Both School District No. 36 (Surrey) and School District No. 43 (Coquitlam) stated that CommunityLink and Equity of Opportunity funding are insufficient and allocated inequitably across districts. The BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils noted that the new normal will require more funding for learning recovery, acceleration programs, school health and safety, student mental health and well-being, and connectivity and support to teachers. The Surrey Teachers' Association advocated for investment in counsellors for children and teenagers as providing students with the supports they need at a time when they are receptive to learning results in savings for society over the course of their lifetime.

School District No. 57 (Prince George) remarked on the number of students living in poverty and the impact on their readiness for full participation in their learning. They advocated for a provincial poverty reduction strategy to address the needs of vulnerable students and families. School District No. 43 (Coquitlam) explained that a decrease in in-class instruction time due to the pandemic has been detrimental for many students, both socially and academically, particularly those who are most vulnerable and recommended funding to address learning loss.

CONCLUSIONS

The Committee reflected on the large volume of input related to capital funding for K-12 education which highlighted difficulties associated with capacity and new builds, and addressing aging infrastructure. They also discussed the implications of districts needing to make capital contributions, and capital expenses

such as portables coming out of operating budgets, and how this impacts their ability to fund classroom expenses, transportation, staffing, and other operational expenses. They recognized that the province has areas of rapid growth where capacity is a real challenge, and discussed the need for innovative long-term capital solutions, such as modular construction, that would allow flexibility to respond to population changes and help to move away from portables. The Committee additionally considered how work can be done with municipalities to better respond to areas of population growth. Further, Members noted that capital funding needs to be proactive and responsive and reflected on presentations which highlighted the need for transparency in funding and decision processes. Members also recognized the importance of IT infrastructure investments both to prepare for another possible shift to online learning in the future and to provide education on the use of technology and to reflect a modern curriculum.

With respect to operational funding, the Committee again emphasized the importance of a proactive funding formula that anticipates future needs and population changes while also addressing a range of challenges highlighted by submissions. They discussed how current policies that do not take into consideration the cost of maintaining older buildings puts pressure on school districts that have declining or stagnant enrolment. Members also remarked on the challenge of student transportation in many communities and noted that investments in public transportation can help address this issue (see Transportation and Transit). They also discussed the environmental impact associated with diesel buses and the use of personal vehicles to drive students to and from schools.

Committee Members noted many benefits related to online and distributed learning for families in rural BC who may live three or four hours away from schools and for students, including those with special needs, who may learn better in such an environment. They discussed how distributed learning models could be better supported and further explored as part of a dynamic education system.

The Committee acknowledged that recruitment and retention is a significant issue and reflected on the many submissions that highlighted the toll of the pandemic on teachers and staff as well as the need for work-life balance. Members noted that the teaching profession has evolved over time, increasing in complexity and with new pressures. They also discussed challenges related to the high cost of housing which impact teachers' ability to live in the communities in which they work.

They considered ways to support and attract teachers from other countries, including supporting the Provincial Nominee Program and reducing barriers for individuals educated outside of Canada.

Committee Members acknowledged the number of presentations and recommendations which emphasized the importance of supports for students with special needs, including the need for inclusion, and to address challenges with respect to identification and long waitlists for assessments. They recognized that funding to support students with special needs is a significant issue in BC and were supportive of recommendations to increase these supports and improve early identification and assessment.

With respect to vulnerable students, the Committee emphasized the importance of school food programs, especially given the

link between nutrition and education outcomes. They noted that food programs can help to reduce stigma for students in need and encourage socialization and interactions between students and staff. Further, they discussed how these programs are largely volunteer driven and that there are gaps with respect to funding and coordination, resulting in a patchwork of programs across the province. Committee Members also noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected student mental health and led to an increase in eating disorders, depression, and anxiety for many as well as issues related to retention and support for guidance counsellors who are overwhelmed. Committee Members also acknowledged the interrelation between students with special needs and vulnerable students, noting that many students fall into both categories.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Capital Funding

107. Re-examine capital funding with a view to being more forward-looking and responsive, addressing inequities and gaps with respect to provincial funding for IT and maintenance, and reviewing policies regarding district contributions and portable construction.
108. Prioritize methods to fast-track construction of new schools and additions, including exploring the use of modular construction and prioritizing means to lower the environmental impact of new and existing schools.

Operational Funding

109. Review the operational funding formula for K-12 education to ensure it is proactive and transparent, based on the identified needs of school districts, with appropriate consideration for anticipated population changes, equitable distribution of resources, supports to deliver the new curriculum and reconciliation initiatives, increased health and safety measures, and student transportation.

Distributed Learning and Independent Schools

110. Recognize online and distributed learning programs as integral to the K-12 education system and re-examine funding to ensure these programs continue to meet the needs of all learners, particularly children and families in rural and remote areas and children and youth with special needs.

Recruitment and Retention

111. Explore creative measures to recruit and retain teachers, including providing incentives, providing relief to teachers in school districts with high housing costs, addressing work-life balance challenges, and reducing barriers for immigrants and internationally educated teachers.

Students with Special Needs

112. Increase supports for students with special needs, including providing supports and training to staff to support inclusion and improving early identification and assessment.

Vulnerable Students

113. Support the expansion, coordination, and sustainability of school meal programs, such as the BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program, and encourage collaboration with BC agricultural producers.
114. Increase funding for mental health supports in schools, including student-focused resources, wrap-around services, and personnel.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND JUSTICE

ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND LEGAL AID

Several organizations recommended increased funding for legal aid and highlighted the need to address restrictive eligibility criteria as well as to expand the scope of services covered. The Law Society of BC noted that many people who struggle to earn a living wage are not able to qualify for legal aid. In addition, they stated that those who do qualify find that their legal aid runs out before their matter is resolved. With respect to wages for lawyers, the Professional Employees Association stated that Legal Aid BC and Family Maintenance Agency lawyers make only a fraction of what Crown Counsel lawyers are paid and that addressing this gap is important for ensuring these legal services are sustainable over the long-term. Prisoners' Legal Services made requests specific to legal aid for prisoners, noting that prisoners are vulnerable and that Prisoners Legal Advocacy receives a much higher demand for services than the organization is able to meet. Regarding legal clinics for non-profit organizations, Pacific Legal Education and Outreach explained that there is a grey area where organizations are too large to receive support but too small to afford ongoing legal assistance, and many do not realize the importance of retaining counsel for important and impactful decisions.

Multiple organizations, including West Coast LEAF, remarked on the need for legal aid funding to address family law and family violence which disproportionately impacts women. The Canadian Bar Association, BC branch explained that since 2002, there has been no legal aid funding for representation to address the majority of family law matters, such as child support, spousal support, division of assets and debts, and parenting arrangements. They further added that legal aid representation is provided only in circumstances of actual or threatened safety or violence issues or to resolve a serious denial of access to children. Ishtar Women's Resource Society also discussed this issue and noted that while legal aid does offer priority support to women leaving violence, the income ceiling and service hour caps are so highly restrictive that more than half of those who apply do not qualify. Further, Rise Women's Legal Centre stated that some women face the prospect of quitting part-time

jobs, potentially leading to homelessness, so they can qualify for legal aid. The Law Society of BC stated that the majority of family law funding is directed at adversarial services; however, this process promotes winners and losers, and family law clients will often have an ongoing relationship with the other party. They advocated for funding to explore expanding non-adversarial resolution of family law matters.

The Committee also heard from the BC Notaries Association who advocated for expanding the scope of practice related to non-contentious legal services such as creating testamentary trust and life estate when preparing a will, providing advice on preparing and filing probate documents in the court registry, and incorporating companies. They stated that this would help provide British Columbians with choice for the provision of these services.

In addition, two organizations made recommendations related to child and youth advocacy centres which bring policing, child protection, health, First Nations, school districts and victim services together to respond collaboratively to allegations of abuse and sexual assault. The BC Network of Child and Youth Advocacy Centres explained that bringing all of these services together increases efficiency and reliability and improves long-term outcomes; however, a lack of committed operational funding is starting to hold them back. First Call: Child and Youth Advocacy Society stated that during the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increase in child sexual abuse, both in homes and online, and called for stable and adequate funding for child and youth advocacy centres to support children and families through the trauma of abuse and court procedures.

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Prisoners' Legal Services noted that prisons are not equipped to provide the level of mental health support required by many people and that many of their clients with mental health disabilities remain in conditions of solitary confinement. They recommended funding the Forensic Psychiatric Hospital to accept people with high mental health needs when they must

be held in a secure setting. Archway Community Services noted that many of the people they serve experience instability and a precarious nature of living. They recommended increasing collaboration between the justice system and social services as well as discouraging reliance on incarceration as a deterrent for procedural and drug offences. The BC General Service Employees' Union called for increased frontline staffing in corrections to reduce high ratios of inmates to officers, address overcrowding and violence, and improve safety for workers and inmates.

COURT SERVICES

Organizations including the Law Society of BC noted that additional funding is required to continue upgrades to technology and infrastructure in the court system. The Canadian Bar Association, BC Branch explained that COVID-19 has changed the way that the legal system uses technology such as through the use of virtual court appearances; however, access to these new processes has not rolled out evenly. They shared that many people are unable to appear virtually to represent themselves, including those without access to a telephone or the internet, those who lack basic computer skills, people who do not speak English as a first language, and people in custody. Rise Women's Legal Centre described barriers to legal services in small communities, noting that due to a lack of safe, regular, and affordable public transportation, some women must hitchhike to meet with a lawyer or attend court appearances, which is a serious safety concern. The Committee also received a specific recommendation from one individual for the construction of a new courthouse in Vernon to address safety concerns and inadequate space in the current building.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Multiple organizations advocated for core funding for services and supports for gender-based violence, describing funding and programs as an uncoordinated patchwork and pointing to an increase in gender-based violence during the pandemic. Ishtar Women's Resource Society cited a statement from the federal Minister for Women and Gender Equality which indicated a 20 to 30 percent increase in reports of family violence during this time. YWCA Metro Vancouver stated that addressing gender-based violence requires investments in multiple areas including access to justice, trauma-informed support and recovery, employment support to leave and stay away from violence,

and opportunities for safe, affordable, and supportive housing. Presentations also referred to supports for women and children leaving violence as a patchwork scattered across different policy areas. In particular, BC Society of Transition Houses explained that funding for community-based victim services has been uncoordinated for many years. They also highlighted the work of their PEACE Program counsellors which is becoming increasingly challenging based on the complex needs of the children and youth they are supporting during the COVID-19 pandemic. They stated that adequate and sustained core funding that meets the continuously evolving requirements of these counsellors to carry out their work is vital. Archway Society for Domestic Peace noted that it is particularly challenging to provide supports in rural areas which are served with limited hours and part-time staffing which results in long waitlists and high staff turnover rates; they advocated for increased operating funds for their programs. WAVAW Rape Crisis Centre stated that re-establishing a provincial ministry for gender equality would allow for cohesion, collaboration, and resource sharing amongst the anti-violence sector, support community informed funding allocation, and enable work toward systems change.

A number of organizations made recommendations for funding and supports for sexual assault survivors. The Prince George Sexual Assault Centre remarked on the lack of services for survivors and noted that proper support and care can substantially reduce the long-term costs of sexual violence and support resiliency of survivors and their communities. The Victoria Sexual Assault Centre noted that sexual assault is not only a matter of justice and public safety but it is also a health issue and that funding should reflect this need. Similarly, WAVAW Rape Crisis Centre explained that as sexual assault is treated solely as a law-and-order issue, the only sustained funding to meet many survivors' needs is aligned with the criminal legal system and short-term support. Further, West Coast LEAF emphasized that survivors suffer short- and long-term harms from being sexually assaulted, including anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation, and as such, survivors require an approach that is trauma-informed and prioritizes health and well-being. Archway Community Services noted that adult males who experienced child sexual abuse report mental health difficulties and highlighted a direct correlation between childhood sexual abuse and perpetuated domestic violence. They recommended increasing access to counselling and funding in this area.

The Committee also received recommendations specific to violence prevention. BC Society of Transition Houses noted that existing anti-violence programs have been operating for decades with inconsistent funding resulting in high rates of casual and part-time staff. As such, they advocated for sustainable core funding for anti-violence programs. The Battered Women's Support Services Association highlighted the importance of prevention services and the need for funding for community-based organizations to support youth and children around violence prevention. They recommended reducing funding to prevention programs organized by for-profit entities such as the BC Lions, stating that community-based responses for prevention are more effective than campaigns. Men's Therapy Centre noted that to lower the rates of violence against women, especially Indigenous and trans women, working with men is necessary. They advocated for funding to provide resources to support and work with men experiencing, but also perpetuating, violence.

Regarding transition housing, both Victoria Women's Transition House Society and West Coast LEAF advocated for core funding in this area as current funding is uncoordinated, with occasional increases in response to government policy changes, or particularly horrific individual cases of violence. West Coast LEAF explained that core funding would allow programs to offer full-time employment to address staffing challenges, waitlists for services, and recruitment and retention of skilled staff who are experts on gender-based violence. In addition, Victoria Women's Transition House Society stated that having a single envelope of funding and reporting requirements would reduce administration for government and agencies and would allow transition houses to increase the stability of services. Amata Transition House Society highlighted the need for wage equity and livable wages in the sector, noting that service providers in transition houses do trauma-based work for \$21.68 per hour in a unionized environment and \$18 in a non-unionized environment. The Committee also received a specific request from Tamitik Status of Women with respect to their project to host a spectrum of affordable housing options for women, including a much larger transition house, and the province's first 24-hour daycare.

GROUND DISTURBANCE

BC Common Ground Alliance shared that the annual cost of ground disturbance damage in BC is estimated to be in the millions of dollars due to direct costs for repairing damaged

infrastructure as well as indirect costs related to lost productivity. They made recommendations related to an intergovernmental taskforce to address ground disturbance and promoting the BC 1 Call service to prevent damage when digging.

NATURAL DISASTERS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The Committee heard several recommendations related to preparedness strategies, funding, and emergency management. Both the Insurance Bureau of Canada and the Regional District of East Kootenay linked climate change to the increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events, with the latter noting that this means emergency management is becoming a more important and more expensive local government responsibility. The district shared concerns that the proposed wording in the Financial Assistance Guidelines will impact local governments financially, and limit their ability to effectively respond to emergencies, and recommended engaging in a collaborative process with the Union of BC Municipalities and local governments to develop new guidelines. Regarding preparedness, Citizens Climate Lobby, Nelson - West Kootenay Chapter recommended establishing community resiliency hubs in rural areas whereby public buildings are fitted with renewable energy systems, back-up power and communications, air conditioning and air filtration. Regarding recovery, Community Futures British Columbia remarked on the impact of natural disasters on small businesses and advocated for a recovery fund to provide immediate access to financing, with easy terms, to businesses that have been impacted by a disaster.

CanAge discussed the impact of natural disasters on seniors. They highlighted that this year's wildfires have disproportionately impacted this demographic and that just under 90 percent of heat-related deaths this summer were of individuals aged 60 and up. They recommended creating a provincial disaster plan for seniors with specific sub-plans for people in long-term care and congregate care settings, community settings, and rural and remote regions.

Three organizations made recommendations regarding the need to address flooding, citing climate change and rising sea levels. Teck Resources Limited called for assessments and mitigation plans for regions prone to flooding while Gingolx Village Government advocated for the extension of the sea wall that surrounds their village waterfront. Watershed Watch Salmon Society framed investments in upgrading existing, aging flood infrastructure, as a way to address climate mitigation and

adaptation goals, while also meeting the needs of reconciliation and reconnecting and restoring much-needed habitat access for BC's at-risk wild salmon.

Multiple submissions highlighted the significant impact of this year's wildfires and made recommendations with respect to funding, detection, and prevention. BC Hydro Ratepayers Association noted that over 800,000 hectares of forest burned in 2021, and that crews were unable to quickly contain new fires. They recommended contracting with existing helicopter companies across BC to provide emergency response services, as well as purchasing additional air tankers or skimmers to be located across BC with emergency response crews. Citizens Climate Lobby, Nelson - West Kootenay Chapter emphasized that many rural communities lack funds for basic fire protection and advocated for resources to be allocated in these areas. The Committee also heard from Andrea Barnett who shared the story of three fires invading their ranch resulting in the loss of all their range and a significant amount of cattle. Barnett stated that if there had been an initial attack strategy that leveraged community resources, the fires could have been actioned much more effectively and at a lesser cost.

Two organizations focused on recommendations specific to recovery from the fire in Lytton. The Lytton & District Chamber of Commerce shared that the fire destroyed businesses, homes, and public buildings throughout the town, including the Chinese History Museum which lost 1,600 artifacts. Further, they noted that 50 percent of the residents either did not have insurance or were underinsured. Two Rivers Community Service Society noted that the community has gone two months without critical services and requires immediate support. Both organizations recommended ensuring the timely processing of building permits, approvals, and inspection in Lytton, establishing a 1-800 phone number and a website to address related matters, and aiding with the immediate re-establishment of health care, ambulance, policing, and other provincial services, as well as municipal services.

Regarding earthquakes, the Insurance Bureau of Canada noted that a significant earthquake in Canada will have a devastating impact on Canadian families and businesses as well as the national economy. They explained that the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions requires property and casualty insurers to be capitalized for up to a 1-in-500-year earthquake. If a more severe earthquake were to occur, the solvency of the Canadian property and casualty insurance industry would be problematic, and this would have a domino

effect across the whole financial sector. They recommended making investments that will better prepare British Columbians for an earthquake and supporting federal action on earthquake risk, including the development of a national earthquake resilience strategy.

POLICING

A few organizations made recommendations related to policing approaches and alternatives. The Battered Women's Support Services Association advocated for a policy shift focused on community-based response, while the National Police Federation noted that increased funding for social services would allow officers to concentrate on core policing services while still participating in community-based work. The federation also stated that these investments should not come from police budgets. The Downtown Victoria Business Association recommended establishing mental health and addictions response teams, noting that these teams can reduce the burden on police forces and the stigma that police response creates for those with mental illness.

The National Police Federation also made recommendations related to RCMP funding and the Surrey policing transition. They noted that funding for the BC RCMP has remained flat in previous years, despite increasing populations, rising equipment and infrastructure costs, and more complex threats to public safety from gang activity, money laundering, and cybercrime. They stated that this lack of adequate resources impacts programs such as the integrated gang enforcement team, combined forces special enforcement unit, and BC relief teams. With regard to the Surrey police transition, they noted that it is behind schedule and has tripled in costs, causing tax increases to residents and businesses. They recommended delaying or suspending the transition and reassessing the financial implications to ensure the safety of those living in Surrey and across the Lower Mainland.

Both the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Victoria Business Association made specific recommendations with respect to public safety in Victoria, citing an increase in crime in the downtown area. The association stated that 62 percent of downtown businesses spent more money in 2020 on security and other preventative investments and that 34 percent of respondents to a community safety survey by the Victoria Police Department believe that crime in downtown has increased.

With respect to gang issues and investigations, the National Police Federation shared that on average, 50 percent of Lower Mainland police calls involve organized crime and gangs, and they advocated for additional funding in this area. Archway Community Services advocated for local, multi-year, culturally relevant funding to address youth gang issues, pointing to the number of young people who are lured into organized crime by the promise of money, cars, and prestige.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Restorative justice organizations highlighted the growth in demand for, and value of, restorative justice as an alternative to the traditional court process. Organizations such as the Community Justice Centre of the Comox Valley pointed to other jurisdictions, including Nova Scotia, Alberta, and Manitoba, which have implemented province-wide restorative justice programs with more suitable levels of funding and government-level encouragement and support. The Canadian Bar Association, BC Branch noted that a robust and comprehensive restorative justice program has potential for significant cost savings to both the judicial and corrections systems. The Vancouver Island Region Restorative Justice Association also advocated for increased funding, noting that cases are increasingly complex due to a variety of underlying factors, including alcohol and drug impacts, homelessness, poverty, and mental health concerns, and as such, the depth of training needed by practitioners has increased. North Shore Restorative Justice Society stated that sustainable funding will create more opportunities to collaborate across services as other non-profit organizations in areas such as mental health or multicultural services would no longer be in competition for the same dollars. They added that community-based responses to crime have the opportunity to combat many of the challenges facing the province with respect to systemic racism, the significant backlog of the criminal justice process in criminal courts, and the increasing costs associated with accessing legal support. On the other hand, the Battered Women's Support Services Association noted that the alternative dispute resolution model creates significant safety risks for survivors of violence and recommended defunding these models.

SEX WORK

Two organizations made recommendations regarding funding for programs and services for sex workers. PEERS Victoria Resource Society advocated for increased funding for peer-

based services which they state have higher rates of access, service retention and satisfaction than conventional justice services. PEERS, along with Living in Community, stated that most funding streams relevant to violence prevention and support for sex workers are focused on human trafficking and there is little support available for those engaged in sex work who have not been trafficked, but who do experience violence. They stated that the provincial Bad Date and Aggressor Reporting system, through which information is collected about perpetrators and then distributed to other sex workers to screen their clients and increase their safety, is an urgent need for sex workers in BC, and advocated for provincial funding for this system.

CONCLUSIONS

Reflecting on the most recent wildfire season, particularly the devastating fire in Lytton, the Committee emphasized the need for bold action to ensure BC is ready for the next wildfire season as well as a renewed approach to emergency management with a focus on prevention, recovery, incorporating local knowledge, and improved communications. They noted that promoting awareness and encouraging preparedness amongst British Columbians is critical as fires and other natural disasters are not a question of "if" but "when". The Committee particularly stressed the impact of climate change on natural disasters and the associated economic, social, and health impacts of these events. Committee Members discussed financial assistance options for support related to natural disasters, noting that the current process is cumbersome and does not work well for people who are being evacuated or who have lost their homes entirely. The Committee also reflected on the difficulties associated with evacuating people during the COVID-19 pandemic and discussed the need for health authorities to have emergency preparedness strategies, particularly in the long-term care sector. Members additionally discussed insurance and noted that many people are not able to afford insurance, or do not have the option to get it for various reasons including real estate transactions, or distance from fire suppression. The Committee also agreed on the need to address ground disturbance noting the financial impact associated with repairing damaged infrastructure.

The Committee reflected on the many submissions and presentations which emphasized that vulnerable populations are underserved by our legal system. Committee Members noted that many of the challenges and barriers addressed

in the recommendations they received are systemic issues and that identifying and addressing these barriers must be a priority. They also recognized the need for access to legal aid in family law matters and to address income qualifications and eligibility criteria. They also acknowledged that legal aid clinics are efficient and provide an important presence that supports access.

With respect to correctional services, Members agreed that mental health issues within correctional services need to be addressed. They also remarked on the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the corrections system and emphasized the need for Indigenous-run healing centres.

Committee Members discussed several challenges with respect to court services in rural BC due to digital connectivity and transportation issues which can lead to safety concerns. Members noted that the pandemic has highlighted the need to invest in technology to allow for virtual participation in court proceedings. They also considered how Service BC locations could be used to increase access to court services in rural BC.

Committee Members remarked on the volume of input regarding gender-based violence and sexual assault from front-line organizations and service providers who highlighted the need for multi-year, predictable, and core funding for services and supports. The Committee emphasized the importance of identifying and treating trauma early and discussed ways to coordinate resources, encourage collaboration between health authorities and service providers, increase accessibility, and reduce barriers for individuals experiencing violence including

through development of a provincial helpline. Members also acknowledged the urgent need for transition housing and highlighted the presentation from Tamitik Status of Women regarding a transitional housing project in Kitimat that will include 24-hour daycare.

Regarding policing, the Committee discussed recommendations related to shifting mental health crisis response to community service organizations and noted that this issue is also being considered by the Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act. Committee Members noted funding difficulties related to policing in smaller communities and rural areas and considered ways to support funding for public safety in these areas. They also highlighted the need for additional resources to address gang violence.

Committee Members were impressed and moved by presentations that highlighted the power and effectiveness of restorative justice programs and noted the potential for significant cost-savings to both the judicial and corrections systems. They also discussed challenges associated with the use of restorative justice in matters of gender-based violence and sexual assault and that alternative dispute resolution may not be appropriate in these situations.

The Committee was also supportive of increased supports for sex workers. Members remarked on the value of a provincial bad date and aggressor reporting system and further discussed the need for ongoing funding for violence prevention, safety, and security of sex workers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Access to Justice and Legal Aid

115. Increase investments in legal aid and legal clinics, including improving access to justice in family law matters, expanding eligibility and coverage limits for legal aid, expanding the scope of services, and increasing training for practitioners on trauma-informed and culturally safe practices.
116. Provide stable and adequate funding to responsive services such as the child and youth advocacy centres across the province.

Correctional Services

117. Ensure cross-sectoral collaboration between the justice system and the social service sector especially during the reintegration period for vulnerable offenders.

118. Fund the Forensic Psychiatric Hospital to accept people with high mental health needs to live with dignity when they must be held in a secure setting.

Court Services

119. Improve access to and modernize the courts and justice system through investments in technology, equipment, and infrastructure, especially in rural and remote communities.

Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Assault

120. Increase services and supports for survivors of sexual assault and gender-based violence by providing multi-year funding for community-based and Indigenous-led programs, providing wrap-around and culturally appropriate services and supports, and investing in violence prevention programs and transition housing.
121. Support collaboration and coordination amongst service providers, health professionals, and health authorities to improve services to survivors of sexual assault and gender-based violence.

Ground Disturbance

122. Work with municipalities and stakeholders to address ground disturbance and prevent damage to underground infrastructure, and promote awareness of the BC 1 Call website and phone number.

Natural Disasters and Emergency Preparedness

123. Significantly strengthen emergency management planning and readiness, and ensure existing plans and strategies are comprehensive, proactive and incorporate: prevention, mitigation, adaptation, response, and recovery; improved communication and coordination with residents, local governments and other stakeholders; evacuation of long-term care and other health care settings; local knowledge; and investment in locally-owned equipment.

Policing

124. Explore alternative approaches to mental health crises that are less reliant on police and increase funding to mental health and social services to address the increasing complexity of these issues.
125. Provide local, multi-year, culturally relevant funding to address youth gang issues.

Restorative Justice

126. Provide increased and sustainable funding for restorative justice programs and better integrate restorative justice within the justice system, including ensuring programs are culturally appropriate to reflect the province's diversity.

Sex Work

127. Provide increased and ongoing funding for programs and services, including peer-based violence prevention services, that promote the safety and security of all individuals who engage in sex work regardless of gender, circumstance, or type of sex work, and without the sole focus being on exiting or trafficking services.
128. Provide ongoing funding for the provincial bad date and aggressor reporting system.

SOCIAL SERVICES

CHARITABLE/NON-PROFIT SECTOR

The Committee heard that the charitable and non-profit sector have an important role in creating jobs and delivering programs and services, with several organizations advocating for stabilization funding for the sector. Vantage Point highlighted the work undertaken by the sector during the pandemic in providing a crucial level of support to government, businesses, and the public through the provision of health and other essential frontline services, support for victims of domestic violence, and deploying volunteers safely. They also stressed that the sector has been severely affected by the pandemic due to lost revenue from canceled events and steep drops in donations. Similarly, YWCA Metro Vancouver cited estimates which indicated that one in five non-profits will not survive the pandemic. Cook Street Village Activity Centre emphasized that non-profits are a vital part of the community and the work their centre does, particularly in serving older adults, helps the health system cope and not be overrun. They added that with stable funding at a reasonable level, non-profit organizations could enable staff to spend more time serving the community rather than constantly fundraising. In addition to a \$500 million stabilization fund for the sector, the Vancouver Foundation recommended a variety of changes related to eligibility for recovery programs, funding for gaming grants, charitable tax credits, and legislation. Regarding tax credits for individual donors, they noted that BC lags behind most other provinces in the country at 5.06 percent on the first \$200 and 16.8 percent on amounts over \$200.

CHILD CARE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Several sectors expressed support for the provision of affordable child care with increased funding to accelerate its roll out. MoveUP noted that child care is one of the most powerful policy tools governments have to tackle inequity by promoting economic growth, racial and economic equity, and child well-being. They added that lack of child care is a significant barrier to workforce participation for women, and low-income, racialized, and Indigenous families. Similarly, the ASPECT BC

noted that lack of child care is a barrier to employment that must be removed for BC to meet its current and future labour market demands. Living Wage for Families Campaign stated that child care is the second highest expense for the living wage family in most BC communities, and comprises 22 percent of the family budget in Metro Vancouver. CEFA Early Learning Schools noted that more than 50 percent of child care operating costs are for leases and recommended a funding mechanism that encourages developers and landlords to work with child care providers to reduce fees and rental rates.

Other organizations referred specifically to funding for \$10-a-day child care in their recommendations. The BC Teachers' Federation stated that \$10-a-day child care is a form of income support to households hit hardest by the current economic crisis, especially as furloughed workers return to work. They advocated for investment in a universal, \$10-a-day child care system in BC, including a build-out of public child care facilities and the provision of before- and after-school care. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives noted that a universal public system, like \$10-a-day child care, would save families thousands of dollars per year and improve gender equality as women disproportionately bear child care duties. They added that public spending in universal child care can largely pay for itself without new taxes, as the resulting increase in women's participation in the labour market would increase income tax revenues.

The Committee also received several recommendations related to child care spaces and facilities. The Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC noted that while government has achieved measurable progress in recent years on lowering parent fees, raising educator wages, and funding new spaces, there is a significant gap between the current supply and demand. They shared that there are almost 600,000 children in the province aged 12 and under, and that about 400,000 of those children have mothers in the paid workforce, and there are only approximately 125,000 licensed child care spaces.

Some organizations highlighted the need for flexible and accessible child care for parents who do not work typical hours, such as those who work shifts. The BC NDP Women's and Gender Rights Committee described long waitlists with parents, particularly mothers, having to leave careers or scale back workable hours in order to fill the gaps in available care. Both IATSE (International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees) 168 and the Performing Arts and Live Events Labour Coalition of BC described challenges finding child care for parents working in the live performance sector due to their atypical working hours which often include weekends and evenings.

With respect to child care fees and subsidies, CEFA Early Learning Schools noted that families can qualify for the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative regardless of their earnings. They recommended exploring early learning and child care subsidies using means testing and redirecting funds to families that truly need it. In contrast, Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce noted that due to the high cost of living in certain regions, some middle-income earners are choosing not to re-enter the workforce because of the high cost of child care. In those cases, cutting off affordable child care at certain income levels does not result in those skilled workers returning to the workforce.

Some organizations, such as BC Complex Kids Society, noted that the Supported Child Development program which funds a one-to-one support worker in a child care setting for kids with complex disabilities, has significant waitlists and inequitable access across the province. They explained that investments in inclusive and flexible child care would enable families to participate in the workforce and children to spend time with their peers. The BC Association for Child Development and Intervention noted that investments in Supported Child Development programs must continue and be informed by data to ensure resource allocation is more equitable. The Health Sciences Association of BC explained that funding increases to Supported Child Development programs over the last few years have been insufficient and, in some cases, base contract funding has increased in communities that do not face the greatest access challenges. They recommended increased funding for Supported Child Development services delivered by child development centres, so that children with special needs will have equitable access to newly funded child care spaces.

A few organizations noted that the Ministry of Education will be taking over responsibility for child care and asked for additional funding to significantly expand the integration of child care into school districts. Organizations noted that the

K-12 system can make a substantial contribution to filling BC's need for child care spaces. Canadian Union of Public Employees British Columbia highlighted that smooth transitions between the various stages of early education are key for children's long-term learning and development. They added that an integrated model of before- and after-school care provided in schools by school districts means parents have a reliable, accessible, and high-quality child care solution. CUPE 728 Surrey School District Support Staff highlighted a number of benefits to providing child care, especially before- and after-school care, through school systems, including the ready-made infrastructure of facilities, and the thousands of education assistants and other education workers who are currently underemployed at less than six hours per day and who could easily be mobilized to provide this care.

The Committee also heard about the need for culturally relevant child care services. The Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC advocated for working with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples to ensure that Indigenous early learning and child care frameworks are developed with Indigenous leadership. Similarly, the BC Co-op Association noted that supporting research and development of Indigenous cooperative child care models would help to identify models that are more in line with traditional ways of teaching and learning and provide a pathway for more culturally appropriate early learning and child care for Indigenous populations. The United Way BC also highlighted the need for investment in culturally safe spaces for children, and recommended expanding complementary child care options for vulnerable families in higher-risk neighbourhoods and investing in culturally safe spaces for children aimed at key social determinants of health.

Many organizations linked difficulties expanding child care to a lack of early childhood educators and made recommendations for increased training seats as well as wage incentives to address recruitment and retention. YMCAs of British Columbia stated that they currently have 1,232 child care staff vacancies and that child care is needed to encourage people to relocate and work in northern BC. They suggested that early childhood educators could move to an apprenticeship program similar to those in the trades, so individuals are able to earn a living while getting educated. The Child Development Centre of Prince George referred to the wage incentive for early childhood educators and noted that this incentive is not accessible to support staff even though Supported Child Development support staff often have more education than program staff. They recommended extending the wage enhancement program to

include Supported Child Development. CUPE 1936 Community Services of Greater Vancouver also commented on restrictions related to the wage enhancement and noted that child care workers unable to obtain early childhood educator certification or those who work at StrongStart or a non-provincially funded program do not receive the \$4 per hour wage enhancement. They recommended extending the \$2 per hour enhancement to all child care workers in BC.

The Committee also received recommendations related to specific projects and models. The Burnaby Healthier Community Partnership provided details about the Burnaby Early Childhood Development Community Table which is a collection of non-profit and public partners who work cooperatively to promote the importance of healthy child development in the community. They requested reconsideration of funding for early childhood development tables as their funding was recently stopped and redirected to programs and services. BGC BC (formerly Boys and Girls Clubs of BC) requested collaboration on a potential funding model for recreational child care, noting that recreational child care offers families choice that meets their needs on a highly flexible basis while also ensuring high-quality programs and oversight. United Way BC requested funding to expand their School's Out Programs which provide healthy, safe, educational activities so that vulnerable elementary students can make constructive use of their time outside of school, particularly during the critical hours between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Enid Elliot noted that there is a growing number of outdoor programs for children in BC, but many are not licensed and are therefore inaccessible to parents who rely on subsidy to afford the program. They recommended amending legislation and regulations to include a category of licensed child care programs that operate full-time outdoors without a premise or building.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CARE

The Committee received 20 submissions advocating for additional supports for youth aging out of care citing lower graduation rates, and increased rates of homelessness and death amongst youth aging out of care. First Call: Child and Youth Advocacy Society noted that an unsafe and non-responsive foster care system is one of the top pathways into youth homelessness. Similarly, TRRUST Collective Impact explained that the three largest gaps for youth as they transition out of government care are safe and affordable housing, sufficient income for the cost of living, and transition supports that begin

early and extend past their 19th birthday. Fostering Change shared that every year 900 youth age out of government care and are left to fend for themselves without a social safety net and that 225 of these youth will end up homeless and that many will be forced to choose between homelessness and toxic and harmful relationships in exchange for shelter. They recommended that no youth age out of care until they have secured shelter, community, and financial support. Crane Management Consultants Ltd. stated that programs for youth aging out of care lack transitional or path finding support. They also pointed to challenges with the Agreements with Young Adults program, noting that youth who age out with lower educational credentials and who are not proceeding to post-secondary education or training are the youth most in need of support yet are not eligible for the program. They further stated that financial support through this program is not transparent, equitable, or fair, and recommended improving transitional and pathfinding support to all youth aging out of care through at least age 25.

The Committee also heard about the need for supports for kinship caregivers. West Coast LEAF noted that there are 13,000 kinship families in BC consisting of grandparents, aunts, cousins and other extended family and community members who are the principal caregivers to children. They stated that many kinship caregivers are grandparents and older single women who are living on a fixed income or in poverty, and recommended enhancing supports and making administrative changes to assist kinship caregivers as well as funding a low-barrier universal kinship care benefit available to all children living in kinship care. Similarly, First Call: Child and Youth Advocacy Society noted that at least 39 percent of kinship care families live below the poverty line, some in deep poverty, and many others are using up their savings to raise these children and will soon be living in poverty themselves. Parent Support Services Society of BC linked increasing numbers of kinship families to the opioid crisis and other socio-economic factors and noted that while many children in these families have experienced trauma and have physical, emotional, or behavioral challenges, they receive little to no government support. Fairness for Children Raised by Relatives described discrepancies in rates between kinship caregivers, foster parents and those receiving the Child in the Home of the Relative benefit as well as issues with out-of-care families receiving federal benefits. Both Parent Support Services Society of BC and West Coast LEAF noted a need to adjust the funding for Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters

to recognize and support older people are raising children in kinship caregiving family relationships.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

With respect to the Children and Youth with Support Needs framework, several organizations requested additional funding to alleviate financial burdens on families. The BC Association for Child Development and Intervention stated that while considerable resources have been invested in the development of this new framework, there has been no commitment for dedicated funding to support implementation. In addition, they noted that many of the challenges this framework attempts to address have been created due to the lack of investment in this sector over the past decade.

Several organizations expressed concern about wait times for assessments and services. Citadel Speech and Language Services emphasized the importance of early intervention, noting that zero to five years old is a critical development period for speech and language skills and that time spent waiting for therapy is a lost opportunity that may never be recovered, even with later intervention. Further, they noted that early intervention can reduce the need for supports later in life, therefore reducing overall costs to taxpayers. They advocated for increased funding for more full-time equivalents to make caseloads more manageable, thereby reducing burnout of speech-language pathologists and improving retention of health care professionals. The Health Sciences Association of BC explained that early intervention therapies, including speech and language therapies, physiotherapy, and occupational therapy, have the longest wait times of any child development centre programs due to insufficient funding. They noted that this means children do not get the care they need when they need it which can result in additional health challenges. Similarly, the BC Association for Child Development and Intervention highlighted that average waitlists for early intervention therapy programs are about seven months with some communities having waitlists of up to a year and a half. They noted that a three-month wait time benchmark to access early intervention services would help to flow new resources to the communities that need it most. The Centre for Child Development of the Lower Mainland shared that funding has not kept pace with population growth in Surrey and Langley. They recommended prioritizing funding to support children who face the longest waitlists and wait times for speech language pathology. With respect to children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, BC Family

Hearing Resource Society noted that contract renewals for early intervention agencies are typically for six or 12 months which creates challenges in terms of planning, programming, staffing and future growth, and as such, they advocated for longer-term contracts to address these issues.

The Committee also heard about the need for funding and resources to support children with complex medical needs. The BC Complex Kids Society stated that approximately 4,000 families across BC qualify for the At Home program for children with medical complexities. They added that funding shortfalls for this program have created an immense financial burden on families, explaining that over seven years, it is estimated that a family with one child with complex medical needs has hundreds of thousands of dollars in out-of-pocket expenses for equipment, therapies, home accessibility renovations, and lost wages. They also highlighted the need for respite, noting that the At Home respite component only funds about ten hours per month.

COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICES AND SOCIAL POLICY

Several organizations advocated for funding for the community social services sector. Board Voice Society of BC noted that the supports provided under the banner of social services in BC are tremendously diverse with community non-profits providing child care, family counselling, seniors care, support for children and adults with developmental delays or disabilities, substance-use support, and community mental health services. They pointed to a need to develop a social policy framework and sustain locally developed services. Similarly, the Federation of Community Social Services of BC highlighted the value of the sector to the health, safety, and well-being of children, families, adults, and seniors but noted that due to underfunding and neglect, the social care system is unstable and fragile. The BC CEO Network Association explained that with limited funding, agencies cannot build and maintain complex systems to enable a nimble response, access the technology required to implement new service systems, or acquire employees essential for ongoing success and delivery of quality services. Our Place Society and Archway Community Services described challenges with respect to administration costs, noting that non-profits need a reasonable administration fee to cover things like maintenance, custodians, finance departments and infrastructure, as these are often not covered by government contracts or donors. CUPE 1936 Community Services of Greater Vancouver stated that

individualized funding is the norm in community living and that a return to a global funding model will improve service quality, enhance job security, and provide program participants with increased access to peers.

The Committee also heard about issues related to compensation in the social services sector. The BC CEO Network Association explained that it is difficult to attract and retain management and leadership staff due to a lack of competitive wages as increases for exempt and excluded staff have been frozen or limited. They added that a low wage redress was provided to some but not to non-unionized staff even though these employees are performing the same work, with the same training and qualifications under contracts with the provincial government. Archway Community Services also commented on the low wage redress, noting that there are 17,000 workers in the sector, 80 percent of whom identify as female, who do not belong to unions. They recommended paying all provincially-funded community social service workers fairly, ensuring equal pay for people delivering equivalent work for this vital sector. CUPE 1936 Community Services of Greater Vancouver stated that provincially-funded community social service workers only receive 80 percent paid sick leave and recommended increasing this to 100 percent.

With respect to programs and services for youth, the Committee received a number of requests including many that emphasized the need for mental health supports due to the pandemic. Big Brothers Big Sisters requested annual funding to be distributed among their 11 agencies to increase the number of youth served and allow for those on waitlists to be matched with mentors. They cited research which indicates that contact with a mentor decreased symptoms of depression and anxiety and that having a mentor was a protective factor against mental health challenges which is especially important during the pandemic. Take a Hike Foundation, which engages youth experiencing vulnerabilities with intensive, continuous clinical counselling, outdoor experiential learning, and community, in partnership with public school districts, also requested increased funding. Family Services of the North Shore highlighted the Proud2Be program which supports LGBTQ2S+ youth and their families. They noted that there is a gap in attention and funding in relation to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer identifying and 2 Spirit children, youth and their families and cited research which shows that LGBTQ2S+ youth have better health outcomes when their parents are supportive and able to skillfully advocate for their young person. Foundry advocated for more centres to

be opened noting that 40 communities in BC have expressed interest in their model; however, they currently only have funding for 12 centres. The City of Vancouver requested funding to renew and expand the Urban Native Youth Centre which is their top priority in terms of supporting additional services for local First Nations and urban Indigenous communities.

A few organizations also made recommendations with respect to programs and services for specific populations. The Coalition of Neighbourhood Houses - Capital Region advocated for core operational funding for neighbourhood houses and neighbourhood-based service hubs that provide a continuum of services across age groups, across BC. They noted that there are currently ten neighbourhood houses in the Capital Region, and eight in the Metro Vancouver area, and that funding would help the movement build capacity to work toward serving all areas of British Columbia with essential place-based, neighbourhood responsive service. The BC Federation of Retired Union Members recommended long term core funding for community based non-profit senior-serving organizations, noting that the pandemic highlighted the importance of these organizations in keeping seniors safe, connected, and healthy. Family Services of Greater Vancouver advocated for increased funding to expand their financial empowerment programs outside of the Lower Mainland to other areas of BC to help individuals file their taxes, access benefits and tax credits, begin saving, and address financial challenges, noting that financial literacy is a key life skill that is under-taught in schools. The Committee also heard from Valley Community Services Society about the need for supports for people who have left the polygamist Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints community, many of whom have complex, multi-faceted needs.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Many organizations expressed concerns that the Labour Relations Board and Employment Standards Branch are underfunded and understaffed. The BC Federation of Labour and BC Employment Standards Coalition noted that the Employment Standards Branch has a smaller budget and fewer offices and employees than it had 20 years ago even though there are well over half a million more workers in BC today. The University of the Fraser Valley Faculty and Staff Association stated that funding increases for the Labour Relations Board and the Employment Standards Branch are needed so that these bodies have the resources and staffing required to quickly respond to cases and conduct enforcement of violations. Similarly, BC

Building Trades stated that the Labour Relations Board needs additional resources to fulfil its adjudicative and investigative roles and appropriately administer the Labour Code as it relates to construction. They also noted that the Employment Standards Branch lacks the staff and resources required to effectively ensure worker rights. Together Against Poverty Society commented that the Employment Standards Branch takes too long to respond to complaints and that complaints have been mishandled due to understaffing.

With respect to minimum wage, some organizations advocated for raising it to the cost of living and ensuring it remains at the cost of living. The Living Wage for Families Campaign noted several benefits of providing a living wage, including: enabling employees to have more time with their families as they are not working multiple low wage jobs; decreasing rates of overtime, absenteeism, and turnover; and improving staff performance. Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Pacific Region also advocated for gig workers to receive at least minimum wage for all hours of work, including time on an app available and waiting for an assignment. They noted that protecting gig workers is key to ensuring they have access to paid sick days, employment standards, a union, and transparency from apps, and recommended that gig workers be deemed “employees” under the *Employment Standards Act*.

IATSE (International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees) 168 and BC General Service Employees' Union were amongst the organizations advocating for increasing mandatory paid sick leave to ten days. The former noted that theatre workers are engaged by multiple employers for varying shifts at varying rates with employers of limited means and that a standard sick leave program does not work in this circumstance. Chartered Professional in Human Resources of British Columbia and Yukon cited estimates that as many as half of employees in BC do not have access to paid sick leave. They added that without paid sick leave, employees often have no option but to go to work risking infecting others or in some cases, worsen their own health. Other organizations called for supports for businesses to cover sick days, and extending the sick day coverage to gig workers, casual workers, part time workers, and temporary workers.

Several organizations made recommendations regarding unions including card check certification, the right for gig workers to unionize, and removing barriers to unionization. Canadian Union of Public Employees British Columbia stated that workers have a constitutionally protected right to join unions, and labour

laws should facilitate rather than hinder that process. They cited the 2018 Labour Relations Code Review Panel Report, which indicated that card check certification remains the single most effective mechanism to avoid unlawful employer interference and to ensure employee choice.

POVERTY REDUCTION

With respect to income and disability assistance, multiple organizations recommended raising rates above the poverty line. The BC Alliance for Healthy Living noted that income assistance rates do not provide enough funds to purchase a healthy diet. They also cited a Statistics Canada study which indicated that British Columbians who live with the lowest incomes are more likely to die early from cancer, respiratory diseases, circulatory diseases, and diabetes, compared to people with average incomes. Several submissions referenced the high cost of housing in their recommendations. Campbell River & District Coalition to End Homelessness stated that rental rates have significantly increased over the last five years and shelter rates have not increased in 13 years. Similarly, BC People First added that the average housing cost for one bedroom in their community is approximately \$1,863; however, the current disability rate is approximately \$1,358. The Mustard Seed Street Church explained that several times a year people receiving income assistance have a five-week gap between payments, instead of the usual four, creating hardships for the additional week. They recommended providing additional stipends for five-week months.

The Committee also heard about the need to adjust eligibility and administration for income and disability assistance. David Green, Chair of the British Columbia Expert Panel on Basic Income, stated that the disability assistance program needs reforms to make it fairer and more accessible, to make benefits more adequate, and to reduce barriers to working. Brenden MacDonald spoke about how when one reaches the earnings exemption, it results in a sudden drop in assistance. As this can serve as a disincentive to work, MacDonald recommended gradually reducing assistance after the annual earnings exemption is reached. Together Against Poverty Society expressed support for a recommendation from the Final Report of the British Columbia Expert Panel on Basic Income to combine the shelter and support portions of income assistance and make payment non-contingent on whether someone has housing. The BC Poverty Reduction Coalition also highlighted recommendations from this report, including eliminating

spousal caps for income and disability assistance as these caps create barriers for the already vulnerable. They also advocated for guaranteed access to income and disability assistance regardless of immigration and citizenship status.

Regarding basic income, the BC Women's Alliance pointed to guaranteed living income as a way of addressing inequality and freeing women from worrying about basic survival. They recommended working with the federal government to implement a guaranteed livable income that is provided to all individuals who make their home in Canada, regardless of citizenship status, and without a means test or other conditions. The Committee received several letters in support of this recommendation. BC Alliance for Arts + Culture noted that basic income programs are not tied to employment and, unlike welfare and disability assistance, they do not require constant monitoring to determine eligibility and deservedness. They advocated for basic income to support recovery in the arts sector.

A number of organizations requested more supports for persons with disabilities. Together Against Poverty Society stated that mental health services should be offered as part of the benefits provided to people with disabilities. Similarly, Inclusion BC noted that fragmented services and a lack of recognition and understanding of the health and mental health needs of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities have left them significantly marginalized. They recommended creating a provincial office to provide leadership and oversight of the health and mental health services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Disability Alliance BC noted that coverage for assistive devices is piecemeal and confusing and people with disabilities who do not qualify for government assistance options are left to purchase expensive medical equipment on their own or seek help from non-profits and charities. They recommended a comprehensive program for assistive devices and medical equipment for people with disabilities, noting that such a program must avoid top-down delivery and the medical model of disability and should instead focus on ability and offer as much personal choice as possible. Realistic Success Recovery Society highlighted the importance of the Skills Development for Individuals Facing Multiple Barriers program which provides supports to those who face extra barriers to success. They recommended expanding this program and ensuring services are easily accessible to supportive housing programs.

With respect to poverty reduction more generally, David Green recommended the creation of a poverty advocate position at the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, noting that an advocate could work with the BC Poverty Reduction Advisory Council to prepare reports to the Legislative Assembly on progress on poverty reduction. First Call: Child and Youth Advocacy Society explained that poverty is one of the most powerful risks to healthy child development and called for continued poverty reduction efforts, focused on raising incomes and reducing costs for families raising their children in poverty. They also suggested targeting poverty reduction measures to help those who have a higher risk of living in poverty, including children in lone-parent families, immigrants and refugees, Indigenous children, racialized children, youth transitioning out-of-care and those living with disabilities. With respect to food, the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition noted that the pandemic has made access to food more difficult for many people, including Black, Indigenous, senior and youth communities. They recommended implementing stronger poverty reduction legislation and policy, including right-to-food principles, rather than fragmented, ministry-by-ministry food policy.

CONCLUSIONS

Members recognized the importance of child care for the economy and reflected on the significant level of engagement in this area, including many suggestions for improvements as well as opportunities to leverage federal commitments. Committee Members also recognized that spaces, waitlists, and costs continue to be a challenge and that addressing these challenges will take time. They emphasized that a comprehensive child care plan requires staff and noted that efforts in training, recruitment and retention for early childhood educators need to continue. The Committee contemplated an apprenticeship model, similar to the trades, that could help prospective early childhood educators financially as well as provide more confidence and ensure readiness to take on the work. Members also noted that there are creative opportunities to improve access to child care through better integration with the public school system, and partnerships with businesses and community organizations.

With respect to children and youth in care, Committee Members acknowledged that children and youth in care require supports into young adulthood to help position them for stability and success. Members also discussed how changing approaches and improving the child welfare system, including supporting family

and cultural connections, can help prevent children entering foster care and lead to better health and social outcomes.

Committee Members agreed that families of children with special needs need to be better supported to address both the direct costs, such as services and equipment, and indirect costs, including the ability to work and caregiver burnout, of caring for children with special needs as these families are struggling financially. Members noted significant waitlists for programs and services, particularly for early intervention services, and discussed how upfront investments can save downstream costs of providing services. They emphasized that early identification is key to such an approach.

The Committee highlighted the importance of the community social services sector and recognized that it needs to be adequately funded. They reflected on key themes from submissions, including the need for stability and predictability to be able to plan long-term. Members noted that many programs and organizations have proven track records and the skills and compassion to provide front-line services and are either underfunded for what they are doing now or could be doing more with additional funding. They also acknowledged issues regarding pay equity or parity for different organizations doing the same work. The Committee reflected on the importance of youth supports as highlighted in many submissions about

impactful programs and organizations, including Foundry, Take a Hike Foundation, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Proud2Be and the Urban Native Youth Centre. The Committee also discussed how charities and non-profits have been significantly impacted by the pandemic with respect to finances and how they adapted in delivering programs and services.

Committee Members discussed the significant issues that were raised with respect to wait times for the Employment Standards Branch and Labour Relations Board. They noted that employment bodies generally are also facing challenges with respect to the changing nature of the workplace and the emerging gig economy. Members recognized that there is a balance needed with respect to protections for workers and ensuring competitiveness for businesses. With respect to input on paid sick leave, they noted that there is already a process in place to determine this model.

Members reflected on opportunities to support individuals on income and disability assistance to increase participation in the workforce. They discussed how existing policies with respect to earnings exemptions are inflexible and can lead to disincentives to work; for example, potential variations in income levels throughout the year are not considered. The Committee agreed that targeted support to the most vulnerable is important.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Charitable and Non-Profit Sector

129. Continue to support the charitable and non-profit sector, including exploring incentives to donate through tax credits.

Child Care and Early Childhood Development

130. Continue investments to improve access to affordable, flexible child care that meets the needs of local communities, including providing before- and after-school care options and exploring creative partnerships with businesses and other organizations to create more child care spaces.

131. Continue to invest in training, recruitment, and retention of early childhood educators, including consideration for shifting training to an apprenticeship model.

Children and Youth in Care

132. Fully evaluate systems and supports currently in place for children and youth in care, including improving early adulthood supports for youth aging out of care to support independence, supporting family and cultural connections, and improving supports to kinship caregivers.

Children and Youth with Special Needs

133. Provide sufficient supports and services for children and youth with special needs and their families, including ensuring early identification, addressing wait times, and providing timely access to early intervention services, and increasing income supports.

Community Social Services and Social Policy

134. Provide predictable, increased, multi-year funding to the community social services sector to enable long-term planning with a focus on measuring and monitoring outcomes, including addressing compensation challenges.

Employment Standards

135. Significantly increase funding to the Employment Standards Branch and the Labour Relations Board to hire additional staff and reduce lengthy wait times.

136. Expedite the enhancement of labour protections for gig workers.

Poverty Reduction

137. Review the eligibility and administration of income and disability assistance, including earning exemptions policies and thresholds, with a view to providing flexibility, reducing barriers to work, and providing targeted support to the most vulnerable.

TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION (CYCLING AND WALKING)

A number of organizations advocated for increased investments in active transportation. HUB Cycling noted that active transportation provides a high return on investment with respect to health savings as well as economic benefits as individuals who walk and cycle spend more at local businesses than motorists. In advocating for increased funding, the BC Alliance for Healthy Living also referenced the health benefits of active transportation resulting from increased physical activity and accessibility, as well as reduced traffic congestion, injuries, air pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions. Several organizations similarly noted the importance of encouraging and enabling British Columbians to walk, bike, and generally spend less time driving, as a means to achieve climate goals. The BC Cycling Coalition shared that 50 percent of trips are less than five kilometres long, and that these trips could be shifted to other modes of transportation, including biking, walking, and scootering.

HUB Cycling expressed that active transportation needs to be easy, efficient, and safe if the provincial government wants to meet its goal of doubling BC's mode share of cycling by 2030. They advocated for better data and benchmarking to help identify gaps and make improvements. They also noted that cycling infrastructure is more affordable than motor vehicle and public transit infrastructure; however, it does not receive a fair share of funding. The BC Cycling Coalition, and several other organizations, compared BC to other jurisdictions in emphasizing how current funding allocations for active transportation are insufficient; they further noted that active transportation programs are regularly oversubscribed.

The Committee also heard about specific needs and challenges in small and rural municipalities. Capital Bike shared that these municipalities lack the infrastructure for active transportation and often lack the capacity to build it. Citizens Climate Lobby, Nelson-West Kootenay Chapter also referenced challenges with a lack of funding for active transportation in rural communities,

and noted that in addition to improving health and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, investments in active transportation can provide opportunities for recreation and tourism in rural communities.

Another theme in submissions on active transportation was education and promotion. HUB Cycling shared that universal cycling education in schools is an effective way to raise a generation of sustainable transportation and safe road users. Capital Bike specifically discussed the Everyone Rides Grade 4-5 program which educates young children on how to bike; however, the program only reaches a quarter of the target children in the school districts in which the program operates. They also recommended increased funding for GoByBike weeks which has not received an increase in funding at the provincial level even as the number of communities has increased.

AUTO INSURANCE

Two organizations advocated for opening up the auto insurance market to allow other insurers to compete with ICBC. The Canadian Taxpayers Federation expressed concerns about financial risks, noting that prior to the pandemic, the corporation was losing money every year and that recent savings can be attributed to fewer crashes and claims due to the pandemic. They were of the view that opening auto insurance up to full competition would guard against financial risk while also providing for consumer choice. The Insurance Bureau of Canada also emphasized a need for consumer choice and competition in auto insurance. They discussed the expansion of product offerings under ICBC's basic package and the impact on the optional auto insurance market, and stated that opening up the market would result in savings for consumers as well as more innovative product offerings.

MoveUP stressed the importance of public ownership of ICBC and how new changes have resulted in reduced rates and improved service for drivers. They discussed opportunities to secure the long-term viability of the corporation through expanded product offerings, such as property insurance, with

a view to providing British Columbians with access to more affordable insurance products.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Several organizations recommended increased investments in public transit. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives noted that public transit can reduce pollution and ease traffic congestion, and has economic and social benefits in providing better access to jobs and cultural amenities and services. They also noted that low-income families are more likely to depend on public transit and, as such, investments here have an equalizing effect.

The Richmond Poverty Response Committee also discussed the use and cost of public transit for low-income British Columbians and how they would benefit from having free or sliding scale transit fares. The BC Poverty Reduction Coalition similarly advocated for the implementation of a sliding scale fare system as a first step to expand free fares to all ages across BC. The Richmond Poverty Response Committee additionally noted that low-income individuals are often the target of public transit violations and are given fines they are not able to pay, and recommended transit fines be withdrawn. The BC Federation of Retired Union Members and the 411 Seniors Centre Society discussed the specific needs of seniors and stated that many seniors are unable to afford the cost of public transit and recommended improving access and affordability.

Improving the provision of rural and regional public transportation was another key theme. The Citizens Climate Lobby, Nelson – West Kootenay Chapter shared that rural residents rely heavily on personal car use because of the lack of regional transportation systems, especially with the end of Greyhound service. They acknowledged that some regional systems have been established; however, better service and interconnection is needed. They noted that this is especially a concern for going to health care appointments. Canadian Union of Public Employees specifically advocated for permanent funding and an expansion of service for BC Bus North, pointing to gaps with communities that are still lacking this service and infrequent bus schedules.

The West Coast LEAF and BC Society of Transition Houses also recommended increased investments for safe and affordable public transit options in rural and remote communities in alignment with the Call for Justice 4.8 from the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. West Coast

LEAF shared that a lack of safe transportation forces women and marginalized individuals to resort to risky transportation options such as hitchhiking to access services and jobs. The BC Society of Transition Houses shared that many of their members indicate existing transportation options are insufficient with limited public transit times and routes and cost. They further noted that Indigenous women are severely impacted by this and discussed the systemic nature of the problem and how it is heightened by the intersectionality of gender, isolation, and racism.

ATU Local 1724 recommended increased direct provincial funding for HandyDART service. They noted that HandyDART provides access to medical treatment, community support and basic human necessities. They highlighted that according to the Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation, 67 percent of HandyDART trips are to access health services and that demand is expected to increase as the population ages. They further noted that HandyDART service can reduce long-term care and hospital stays.

The Committee also received submissions related to funding for specific projects and transit agencies. Nathan Davidowicz recommended that BC Transit and TransLink be required to purchase new electric buses. Both the University of British Columbia and the City of Vancouver discussed the need to prioritize and follow through on funding for the Millennium Line SkyTrain Extension to the university while the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade encouraged working with other levels of government on securing funding for TransLink and similar agencies. The Better Transit Alliance of Greater Victoria recommended funding for a new transit depot and an expanded fleet in Greater Victoria, and the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce supported the development of a ferry shuttle between the Westshore and downtown Victoria. The BC Hydro Ratepayers Association suggested creating regional rapid rail lines, including from the Lower Mainland to Chilliwack, Tsawwassen to Vancouver, and from White Rock to Vancouver.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

The BC Road Builders & Heavy Construction Association noted that jobs, trade, supply-chain security, and quality of life is intricately linked to strong and reliable transportation infrastructure, and that investments in infrastructure are critical to economic recovery efforts. They described the state of disrepair of some roads, bridges, and tunnels, and how climate change is intensifying wear and tear. The association,

along with the BC Stone Sand and Gravel Association, also discussed how investing in roads and maintenance improves the transportation network leading to less time spent in traffic and consequently reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

The importance of aligning transportation infrastructure investments with climate goals was expressed by several organizations. The BC Sustainable Energy Association was of the view that too much is spent on general-purpose traffic lanes and other infrastructure that induces more traffic and greenhouse gas emissions while the Better Transit Alliance of Greater Victoria noted that transportation is BC's largest and fastest growing source of greenhouse gas emissions. For Our Grandkids Victoria discussed how transportation infrastructure funding is largely spent on highway expansion and stated that additional investments in more sustainable and different modes of transportation are needed.

The BC Maritime Employers Association advocated for targeted support to address infrastructure bottlenecks, including in roads and rail. They described challenges for supply chains with increased turbulence and uncertainty due to pandemic-related shutdowns and rail disruptions, and the importance of being able to continue to move essential goods. The BC Marine Terminal Operators Association discussed the need for a comprehensive goods movement strategy for securing local supply chains while supporting sustainability objectives and helping to improve the competitiveness and performance of BC's marine terminals. The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade similarly made several recommendations related to ensuring trade-enabling infrastructure and land to facilitate the movement of goods and maintain BC's competitiveness as a gateway. The board also suggested reviewing and amending the current regulatory framework, in consultation with the trucking industry, with the core principle of ensuring safety and moving to a simpler, commodity-agnostic approach, as well as ensuring a competitive and fair tendering process for public projects.

The Kelowna Chamber of Commerce specifically recommended better supporting the aviation industry, including working with the federal government on this issue. They noted that the aviation-based industries are struggled to grow and that companies in the Okanagan are suffering due to a lack of funding and attention from national bodies.

A number of organizations also advocated for funding and investments in specific infrastructure projects across BC. These included: rural roads in the North Peace, South Taylor Hill and Taylor Bridge in northeast BC, additional investments in the

Okanagan, replacement of the George Massey Tunnel, an additional berth at Duke Point Terminal, the Gingolx Harbour, and several highways.

CONCLUSIONS

The Committee acknowledged the benefits of active transportation with respect to supporting climate action, healthy living, and community. Members noted that a strategy is currently in place with respect to active transportation; however, there may be opportunities to better prioritize investments in this area. They particularly focused on opportunities to engage grassroots organizations in this work as well as the need to better address maintenance and repair.

Committee Members discussed the need for affordable, reliable, and timely public transit, and how access to public transit is an equity issue. They especially acknowledged challenges in small, rural, remote, and Indigenous communities where there may be limited or no public or regional transit connections, as well as the need to increase accessible transportation services such as HandyDART. The Committee observed that public transit is directly connected to a number of areas including safety, climate change, access to learning and jobs, and access to health care and other public services, and as such, investments in public transit can provide significant economic, environmental, health, and social returns. Members also noted that improving public transit can help provide a much-needed transportation option for K-12 students. They were of the view that a comprehensive plan needs to address gaps and improve the provision of transit services across the province.

With respect to transportation infrastructure generally, the Committee acknowledged how infrastructure is critical for moving goods and resources in a timely manner and therefore critical to maintaining a growing economy. Members agreed that investments in transportation infrastructure need to be integrated and comprehensive to address economic, social, and environmental needs, including ensuring projects incorporate active transportation and public transit infrastructure where possible, while also meeting climate objectives. The Committee also discussed varying perspectives with respect to the tendering process for infrastructure projects and agreed on the importance of ensuring the process is fair and competitive.

As it relates to auto insurance, Committee Members recognized that there have been a number of recent changes. They noted that there may be opportunities to continue to make improvements to ICBC with respect to service, accessibility, and affordability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Active Transportation (Cycling and Walking)

138. Continue investments in active transportation in partnership with local governments and community-based organizations, with particular attention to small, rural, and remote communities.

Auto Insurance

139. Continue to enhance innovation, accessibility, service, and affordability of auto insurance through ICBC.

Public Transit

140. Develop a comprehensive, province-wide public transit plan to ensure accessible, affordable public transportation options are available across the province, with a view to addressing gaps in the provision of regional transportation services, investing in electric buses, increasing accessible transportation options such as HandyDART, and addressing the needs of small, rural, remote, and Indigenous communities.

Transportation Infrastructure

141. Ensure that investments and improvements in transportation infrastructure support trade and the efficient movement of goods to market while also leveraging opportunities to expand active and public transportation and implement climate-friendly solutions.

142. Invest in roads and highways in rural BC.

143. Support the aviation industry in the Lower Mainland, the Okanagan, and in northern BC where aviation-based industries are struggling to grow.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Indigenous Peoples and Reconciliation

1. Ensure budgetary and policy decisions and actions are made through the lens of reconciliation and anchored in the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and the recommendations in the In Plain Sight Report.
2. Provide support to the Métis Nation British Columbia for programs and services to Métis people.

Systemic Barriers – Gender and Race

3. Provide predictable investments in programs, services, and supports across all sectors to improve gender and racial equity, access, opportunity, safety, and participation.

Accessibility

4. Continue a comprehensive approach to improving the accessibility of public infrastructure across the province.
5. Expand medical coverage or explore new ways to reduce the significant personal cost of accessibility modifications and mobility aids for individuals, including vehicle lifts, ramps, or hoists.

Digital Connectivity

6. Recognize the critical importance of digital connectivity and significantly enhance and expedite efforts to ensure the provision of affordable accessible internet across the province, with particular attention to rural, remote, and Indigenous communities.

ADVANCED EDUCATION

Adult Education and Literacy

7. Increase funding for adult education and literacy, including increasing the number of funded courses to reflect a broad range of educational needs and interests and to improve employment opportunities for individuals.

Capital Funding

8. Allocate resources to support post-secondary institutions to build infrastructure to provide full services on campus such as recreation and wellness centres, and address the urgent need for student housing, particularly at smaller colleges.

Indigenous Students

9. Provide additional supports for Indigenous learners, including Elder programs and similar initiatives that provide connection to culture and community, Indigenous counsellors and advisors, and mechanisms to ensure improved access and affordability.

International Students

10. Recognize the value and contributions of international students and diversity by continuing to promote BC as a welcoming jurisdiction for international students including examining the business model, providing wrap-around supports, and ensuring safety and fair treatment as well as transparency and predictability regarding tuition fees.

Operational Funding

11. Recognize the value and importance of post-secondary education by examining the funding model to ensure investments position BC to meet the needs of the future workforce, address operational pressures and programming demands, and include consideration for short-term financial flexibility with clearly defined accountabilities and transparency to support recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research and Innovation

12. Provide consistent and ongoing funding for graduate and undergraduate student research across the province to support communities and spur economic and social recovery.

Student Supports

13. Increase supports to address sexualized and gender-based violence on campus and to ensure a more extensive and robust mental health network at post-secondary institutions across the province.

Technology, Trades, and Skills Training

14. Increase investments and opportunities for upskilling, reskilling, co-ops, and micro-credential programs as well as apprenticeships and trades training.

Tuition and Financial Assistance

15. Reduce financial barriers to post-secondary education, including by temporarily expanding grant funding, to ensure students have increased levels of support for the years following the COVID-19 pandemic and to encourage participation in and completion of post-secondary education.
16. Improve transparency regarding course fees, ancillary fees, and other expenses related to the direct and indirect costs of education.

ARTS, LIBRARIES AND SPORT

Arts and Culture

17. Support recovery in the arts and culture sector by providing predictable, long-term funding, providing a live entertainment labour tax credit for BC-based productions, and promoting attendance at festivals, fairs, rodeos and other arts and culture events.
18. Explore mechanisms to support individual artists to eliminate insecurity and precarity.
19. Partner with other levels of government to invest in capital infrastructure for the arts and culture sector.
20. Create a program to incentivize the purchase of BC-published books in schools and libraries.

Digital Media, Music, and Film

21. Support the digital media, music, and film industry by implementing a labour tax credit for the creation of made-in-BC content for the broadcast sector, ensuring BC remains competitive in attracting productions and operations to the province, and affording equal opportunities for artists and companies throughout BC.

Public Libraries

22. Increase provincial operational funding for public libraries and provide targeted support for libraries in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities.

Sport

23. Increase investment in the sport sector, including providing an additional \$12 million over three years to implement the provincial Pathways to Sport strategic framework, to promote recovery in the sector, increase participation in sport, address gender equity in sport participation, and encourage healthy living and wellness.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Agriculture, Fish and Food Security

24. Support BC's agriculture industry and strengthen food security by addressing barriers to new and continued agricultural activity, including examining how the Agricultural Land Reserve can better facilitate farming, providing supports to new farmers, and encouraging best practices through extension services.
25. Invest in agricultural infrastructure, including water infrastructure and aging and depleted infrastructure such as fences, as well as climate adaptation and emissions-reduction measures.
26. Ensure a robust regulatory framework and strengthen protections and safety for temporary farm workers, including implementing a new mid-season inspection process in consultation with industry.
27. Support the role of the PNE as a provincial leader in agricultural outreach.
28. Implement a minimum wholesale price on absolute alcohol.
29. Increase support for aquaculture and processing in BC, including working with the federal government on regulatory and protection measures to enhance aquaculture.

Forestry

30. Ensure reforms to forest management and practices support reconciliation, healthy forests, climate action, strong communities, and value-added opportunities, in consultation and collaboration with Indigenous peoples, industry and local communities, including developing a community-based forest sector and strengthening economic transition supports for families and communities.

Jobs and Immigration

31. Take a comprehensive approach to addressing labour shortages by targeting untapped sources of skilled workers, investing in diversity and inclusion strategies, encouraging healthy and safe workplaces, and working with the federal government to increase BC's allocation for the Provincial Nominee Program.

Natural Resource and Rural Development

32. Significantly increase resources to ensure sufficient capacity within natural resource ministries and Indigenous communities to provide predictability and improve timeliness of permitting as well as to enhance monitoring and oversight.
33. Continue the pathway to electrification and decarbonization of mining and other natural resource operations.
34. Increase funding for Geoscience BC.
35. Consider the value-added resource manufacturing sectors of chemistry and plastics as a strategic supply chain sector for the province, and provide supports to build new, low-carbon and zero-carbon facilities, where possible, or deploy emission reduction technologies.

36. Provide dedicated supports to strengthen and diversify rural economies through a mechanism such as the Rural Dividend Fund.

Tourism

37. Support recovery and expansion of the tourism sector, including exploring partnerships with Indigenous groups and communities, promoting environmentally-friendly visitor experiences and sustainable business practices, expanding accessibility and inclusion initiatives, and increasing investment in tourism marketing.

Trade

38. Reduce interprovincial trade barriers to support small- and medium-sized businesses, and strengthen investments to support international trade and exports.

Technology and Innovation

39. Continue to embrace technology and innovation as critical drivers of economic growth and resilience with increased investment in tech talent and training, support for entrepreneurs to scale up, and a competitive tax eco-system that encourages high-growth domestic innovators to stay and build businesses in BC.
40. Support the development of the life sciences and biomanufacturing strategy, including training and development of needed talent.
41. Ensure that the benefits of technology and innovation are felt around the province by working with rural and northern communities to support innovation and create job growth.
42. Provide tax incentives to BC-based businesses using, building, and commercializing quantum computing technologies.

ENVIRONMENT

Climate Change and Clean Energy

43. Urgently address the climate crisis by mobilizing all levers of government and establishing a cross-ministry climate preparedness and adaptation taskforce to implement scientifically-informed solutions developed by and in consultation with Indigenous peoples, local governments, community organizations, and businesses.
44. Ensure BC's climate measures are actionable, adaptable, and flexible to address the needs and circumstances of different industries, communities, and regions, and result in meaningful reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.
45. Continue to incent and invest in clean and renewable energy sources to expediate the transition to a net-zero economy.

Electric and Low-Emission Vehicles

46. Maintain full funding for Clean BC's Go Electric BC Program and carefully examine hydro infrastructure to ensure that BC's electric grid will be able to support the transition to electric vehicles.
47. Support opportunities to convert commercial vehicles to zero- and low-emission fleets, including encouraging research and leveraging opportunities with respect to hydrogen.

Energy Efficiency and Buildings Standards

48. Examine existing incentives, programs, and job training programs, and engage building professionals, to ensure that BC has all the resources necessary to meet the retrofitting targets outlined by CleanBC while also alleviating high energy costs for those most in need.

Environmental Protection and Conservation

49. Better integrate science-based approaches, including local and Indigenous knowledge and practices into conservation, protection and predator management efforts, including wildlife conservation and management and fire mitigation practices.
50. Establish a permanent and sustainable fish, wildlife, and habitat management fund to support conservation activities by government, community organizations, the private sector, and Indigenous peoples.

Invasive Species

51. Significantly increase funding for invasive species prevention, monitoring, regulation, inspection, and mitigation as well as for preventing and responding to invasive species and noxious weeds incursions that arise as a direct result of wildfires and climate change.

Parks and Recreation

52. Provide increased funding for parks, recreation and trails to address gaps in maintenance and staff, including dedicated funding to community-based organizations for trail maintenance and development.

Recycling and Waste

53. Explore opportunities to establish a comprehensive province-wide waste management program that focuses on increased public awareness, local recycling of plastic and aluminum materials, and reducing waste, including mandating recycled content standards for all plastic products and packaging.

Water

54. Increase funding for watershed security to advance maintenance, conservation, and protection of BC's watersheds.
55. Update and modernize dams to meet safety standards and explore new ways to store water, such as small dams on tributaries.
56. Provide \$1 million per year over five years for the review of the Okanagan Lake Regulation System and Operating Plan.

FISCAL AND REGULATORY POLICY

Budgetary and Taxation Policy

57. Ensure BC's budgetary and taxation framework enables proactive public spending to address urgent challenges, supports a healthy and sustainable economy, enables competitiveness and innovation, and supports equality while ensuring confidence in the province's finances.

Co-operatives

58. Support the co-operative sector by investing in capacity-building and scaling of existing co-operatives and investing in the development of new co-operatives and community-based enterprises.

COVID-19 Recovery and Measures

59. Evaluate and adapt pandemic-related supports for individuals and small- and medium-sized businesses to ensure they are responsive to need, and support short- and long-term recovery.

Prompt Payment

60. Prioritize the introduction of prompt payment legislation.

Specific Taxation Measures

61. Re-evaluate commercial property assessment categories with a view to alleviating the impact of development potential on property assessments and associated taxation.
62. Examine and address non-compliance in the collection and remittance of PST by non-resident companies.
63. Evaluate and review opportunities to adjust the employer health tax thresholds.
64. Examine graduating the corporate income tax rate between small and large companies.
65. Review the luxury tax structure, thresholds, and policies to ensure it applies only to luxury items.

Tobacco and Cannabis

66. Ensure robust enforcement of illegal tobacco and cannabis.

HEALTH

Chronic Diseases and Complex Conditions

67. Increase access to a range of arthritis treatment options, including arthritis-specific primary and community care, and work with stakeholders to reduce wait times for joint replacements.
68. Fund specialized services to support women with both the trauma of intimate partner violence and brain injury, including training and awareness for community-based service providers, first responders and law enforcement to recognize brain injury, and prevention programs aimed at keeping people from becoming either a victim or perpetrator of intimate partner violence.
69. Reduce barriers and enhance coverage of diabetic medications and devices, including new technology such as FreeStyle Libre, and commit the necessary resources to implement a provincial diabetes strategy using the Diabetes 360° framework, as well as fully participate in federal, provincial, and territorial consultations on the development of a nationwide diabetes strategy.
70. Ensure individuals with Down syndrome and their families have access to appropriate services and supports, including access to registered therapy providers.
71. Ensure individuals with lymphatic disorders are able to proactively manage their condition by providing access to diagnostic services, treatment options, and appropriate equipment and supply.
72. Prioritize and fund the development of myalgic encephalomyelitis-specific billing codes for BC clinicians and the development of continuing medical education credits, modules or incentives for BC physicians, medical students, and other medical professionals to attend training about myalgic encephalomyelitis.
73. Implement a comprehensive British Columbia lung health strategy.
74. Establish a Cancer Prevention Strategy as part of BC's 10-Year Cancer plan and continue to support the Canadian Cancer Society's Centre for Cancer Prevention and Support through creating an Innovation Fund for Cancer Prevention.
75. Further invest in cancer care and treatments to meet the growing need from the aging population and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
76. Introduce a remote oral cancer screening program to expedite the triage of the potential oral cancer patients in remote areas.

77. Supply an automated breast ultrasound machine and screening products for every public hospital and clinic that has a mammogram machine and provide training to mammogram technicians to perform automated breast ultrasounds to address the shortage of sonographers, improve the efficiency of breast cancer screening, and improve the early detection of cancer in dense breast tissue.
78. Designate a separate Medical Services Plan code for breast screening ultrasounds necessary for dense breast tissue with a recommended cost to perform the procedure.
79. Expand Medical Services Plan coverage for the prostate-specific antigen test for asymptomatic individuals when ordered by a physician.

Community Care and Seniors

80. Immediately review the continuum of long-term care to home care services to ensure high quality, culturally-appropriate care, including: strongly defining and implementing care, health and safety standards; ensuring robust oversight and operator accountability; ensuring adequate staffing levels and hours of care; and incorporating resident and family voices.
81. Implement a comprehensive plan for the development of affordable long-term care and assisted living spaces to ensure British Columbians receive appropriate care.
82. Support seniors to age in place by increasing home support services and programs, including the Better at Home program, adjusting the co-payment for home support services so it is equitable to long-term care funding, and exploring innovative, affordable aging in place models, such as co-housing, HomeShare projects, and co-operative housing.
83. Increase investments in community supports, caregiver supports, and respite programs, as well as programs and supports for individuals with dementia and Alzheimer's.

Health Human Resources

84. Support education, recruitment, and retention efforts to address the shortage of health professionals, especially in rural and remote areas, by expanding post-secondary training capacity and clinical leadership opportunities, providing incentives, and removing barriers for internationally trained health professionals with respect to bridging and licensing.
85. Leverage existing health human resources to ensure access to timely and appropriate care by addressing administrative and logistical barriers to service provision and access to information, and by ensuring all health professionals are supported and enabled to work to their full scope of practice.
86. Expand and significantly increase funding for multi-disciplinary, integrated, community-based primary care networks, including integrating additional health professionals such as psychologists and chiropractors, into this team-based model.
87. Improve access to effective chronic pain management services by allocating \$2.7 million over four years for a pilot initiative within primary care networks in ten communities for chiropractors to treat, manage and prevent chronic pain conditions, particularly for vulnerable populations with low-income.

Hospice and Palliative Care

88. Increase investments in hospices and palliative care as well as grief and bereavement programs, including developing and implementing provincial standards and accreditation for hospice care, expanding palliative facility space, improving training for hospice workers, expanding grief and bereavement programs, and increasing awareness of the needs of people in grief.

89. Increase annual funding to Canuck Place Children's Hospice.

Medical Coverage and Services

90. Invest in prevention and early intervention of medical conditions, including expanding coverage for medical aids and prostheses, rehabilitation, psychology, and dental care.

Mental Health and Addictions

91. Invest in the continuum of mental health services and infrastructure for all ages recognizing the specificity of support required for different populations and varying degrees of mental health and addiction challenges, including prevention, early intervention, community care, integrated wrap-around support, addictions harm reduction and recovery, and involuntary care.

Pharmaceuticals

92. Implement a PharmaCare strategy to reduce the cost of prescriptions and ensure excellent access to innovative medicines, including working with the federal government on cost, coverage, and access to prescription drugs.

Public Health

93. Support a holistic approach to population health and promotion, including implementing a social determinants of health lens in all policies and actions, investing resources to strengthen capacity and public health data collection, increasing investments in physical activity and wellness, and using available regulatory and taxation tools to incent healthy behaviour.
94. Fund universal access to no-cost prescription contraception.
95. Explore the effectiveness of various methods and practices, such as antimicrobial copper, to reduce the opportunity for virus and bacteria transmission in public spaces.
96. Invest in public health initiatives and professionals to support maternal health and healthy infant development, with special attention to low-income families and those facing other threats to their ability to thrive.
97. Adopt a gendered approach to healthcare, including a Women's Health Strategy that reflects the distinct equity issues affecting women's health and well-being in BC.

Research

98. Provide reliable funding for health science research, including funding for Genome BC and TRIUMF, as well as funding for women's health research.

Rural and Remote Health Care

99. Ensure British Columbians who require ambulatory medical services outside of their home communities receive timely and reliable return transportation.
100. Explore innovative ways to expand health services in communities and through technology to rural, remote, and underserved areas of the province. [See also Recommendation 6 in Equity and Inclusion]

HOUSING

Affordability and Supply

101. Prioritize and take immediate action to increase the affordability and supply of housing by seriously examining all provincial policy levers, including: blanket zoning; municipal incentives to increase density and address development and permitting processes and timelines; taxation; co-op housing; short-term rental regulations; and development incentives and other creative solutions and partnerships.

Complex Care, Supportive and Social Housing

102. Ensure all complex care and supportive housing initiatives across the province incorporate culturally diverse and appropriate care, including specific supports for women leaving violence, Indigenous people, youth, seniors, individuals with disabilities, and those at risk of or experiencing homelessness.
103. Develop provincial guidance on the methodology for community level housing data, such as point-in-time homeless counts, to establish consistent data collection, support the capacity of smaller communities, and to better inform housing and program decisions at all levels of government.

Money Laundering, Mortgage Fraud and Data

104. Combat mortgage fraud and money laundering in the real estate market, including strengthening enforcement and penalties for crime, and improving education for the public and enforcement agencies.

Rental Regulations

105. Ensure new and existing rental regulations are meeting the objective of increasing and protecting the supply of properly maintained rental availability, including balancing the rights of both landlords and tenants, and provide adequate funding to the Residential Tenancy Branch to enforce regulations.

Strata

106. Reform strata governance and implement structured regulations to address issues related to building maintenance plans, insurance coverage, the definition of a unit, and transparency for current and future unit owners, including providing education and training to unit owners and strata corporations on their roles and responsibilities.

K-12 EDUCATION

Capital Funding

107. Re-examine capital funding with a view to being more forward-looking and responsive, addressing inequities and gaps with respect to provincial funding for IT and maintenance, and reviewing policies regarding district contributions and portable construction.
108. Prioritize methods to fast-track construction of new schools and additions, including exploring the use of modular construction and prioritizing means to lower the environmental impact of new and existing schools.

Operational Funding

109. Review the operational funding formula for K-12 education to ensure it is proactive and transparent, based on the identified needs of school districts, with appropriate consideration for anticipated population changes, equitable distribution of resources, supports to deliver the new curriculum and reconciliation initiatives, increased health and safety measures, and student transportation.

Distributed Learning and Independent Schools

110. Recognize online and distributed learning programs as integral to the K-12 education system and re-examine funding to ensure these programs continue to meet the needs of all learners, particularly children and families in rural and remote areas and children and youth with special needs.

Recruitment and Retention

111. Explore creative measures to recruit and retain teachers, including providing incentives, providing relief to teachers in school districts with high housing costs, addressing work-life balance challenges, and reducing barriers for immigrants and internationally educated teachers.

Students with Special Needs

112. Increase supports for students with special needs, including providing supports and training to staff to support inclusion and improving early identification and assessment.

Vulnerable Students

113. Support the expansion, coordination, and sustainability of school meal programs, such as the BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program, and encourage collaboration with BC agricultural producers.
114. Increase funding for mental health supports in schools, including student-focused resources, wrap-around services, and personnel.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND JUSTICE

Access to Justice and Legal Aid

115. Increase investments in legal aid and legal clinics, including improving access to justice in family law matters, expanding eligibility and coverage limits for legal aid, expanding the scope of services, and increasing training for practitioners on trauma-informed and culturally safe practices.
116. Provide stable and adequate funding to responsive services such as the child and youth advocacy centres across the province.

Correctional Services

117. Ensure cross-sectoral collaboration between the justice system and the social service sector especially during the reintegration period for vulnerable offenders.
118. Fund the Forensic Psychiatric Hospital to accept people with high mental health needs to live with dignity when they must be held in a secure setting.

Court Services

119. Improve access to and modernize the courts and justice system through investments in technology, equipment, and infrastructure, especially in rural and remote communities.

Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Assault

120. Increase services and supports for survivors of sexual assault and gender-based violence by providing multi-year funding for community-based and Indigenous-led programs, providing wrap-around and culturally appropriate services and supports, and investing in violence prevention programs and transition housing.
121. Support collaboration and coordination amongst service providers, health professionals, and health authorities to improve services to survivors of sexual assault and gender-based violence.

Ground Disturbance

122. Work with municipalities and stakeholders to address ground disturbance and prevent damage to underground infrastructure, and promote awareness of the BC 1 Call website and phone number.

Natural Disasters and Emergency Preparedness

123. Significantly strengthen emergency management planning and readiness, and ensure existing plans and strategies are comprehensive, proactive and incorporate: prevention, mitigation, adaptation, response, and recovery; improved communication and coordination with residents, local governments and other stakeholders; evacuation of long-term care and other health care settings; local knowledge; and investment in locally-owned equipment.

Policing

124. Explore alternative approaches to mental health crises that are less reliant on police and increase funding to mental health and social services to address the increasing complexity of these issues.
125. Provide local, multi-year, culturally relevant funding to address youth gang issues.

Restorative Justice

126. Provide increased and sustainable funding for restorative justice programs and better integrate restorative justice within the justice system, including ensuring programs are culturally appropriate to reflect the province's diversity.

Sex Work

127. Provide increased and ongoing funding for programs and services, including peer-based violence prevention services, that promote the safety and security of all individuals who engage in sex work regardless of gender, circumstance, or type of sex work, and without the sole focus being on exiting or trafficking services.
128. Provide ongoing funding for the provincial bad date and aggressor reporting system.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Charitable and Non-Profit Sector

129. Continue to support the charitable and non-profit sector, including exploring incentives to donate through tax credits.

Child Care and Early Childhood Development

130. Continue investments to improve access to affordable, flexible child care that meets the needs of local communities, including providing before- and after-school care options and exploring creative partnerships with businesses and other organizations to create more child care spaces.
131. Continue to invest in training, recruitment, and retention of early childhood educators, including consideration for shifting training to an apprenticeship model.

Children and Youth in Care

132. Fully evaluate systems and supports currently in place for children and youth in care, including improving early adulthood supports for youth aging out of care to support independence, supporting family and cultural connections, and improving supports to kinship caregivers.

Children and Youth with Special Needs

133. Provide sufficient supports and services for children and youth with special needs and their families, including ensuring early identification, addressing wait times, and providing timely access to early intervention services, and increasing income supports.

Community Social Services and Social Policy

134. Provide predictable, increased, multi-year funding to the community social services sector to enable long-term planning with a focus on measuring and monitoring outcomes, including addressing compensation challenges.

Employment Standards

135. Significantly increase funding to the Employment Standards Branch and the Labour Relations Board to hire additional staff and reduce lengthy wait times.
136. Expedite the enhancement of labour protections for gig workers.

Poverty Reduction

137. Review the eligibility and administration of income and disability assistance, including earning exemptions policies and thresholds, with a view to providing flexibility, reducing barriers to work, and providing targeted support to the most vulnerable.

TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT

Active Transportation (Cycling and Walking)

138. Continue investments in active transportation in partnership with local governments and community-based organizations, with particular attention to small, rural, and remote communities.

Auto Insurance

139. Continue to enhance innovation, accessibility, service, and affordability of auto insurance through ICBC.

Public Transit

140. Develop a comprehensive, province-wide public transit plan to ensure accessible, affordable public transportation options are available across the province, with a view to addressing gaps in the provision of regional transportation services, investing in electric buses, increasing accessible transportation options such as HandyDART, and addressing the needs of small, rural, remote, and Indigenous communities.

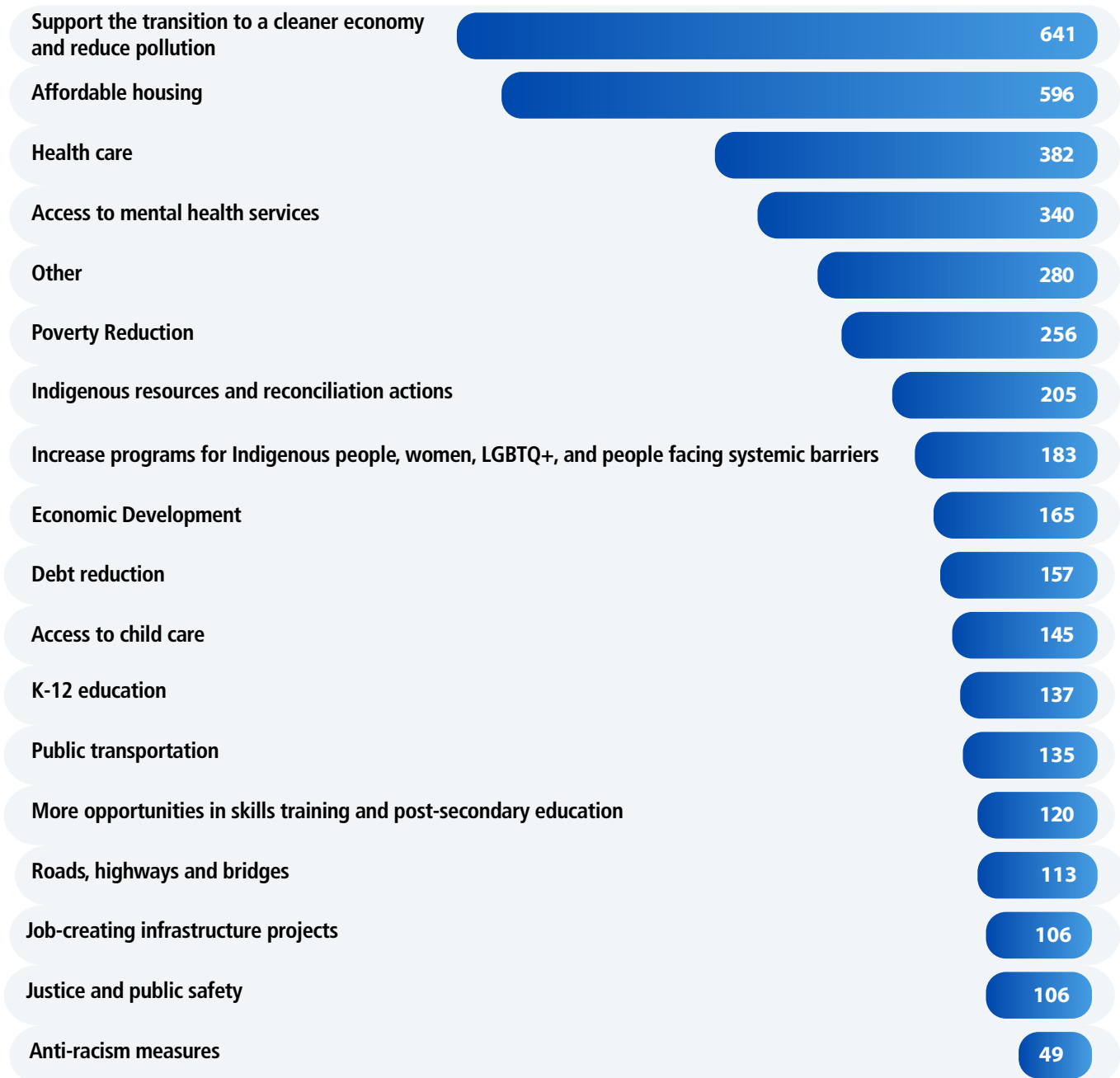
Transportation Infrastructure

141. Ensure that investments and improvements in transportation infrastructure support trade and the efficient movement of goods to market while also leveraging opportunities to expand active and public transportation and implement climate-friendly solutions.
142. Invest in roads and highways in rural BC.
143. Support the aviation industry in the Lower Mainland, the Okanagan, and in northern BC where aviation-based industries are struggling to grow.

APPENDIX A: SURVEY RESULTS

QUESTION 1

The BC government is committed to making life more affordable, delivering the services people count on and building a resilient, sustainable economy. Please select three priorities to help make life better for you, your family and your community as we move through recovery. (1,414 Responses)

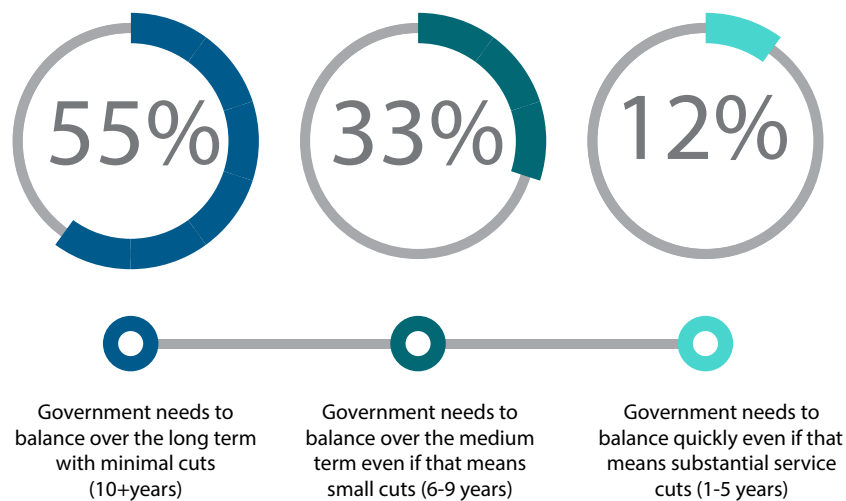


“Other” Summary

Responses in the “other” category were overwhelmingly focused on environmental protection, natural resource extraction and climate change (38 percent of “other” responses). The main areas of concern were regarding preserving old growth forests and natural areas, eliminating government subsidies for natural resource industries, and taking more aggressive measures towards mitigating climate change. Other topics mentioned include: increasing support programs for persons with disabilities and individuals with neurodiverse needs, COVID-19 economic recovery and public health measures, and increasing staffing and resources for healthcare.

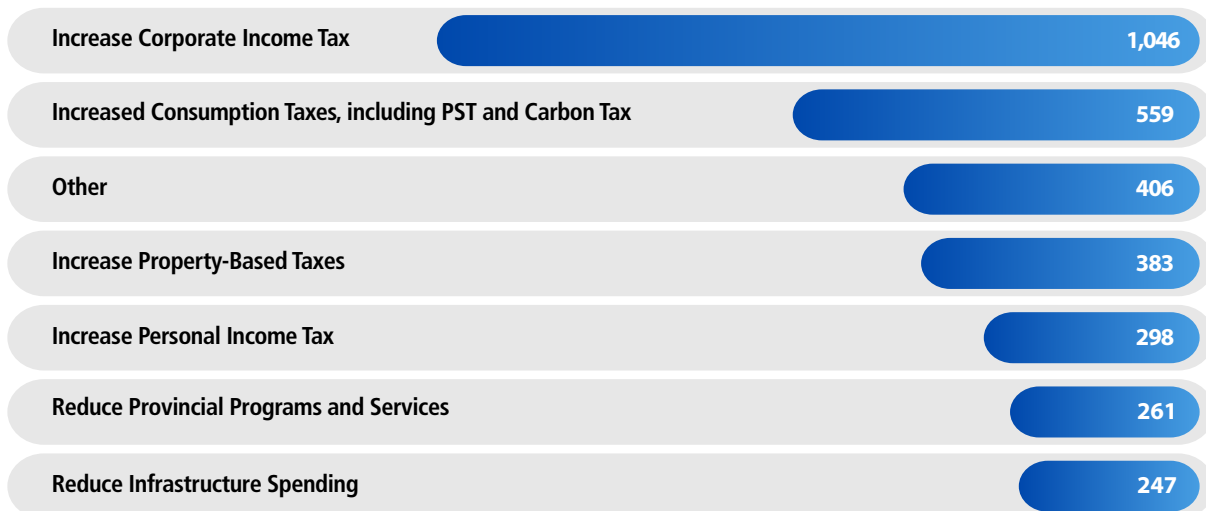
QUESTION 2

Part of BC’s economic recovery includes a sustainable path back to a balanced provincial budget. Early projections of a return to balance are seven to nine years, and a more detailed timeline will be outlined in Budget 2022. Which statement below best matches your views about returning to balance? (1,399 Responses)



QUESTION 3

The pandemic has required unprecedented spending to help people, businesses, and communities. The British Columbia government has various tools it can use to reduce provincial debt over time. Check the options you can support. (Select all that apply) (1,412 Responses)

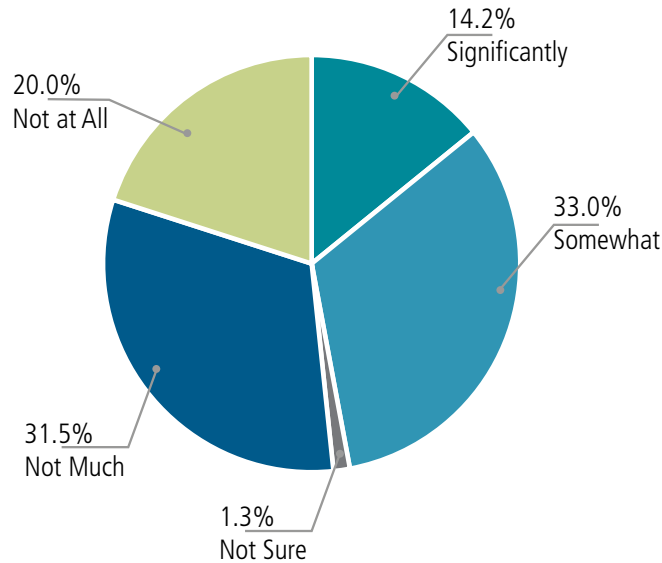


“Other” Summary

Responses in the “other” category are largely split three ways. The first was to reduce the size of government including reducing services and programs, and improving the efficiency of government spending. The second most frequent theme was implementing a wealth tax; this is generally viewed as increasing taxes on both the income and assets of the wealthiest British Columbians. The final theme was eliminating natural resource subsidies with a focus on eliminating subsidies to the oil and gas sector as a means to reduce provincial debt over time.

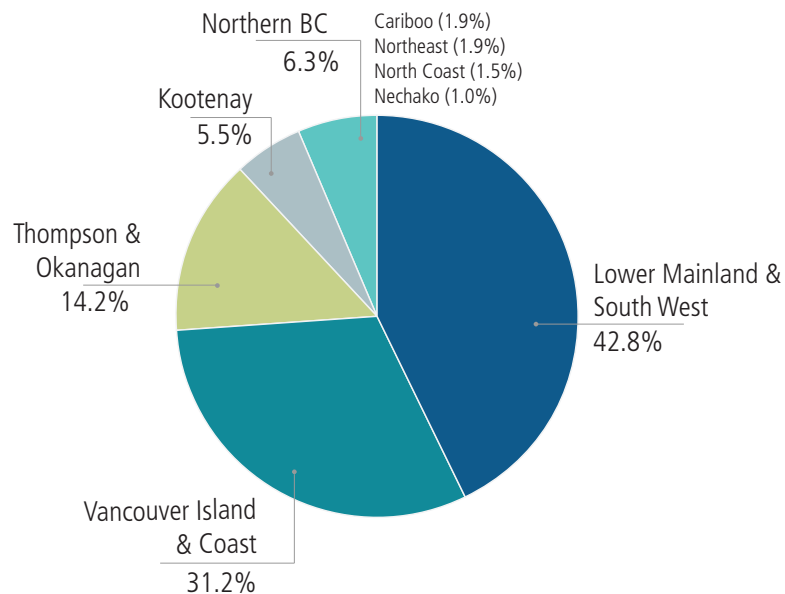
QUESTION 4

How has the pandemic affected your financial well-being? (1,413 Responses)



QUESTION 5

Please identify your region. (1,412 Responses)



APPENDIX B: PRESENTATIONS

- A Way Home Kamloops, Tangie Genshorek (28-Sep-21, Kamloops)
- ACCESS BC - SCI BC - Regional Tourism Associations, Nancy Harris (28-Sep-21, Prince George)
- AccessBC Campaign for free prescription contraception, Ruth Habte (20-Sep-21, Vancouver)
- Advanced Biofuels Canada, Doug Hooper (3-Sep-21, Virtual)
- Adventure Tourism Coalition, Kathy MacRae (1-Sep-21, Virtual)
- Amata Transition House Society, Lauren Johnson (2-Sep-21, Virtual)
- Archway Community Services, Laura Midan (30-Sep-21, Richmond)
- ASPECT BC - Association of Service Providers for Employability & Career Training, Janet Morris-Reade (27-Sep-21, Victoria)
- Association for Mineral Exploration, Kendra Johnson (30-Aug-21, Virtual)
- Association of BC Public Library Directors, Elizabeth Tracy (1-Sep-21, Virtual)
- Association of Book Publishers of BC, Heidi Waechtler (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)
- Tunya Audain (20-Sep-21, Vancouver)
- Backpack Buddies, Emily-anne King (3-Sep-21, Virtual)
- Ballet Victoria, Paul Destrooper (27-Sep-21, Victoria)
- Andrea Barnett (28-Sep-21, Kamloops)
- Battered Women's Support Services Association, Angela Marie MacDougall (2-Sep-21, Virtual)
- BC Agriculture Council, Danielle Synotte (28-Sep-21, Kamloops)
- BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation, Pat Tonn (3-Sep-21, Virtual)
- BC Alliance for Arts + Culture, Howard Jang (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)
- BC Alliance for Healthy Living, Rita Koutsodimos (2-Sep-21, Virtual)
- BC Anesthesiologists' Society, Roland Orfaly (30-Sep-21, Richmond)
- BC Association for Child Development and Intervention, Jason Gordon (2-Sep-21, Virtual)
- BC Association of Broadcasters, Robert Germain (1-Sep-21, Virtual)
- BC Association of Farmers' Markets, Heather O'Hara (30-Sep-21, Richmond)
- BC Bioenergy Network, Scott Stanners (3-Sep-21, Virtual)
- BC Blind Sports and Recreation Association, Jane Blaine (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)
- BC Building Trades, Brynn Bourke (30-Aug-21, Virtual)
- BC Care Providers Association, Terry Lake (20-Sep-21, Vancouver)
- BC Cattlemen's Association, Kevin Boon (28-Sep-21, Kamloops)
- BC Centre for Women in the Trades, Karen Dearlove (20-Sep-21, Vancouver)
- BC CEO Network Association, Brandon Arnett (2-Sep-21, Virtual)
- BC Chamber of Commerce, Fiona Famulak (30-Aug-21, Virtual)
- BC Chapter of the Coalition for Healthy School Food, Samantha Gambling (29-Sep-21, Nanaimo)
- BC Chiropractic Association, Zehra Gerretsen (30-Sep-21, Richmond)
- BC Climate Alliance, Margaret Holm (3-Sep-21, Virtual)
- BC Coalition for Forestry Reform, Taryn Skalbania (29-Sep-21, Kelowna)
- BC Common Ground Alliance, M.J. Whitemarsh (27-Sep-21, Victoria)
- BC Complex Kids Society, Brenda Lenahan (29-Sep-21, Nanaimo)
- BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils, Andrea Sinclair (20-Sep-21, Vancouver)
- BC Construction Association, Chris Atchison (27-Sep-21, Victoria)
- BC Council of Forest Industries, Alexa Young (30-Aug-21, Virtual)
- BC Dairy Association, Christine Terpsma (30-Sep-21, Richmond)
- BC Employment Standards Coalition, David Fairey (30-Aug-21, Virtual)
- BC Federation of Labour, Laird Cronk (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)
- BC Federation of Students, Melissa Chirino (31-Aug-21, Virtual)
- BC Freshwater Legacy Initiative, Tim Morris (3-Sep-21, Virtual)
- BC Fruit Growers' Association, Glen Lucas (28-Sep-21, Kamloops)
- BC Gaming Industry Association, Shiera Stuart (30-Sep-21, Richmond)
- BC Hospice Palliative Care Association, Donna Flood (28-Sep-21, Prince George)
- BC Libraries Cooperative, Kevin Millsip (1-Sep-21, Virtual)
- BC Library Trustees Association, Jerrilyn Kirk (1-Sep-21, Virtual)
- BC Lung Association, Christopher Lam (20-Sep-21, Vancouver)
- BC Maritime Employers Association, Mike Leonard (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)
- BC Network of Child and Youth Advocacy Centres, Brooke McLardy (29-Sep-21, Kelowna)
- BC Notaries Association, Chad Rintoul (27-Sep-21, Victoria)
- BC People First, Jo-Anne Gauthier, Margaux Wosk (30-Sep-21, Richmond)
- BC People First, Margaux Wosk (30-Sep-21, Richmond)
- BC Pharmacy Association, Geraldine Vance (2-Sep-21, Virtual)
- BC Poverty Reduction Coalition, Rowan Burdge (2-Sep-21, Virtual)
- BC Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association, Darren Danyluk (20-Sep-21, Vancouver)
- BC Psychological Association, Lesley Lutes (2-Sep-21, Virtual)
- BC Real Estate Association, Trevor Hargreaves (20-Sep-21, Vancouver)
- BC Regional Tourism Secretariat, Anthony Everett (29-Sep-21, Nanaimo)
- BC School Sports, Jordan Abney (20-Sep-21, Vancouver)

BC School Trustees Association, Stephanie Higgison (29-Sep-21, Nanaimo)

BC SCI Community Services Network, Sian Blyth (27-Sep-21, Victoria)

BC Seafood Alliance, Christina Burrige (30-Aug-21, Virtual)

BC Snowmobile Federation, Donegal Wilson (29-Sep-21, Kelowna)

BC Soccer Association, Jason Elligott (1-Sep-21, Virtual)

BC Society of Transition Houses, Amy FitzGerald (2-Sep-21, Virtual)

BC SPCA, Alison Cuffley (20-Sep-21, Vancouver)

BC Sport Tourism Network / Sport Hosting Vancouver, Michelle Collens (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)

BC Sports Hall of Fame, Nicholas Cartmell (1-Sep-21, Virtual)

BC Stone Sand and Gravel Association, Daniel Allard (30-Sep-21, Richmond)

BC Sustainable Energy Association, Tom Hackney (27-Sep-21, Victoria)

BC Teachers' Federation, Teri Mooring (20-Sep-21, Vancouver)

BC Tech Association, Jill Tipping (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)

BC Ultimate, Brian Gisel (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)

BC Watershed Security Coalition, Coree Tull (3-Sep-21, Virtual)

BC Wildlife Federation, Chuck Zuckerman (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)

BC Women's Health Foundation, Genesa Greening (2-Sep-21, Virtual)

BCEdAccess Society, Tracy Humphreys (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

BCIT Student Association, Stewart McGillivray (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

Better Transit Alliance of Greater Victoria, Eric Doherty (30-Aug-21, Virtual)

BGC BC (formerly Boys and Girls Clubs of BC), Carolyn Tuckwell (1-Sep-21, Virtual)

Big Brothers Big Sisters, Corina Carroll (2-Sep-21, Virtual)

Breakfast Club of Canada, Ryan Baker (3-Sep-21, Virtual)

British Columbia Association of the Appraisal Institute of Canada, Brett Garnett (20-Sep-21, Vancouver)

British Columbia Cycling Coalition, Ray Straatsma (30-Aug-21, Virtual)

British Columbia Dental Association, Samson Ng (20-Sep-21, Vancouver)

British Columbia Golf, Kris Jonasson (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)

British Columbia Library Association, Rina Hadziev (1-Sep-21, Virtual)

British Columbia Provincial Football Association, Keith Ryan (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)

British Columbia Rodeo Association, Patricia Gerhardi (1-Sep-21, Virtual)

British Columbia Yachts Broker Association, Rom Van Stolk (1-Sep-21, Virtual)

Building Owners and Managers Association of BC, Damian Stathonikos (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)

Burnaby Board of Trade, Paul Holden (30-Aug-21, Virtual)

Caledonia Ramblers Hiking Club, Dave King (28-Sep-21, Prince George)

Camosun College Faculty Association, Lynelle Yutani (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

Camosun College Student Society, Puneet Kaur (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

Canadian Addiction Treatment Centres, Matthew Grife (30-Sep-21, Richmond)

Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, Geoffrey Morrison (30-Aug-21, Virtual)

Canadian Association of Physician Assistants, Marina Banister (20-Sep-21, Vancouver)

Canadian Bar Association, BC Branch, Aleem Bharmal (2-Sep-21, Virtual)

Canadian Biogas Association, Jennifer Green (3-Sep-21, Virtual)

Canadian Cancer Society, Charles Aruliah (2-Sep-21, Virtual)

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Alexander Hemingway (30-Aug-21, Virtual)

Canadian Freshwater Alliance, Danielle Paydli (29-Sep-21, Nanaimo)

Canadian Media Producers Association, BC Branch, Haydn Wazelle (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)

Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division, Jonathan Morris (2-Sep-21, Virtual)

Canadian Society for Disability and Oral Health, Joan Rush (20-Sep-21, Vancouver)

Canadian Union of Public Employees British Columbia, Karen Ranalletta (30-Sep-21, Richmond)

Canuck Place Children's Hospice, Tarnia Taverner (20-Sep-21, Vancouver)

Capital Bike, Corey Burger (30-Aug-21, Virtual)

CEFA Early Learning Schools, Ron Cecillon (20-Sep-21, Vancouver)

Chartered Professional Accountants of British Columbia, Lori Mathison (30-Aug-21, Virtual)

Chemistry Industry Association of Canada, Greg Moffatt (30-Aug-21, Virtual)

Child Development Centre of Prince George, Candis Johnson (28-Sep-21, Prince George)

Citadel Speech and Language Services, Becca Yu (30-Sep-21, Richmond)

Citizens Climate Lobby, Nelson - West Kootenay Chapter, Laura Sacks (3-Sep-21, Virtual)

City of Prince George, Lyn Hall (28-Sep-21, Prince George)

Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC, Sharon Gregson (30-Sep-21, Richmond)

College of New Caledonia Students' Union, Amy Barry (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

College of the Rockies, Paul Vogt (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

College of the Rockies Faculty Association, Joan Kaun (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society, Robyn Hooper (3-Sep-21, Virtual)

Community Connections Society of South East British Columbia, Gary Eisele (2-Sep-21, Virtual)

Community Futures British Columbia, Larry Widmer (29-Sep-21, Kelowna)

Community Justice Centre of the Comox Valley, Bruce Curtis (29-Sep-21, Nanaimo)

Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness, Angela Fletcher (3-Sep-21, Virtual)

Comox Valley Families for Public Education, Shannon Aldinger (29-Sep-21, Nanaimo)

Comox Valley Lifelong Learning Centre, Peter Bazovský (1-Sep-21, Virtual)

Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia, Daniel Laitsch (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

Convenience Industry Council of Canada, Jeff Brownlee (30-Aug-21, Virtual)

Council of Canadian Innovators, Tessa Seager (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)

Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC, Sheila Pither (20-Sep-21, Vancouver)

Cranbrook Chamber of Commerce, Christine Hoechsmann (30-Aug-21, Virtual)

CUPE 1936 Community Services of Greater Vancouver, Sheryl Burns (20-Sep-21, Vancouver)

CUPE 3479 North Island College Support Staff, Michelle Waite (29-Sep-21, Nanaimo)

CUPE 728 Surrey School District Support Staff, Tammy Murphy (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

CUPE Local 391, Kari Scott-Whyte (1-Sep-21, Virtual)

Curl BC, Scott Braley (30-Sep-21, Richmond)

Cindy Dalglish (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

David Suzuki Foundation, Tom Green (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)

Nathan Davidowicz (30-Sep-21, Richmond)

Dense Breasts Canada, Michelle Di Tomaso (20-Sep-21, Vancouver)

DigiBC, Loc Dao (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)

Dogwood, David Mills (29-Sep-21, Nanaimo)

Downtown Victoria Business Association, Jeff Bray (27-Sep-21, Victoria)

Ducks Unlimited Canada, Andrea Barnett (28-Sep-21, Kamloops)

Dyslexia BC, Cathy McMillan (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

Dze I K'ant Friendship Centre Society, Annette Morgan (3-Sep-21, Virtual)

East Kootenay Invasive Species Council, Randy Harris (3-Sep-21, Virtual)

Elders Council for Parks in BC, Colin Campbell (3-Sep-21, Virtual)

Enid Elliot (27-Sep-21, Victoria)

Emily Carr Students' Union, Ishika Tripathi (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

Engage Sport North Society, Mandi Graham (1-Sep-21, Virtual)

Faculty Association of the College of New Caledonia, George Davison (28-Sep-21, Prince George)

Family Councils of BC Steering Committee, Nola Galloway (29-Sep-21, Nanaimo)

Family Services of Greater Vancouver, Maria Howard (20-Sep-21, Vancouver)

Family Services of the North Shore, Valerie Dolgin (30-Sep-21, Richmond)

Federation of Community Social Services of BC, Rick FitzZaland (27-Sep-21, Victoria)

Federation of Post-Secondary Educators, Brent Calvert (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

First Call: Child and Youth Advocacy Society, Adrienne Montani (2-Sep-21, Virtual)

First Things First Okanagan, Sue Kirschmann (3-Sep-21, Virtual)

First West Credit Union, Launi Skinner (30-Sep-21, Richmond)

For Our GrandKids Victoria, Kathryn Molloy (27-Sep-21, Victoria)

For Our Kids, Jennifer Edwards (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

Fort Nelson & District Chamber of Commerce, Bev Vandersteen (30-Aug-21, Virtual)

FortisBC, Jordan Bell (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)

Fostering Change, Susan Russell (20-Sep-21, Vancouver)

Foundry, Steve Mathias (2-Sep-21, Virtual)

Genome BC, Pascal Spothelfer (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)

Geoscience BC, Gavin Dirom (30-Aug-21, Virtual)

Gingolx Village Government, Corinne McKay (30-Aug-21, Virtual)

Graduate Student Societies of BC, Ruben Munoz (20-Sep-21, Vancouver)

Grand Forks & District Public Library, Cari Lynn Gawletz (1-Sep-21, Virtual)

Pamela Grant (27-Sep-21, Victoria)

Greater Vancouver Board of Trade, Bridgitte Anderson (30-Aug-21, Virtual)

Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce, Robin Cardew (30-Aug-21, Virtual)

Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce, Bruce Williams (30-Aug-21, Virtual)

David Green (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)

H.R. MacMillan Space Centre, Raylene Marchand (1-Sep-21, Virtual)

Habitat for Humanity, Pat McKenna (3-Sep-21, Virtual)

Scott Harrison (29-Sep-21, Nanaimo)

Heart & Stroke Foundation, Jeff Sommers (2-Sep-21, Virtual)

Horse Council BC, Sarah Allison (3-Sep-21, Virtual)

Hospital Employees' Union, Meena Brisard (30-Sep-21, Richmond)

Hydra Energy Canada Corp, Jessica Verhagen (3-Sep-21, Virtual)

IATSE (International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees) 168, George Scott (27-Sep-21, Victoria)

Inclusion BC, Karla Verschoor (2-Sep-21, Virtual)

Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity & Recreation Council, Corinne McKay (1-Sep-21, Virtual)

Innergex Renewable Energy, Julia Balabanowicz (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)

Insurance Bureau of Canada, Aaron Sutherland (27-Sep-21, Victoria)

International Mountain Bike Association of Canada, AJ Strawson (3-Sep-21, Virtual)

Invasive Species Council of BC, Gail Wallin (28-Sep-21, Prince George)

Ishtar Women's Resource Society, Meredith Klemmensen (30-Sep-21, Richmond)

Island Coastal Economic Trust, Aaron Stone (29-Sep-21, Nanaimo)

Juan de Fuca Performing Arts Centre Society, David Stocks (1-Sep-21, Virtual)

Kamloops Chamber of Commerce, Colin O'Leary (28-Sep-21, Kamloops)

Kamloops Symphony, Daniel Mills (28-Sep-21, Kamloops)

Kelowna Chamber of Commerce, Dan Rogers (29-Sep-21, Kelowna)

KidSport BC, Katelynn Ramage (1-Sep-21, Virtual)

Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Alan Davis (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

Lake Windermere Ambassadors, Shannon McGinty (3-Sep-21, Virtual)

Richard Lamoureux (29-Sep-21, Kelowna)

Langara College, Lane Trotter (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

Law Society of BC, Lisa Hamilton (2-Sep-21, Virtual)

Literacy Quesnel Society, Rebecca Beuschel (28-Sep-21, Prince George)

Living in Community, Halena Seiferling (30-Sep-21, Richmond)

Living Lakes Canada, Kat Hartwig (3-Sep-21, Virtual)

Living Wage for Families Campaign, Anastasia French (20-Sep-21, Vancouver)

Cynthia Lockrey (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

LUSH Valley Food Action Society, Maurita Prato (3-Sep-21, Virtual)

Lytton & District Chamber of Commerce, Bernard Fandrich (30-Aug-21, Virtual)

Manufacturing Safety Alliance of BC, Lisa McGuire (30-Sep-21, Richmond)

Men's Therapy Centre, Nick Sandor (27-Sep-21, Victoria)

Midwives Association of BC, Bernice Budz (2-Sep-21, Virtual)

Mining Association of BC, Michael Goehring (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)

Motion Picture Production Industry Association of BC, Peter Leitch (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)

MoveUP, David Black (30-Sep-21, Richmond)

Adi Mudaliar (30-Sep-21, Richmond)

My Sea to Sky, Tracey Saxby (3-Sep-21, Virtual)

National Elevator and Escalator Association, Christian von Donat (30-Sep-21, Richmond)

National Police Federation, Brian Sauv  (2-Sep-21, Virtual)

Nature United, Michael Reid (29-Sep-21, Nanaimo)

Nelson CARES Society, Jenny Robinson (3-Sep-21, Virtual)

New Car Dealers Association of BC, Blair Qualey (30-Sep-21, Richmond)

North Island College Faculty Association, Jen Wrye (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

North Island Students' Union, Carissa Wilson (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

North Peace Rural Roads Coalition, Jackie Kjos (30-Aug-21, Virtual)

North Shore Restorative Justice Society, Sioned Dyer (2-Sep-21, Virtual)

Northern Lights College, Todd Bondaroff (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

Office of the Seniors Advocate, Isobel Mackenzie (27-Sep-21, Victoria)

Okanagan Basin Water Board, Anna Warwick Sears (29-Sep-21, Kelowna)

Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society, Ian Graham (29-Sep-21, Kelowna)

Our Place Society, Julian Daly (27-Sep-21, Victoria)

Outdoor Recreation Council of British Columbia, Louise Pedersen (3-Sep-21, Virtual)

Pacific Legal Education and Outreach, River Shannon (2-Sep-21, Virtual)

Pacific National Exhibition, Shelley Frost (1-Sep-21, Virtual)

PacificSport Fraser Valley, Stephanie Rudnisky (30-Sep-21, Richmond)

PacificSport Interior BC, Carolyn Boomer (28-Sep-21, Kamloops)

PacificSport Vancouver Island, Catharine Edwards (1-Sep-21, Virtual)

Partnership for Water Sustainability in British Columbia, Ted van der Gulik (30-Sep-21, Richmond)

Peachland Watershed Protection Alliance, Alex Morrison (29-Sep-21, Kelowna)

PEERS Victoria Resource Society, Sophia Ciavarella (27-Sep-21, Victoria)

Performing Arts and Live Events Labour Coalition of BC, Scott Bellis (1-Sep-21, Virtual)

Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada, Cynthia Callard (2-Sep-21, Virtual)

Physiotherapy Association of BC, Christine Bradstock (20-Sep-21, Vancouver)

PISE (Pacific Institute for Sport Excellence), Robert Bettauer (1-Sep-21, Virtual)

Prince George Chamber of Commerce, Todd Corrigan (28-Sep-21, Prince George)

Prince Rupert Port Authority, Ken Veldman (30-Aug-21, Virtual)

Prisoners' Legal Services, Jennifer Metcalfe (2-Sep-21, Virtual)

ProArt Alliance of Greater Victoria, Doug Jarvis (1-Sep-21, Virtual)

ProMOTION Plus, Sue Griffin (1-Sep-21, Virtual)

Public Health Association of BC, Juan Solorzano (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)

Realistic Success Recovery Society, Susan Sanderson (30-Sep-21, Richmond)

Regional District of East Kootenay, Rob Gay (30-Aug-21, Virtual)

Resource Works Society, Stewart Muir (30-Aug-21, Virtual)

Retail Council of Canada, Avery Bruenjes (30-Aug-21, Virtual)

Richmond FarmWatch, Laura Gillanders (30-Sep-21, Richmond)

Right To Play, Jake Winn (1-Sep-21, Virtual)

Ringette BC, Nicole Robb (20-Sep-21, Vancouver)

Rise Women's Legal Centre, Kim Hawkins (2-Sep-21, Virtual)

Rivershed Society of BC, Justine Nelson (3-Sep-21, Virtual)

Liza Schmalcel (29-Sep-21, Nanaimo)

School District No. 23 (Central Okanagan), Moyra Baxter (29-Sep-21, Kelowna)

School District No. 38 (Richmond), Debbie Tablotney (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

School District No. 41 (Burnaby), Jen Mezei (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

School District No. 43 (Coquitlam), Kerri Palmer Isaak (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast), Maria Hampvent (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

School District No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay), Chris Johns (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

School District No. 57 (Prince George), Tim Bennett (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

School District No. 60 (Peace River North), Helen Gilbert (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

School District No. 71 (Comox Valley), Brenda Hooker (29-Sep-21, Nanaimo)

School District No. 73 (Kamloops-Thompson), Heather Grieve (28-Sep-21, Kamloops)

Science World, Tracy Redies (1-Sep-21, Virtual)

Self Design Learning Foundation, Amber Papou (28-Sep-21, Kamloops)

Selkirk College Faculty Association, Victor Villa (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

Shuswap Trail Alliance, Carmen Massey (28-Sep-21, Kamloops)

Simon Fraser University, Joy Johnson (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

SONS - Save Our Northern Seniors, Margaret Little (2-Sep-21, Virtual)

South Island Prosperity Partnership, Dallas Gislason (27-Sep-21, Victoria)

Speech and Hearing BC, Staci Cooper (29-Sep-21, Kelowna)

Sport BC, Rob Newman (1-Sep-21, Virtual)

Stand.earth, Sven Biggs (3-Sep-21, Virtual)

Students Union of University of British Columbia Okanagan, Ahmed Ahmed (29-Sep-21, Kelowna)

Students' Union of Vancouver Community College, Hemvir Singh (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

Support Network for Indigenous Women and Women of Colour, Dominique Jacobs (27-Sep-21, Victoria)

Surfrider Foundation Canada, David Boudinot (27-Sep-21, Victoria)

Surge Narrows Forest Advisory Committee, Coady Webb (27-Sep-21, Victoria)

Surrey Board of Trade, Anita Huberman (30-Aug-21, Virtual)

Surrey Teachers' Association, Julia MacRae (20-Sep-21, Vancouver)

Take a Hike Foundation, Gordon Matchett (20-Sep-21, Vancouver)

Tamitik Status of Women, Michelle Martins (2-Sep-21, Virtual)

The Bridge Youth & Family Services Society, Celine Thompson (29-Sep-21, Kelowna)

The Centre for Child Development of the Lower Mainland, Gerard Bremault (2-Sep-21, Virtual)

The Exploration Place Museum + Science Centre, Tracy Calogheros (1-Sep-21, Virtual)

The Neighbourhood Pharmacy Association of Canada, Shelita Dattani (2-Sep-21, Virtual)

The Research Universities' Council of British Columbia, Max Blouw (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association, Sonja Gaudet (29-Sep-21, Kelowna)

Thompson Rivers University, Brett Fairbairn (28-Sep-21, Kamloops)

Thompson Rivers University Students' Union, Leif Douglass (28-Sep-21, Kamloops)

Together Against Poverty Society, Emily Rogers (27-Sep-21, Victoria)

Tourism Industry Association of British Columbia, Walt Judas (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)

Trails Society of BC, Ciel Sander (3-Sep-21, Virtual)

Triathlon BC, Allan Prazsky (1-Sep-21, Virtual)

TRIUMF, Nigel Smith (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)

Two Rivers Community Service Society, Winona McCann (30-Aug-21, Virtual)

United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union, Northern Office, Joy Thorkelson (30-Aug-21, Virtual)

United Way BC, Kahir Lalji, Launi Skinner (30-Sep-21, Richmond)

University of British Columbia, Santa Ono (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

University of the Fraser Valley Faculty and Staff Association, Ian Rocksborough-Smith (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

University of Victoria, Kevin Hall (31-Aug-21, Virtual)

Vancouver Art Gallery, Anthony Kiendl (1-Sep-21, Virtual)

Vancouver Foundation, Kevin McCort (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)

Vancouver International Marathon Society (RUNVAN), Eric Chene (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)

Vancouver Island Counselling Centre for Immigrants and Refugees, Adrienne Carter (27-Sep-21, Victoria)

Vancouver Island Federation of Hospices, Gretchen Hartley (29-Sep-21, Nanaimo)

Vancouver Island Integrated Counselling and Community Services, Earl Blacklock (29-Sep-21, Nanaimo)

Vancouver Island Region Restorative Justice Association, Gail Newsbury (2-Sep-21, Virtual)

Vantage Point, Cherie Payne (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)

Victoria Community Health Co-operative, Vanessa Hammond (27-Sep-21, Victoria)

Victoria Disability Resource Centre, Gina Huylenbroeck (27-Sep-21, Victoria)

Victoria Hospice, Kevin Harter (27-Sep-21, Victoria)

Victoria Residential Builders Association, Casey Edge (27-Sep-21, Victoria)

Victoria Sexual Assault Centre, Elijah Zimmerman (27-Sep-21, Victoria)

Victoria Women's Transition House Society, Maurine Karagianis (2-Sep-21, Virtual)

Volleyball BC, Emma Gibbons (1-Sep-21, Virtual)

Watersheds BC, Zita Botelho (27-Sep-21, Victoria)

WAWAW Rape Crisis Centre, Dalya Israel (2-Sep-21, Virtual)

West Coast Environmental Law, Michael Bissonnette (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)

West Coast LEAF, Humera Jabir (21-Sep-21, Vancouver)

Western Canada Mountain Bike Tourism Association, Martin Littlejohn (1-Sep-21, Virtual)

Western Canada Theatre, Evan Klassen (28-Sep-21, Kamloops)

Wetlands Workforce, Glenn Auger (3-Sep-21, Virtual)

Wildsight, Randal Macnair (3-Sep-21, Virtual)

Wine Growers BC, Miles Prodan (29-Sep-21, Kelowna)

Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative, Tim Burkhart (3-Sep-21, Virtual)

YMCAs of British Columbia, Amanda Alexander (28-Sep-21, Prince George)

APPENDIX C: WRITTEN AND VIDEO SUBMISSIONS

411 Seniors Centre Society
AbbVie Canada
Advocates for SD73
Aerus Electrolux
Timothy Agg
Allen Aicken
AirBnB Canada
Tama Aisake
Patrick Allard
Alma Mater Society of the University of
British Columbia / Alliance of British
Columbia Students / University of Victoria
Students Society
Alzheimer Society of B.C.
Andrea Carol Anderson
Don Anderson
Robert Anderson
Archway Society for Domestic Peace
Arthritis Research Canada
Arthritis Society
ATU Local 1724
Tyler Bacon
Arthur Bakx
Kevin Bavaro
BC Colleges
BC Co-op Association
BC Diving
BC Federation of Retired Union Members
BC General Service Employees' Union
BC Hockey
BC Humanist Association
BC Hydro Ratepayers Association
BC Lodging and Campgrounds Association
BC Lymphedema Association
BC Marine Terminal Operators Association
BC Museums Association
BC NDP Women's and Gender Rights
Committee
BC Non-Profit Housing Association
BC Recreation and Parks Association
BC Road Builders & Heavy Construction
Association
BC Schizophrenia Society
BC Speed Skating Association

BC Speed Skating Association Board of
Directors
BC Wheelchair Sports Association
BC Wildlife Federation, Region 5
BC Women's Alliance
BC Wrestling Association
Anthony Bell
Barbara Berger
Kim Block
BlueGold Labs Inc
Board Voice Society of BC
Nathan Bolton
Chris Borkent
Teresa Brandvold
Timothy Bray
Chavisa Brett
Victor Brice
British Columbia Freestyle Ski Association
British Columbia Hotel Association
British Columbia Trucking Association
Brown Properties
Fred Bunnell
Burnaby Healthier Community Partnership
Business Council of British Columbia
Edward Butterworth
Campbell River & District Coalition to End
Homelessness
Canada West Wushu Association
Canadian Beverage Association
Canadian Federation of Independent
Business
Canadian Home Builder's Association British
Columbia
Canadian Life and Health Insurance
Association
Canadian Taxpayers Federation
Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Pacific
Region
CanAge
Canopy Growth Corp.
Capilano Faculty Association
Andrea Carley
Douglas Carrick
Brian Case
Annie Cassells

Jason Cassels
CDK Consulting Group
Braydon Chapelas
Chartered Professionals in Human Resources
of British Columbia and Yukon
Chemainus Climate Solutions
Chilliwack Citizens For Change
Chilliwack Healthier Community
Wayne Choquette
Citizens' Environment Network in Colwood
City of Vancouver
Brent Clark
Clayoquot Action
Travis Clifford
Climate Action Now!
Kathryn Clouston
Coalition of Neighbourhood Houses - Capital
Region
Coast Mental Health
Frank Cole
Elizabeth Collrin
Cook Street Village Activity Centre
Em Cooper
Covenant House Vancouver
Paul Craik
Cranbrook Public Library
Crane Management Consultants Ltd.
Mark Dalton
John Davidson
Sandy Davidson
Mark de Bruijn
Adriaan de Vries
Decoda Literacy Solutions
Jan Derpak
Destination Greater Victoria
Diabetes Canada
Digital Beans Bookkeeping Services
Disability Alliance BC
Douglas Students' Union
Down Syndrome Society of British Columbia
D-Wave Systems Inc.
Ecotrust Canada
Edsembli Inc
Susan Ellard
Katharine Ellison

Emily Carr Students' Union and Emily Carr Faculty Association
 Enbridge Inc.
 Bob Ennenberg
 Diana Erickson
 Stephen Evans
 Mark Eveleigh
 Fairness for Children Raised by Relatives
 Farabloc Development Corporation
 Kate Farrell
 Federation of Mountain Clubs of British Columbia
 Finning International
 First Nations Fisheries Council
 Food, Health & Consumer Products of Canada
 Foolish Operations Society
 For Our Kids North Vancouver
 Forge Valley Fitness
 Donna Forsyth
 Jonathan Fortin
 David Fraser
 David Freeman
 Friends of Rails to Trails Vancouver Island
 Claudio Furlan
 Dean Gingrich
 Global Automakers of Canada
 Efrat Goldfarb
 Charles Gouge
 Wendy Gregg
 Gymnastics BC
 Angelika Hackett
 David Hale
 Peter Hall
 Judith Hammill
 Herb Hammond
 Shawna Hansen
 Judith Harper
 K. Harris
 Sandra Harrison
 M Hawkins
 Health Sciences Association of BC
 Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Institute of Canada
 Melanie Hedch
 Linda Heese
 Heather Hiebert
 Melanie Hollands
 Doug Hopwood
 HUB Cycling
 David Huntley
 Clint Hutzulak
 IBM Canada
 Imperial Tobacco Canada Limited

Innovative Medicines Canada
 Institute for Public Education BC
 International Institute for Sustainable Development
 Invasive Species Council of Metro Vancouver
 Bill Irving
 Robyn Jacob
 Anji Jones
 Alan Kelly
 Jaehong Kim
 Curtis King
 Caleb Kramer
 Kwantlen Faculty Association
 Peter Labanic
 Maria Lagunes
 LandlordBC
 Julia Lane
 Sandra Langley
 Gary Lea
 Natali Leduc
 Ritchie Leslie
 Life Sciences British Columbia
 Lillooet Regional Invasive Species Society
 Lin Lin
 Yui Lin
 Michael Linehan
 Juli Low Ah Kee
 Sandy Lowe
 Sacha Mallais
 Debbie Maloway
 Sue Martin
 Randall Mathers
 Anju Matsumoto
 Adrienne McCann
 Aaron McClelland
 Garry McCracken
 Brendan McCullough
 Alysha McFadden
 Gwyneth McIntosh
 Carol McIntyre
 Laurie McNeil
 Meadowbrook Community Association
 Medical Cannabis Canada
 Merck Canada
 Metro Vancouver
 Onni Milne
 Twyla Monasch
 Angie Morris
 Matthew Morrish
 Mortgage and Title Insurance Industry Association of Canada
 Mortgage Professionals Canada
 Mosaic Forest Management
 Motion

Sheila Murland
 Jim Murray
 Musqueam Indian Band and Fraser River Discovery Centre
 Myalgic Encephalomyelitis & Fibromyalgia Society of BC
 Vic Nacci
 Nanaimo & Area Land Trust
 Rob Nathan
 Nelson Public Library
 Joan Nesbitt
 Mark Neumeyer
 Northern Confluence Initiative
 Okanagan Sustainability Leadership Council
 Oso Solar
 Pacific Community Resources Society
 PacificSport Okanagan Regional Sport Centre
 Parent Support Services Society of BC
 Deanna Partridge-David
 Gerry Pearpoint
 Alan Philip
 Erica Pinsky
 Nola Poirier
 Prince George Sexual Assault Centre
 Professional Employees Association
 Progressive Intercultural Community Services- PICS
 Prosthetic & Orthotics Association of British Columbia
 H el ene Provencher
 Ceile Prowse
 Tom Quily
 READ Surrey/White Rock Society
 Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver
 Real Estate Foundation of BC
 Resource Municipalities Coalition
 Danielle Rice
 Richmond Arts Coalition
 Richmond Poverty Response Committee
 Richmond Public Library
 A Rivera
 Ed Robertson
 Kelly Robinson
 Khoobun Roboobi
 George Rose
 Royal Roads University
 James Sabraw
 Salmo Valley Public Library
 Salt Spring Island Public Library
 Johanna Sandkuhl
 Harumi, Eakin and Eamon Sawada-Tse
 Karin Scarth
 Heather Schamehorn
 Andrea Schnarr

School District No. 35 (Langley)
School District No. 36 (Surrey)
School District No. 39 (Vancouver)
School District No. 42 (Maple Ridge-Pitt
Meadows)
Stefan Seller
Stan Shaffer
Allan Sharp
Gerald Shaw
Shell Canada
Christopher Shepherd
David Slade
Jim Smiley
Connie Smith
Judy Smith
Society for the Protection and Care of Seniors
Anneka Spice
Sport Medicine Council of British Columbia
(SportMedBC)
Aileen Stalker
STEMCELL Technologies Inc
Sam Stewart
Delilah Summer
Sun City Physiotherapy
Sun Life
Surrey Public Library Board
Sustainable Environment Network Society
Swim BC
Sysco British Columbia
Robert Taylor
Teck Resources Limited
Tennis British Columbia
Tennis Canada
The Co-operators
The Cridge Centre for the Family
The Fur-Bearers
The Guide Outfitters Association of British
Columbia
The Mustard Seed Street Church
Nicholas Thomas
Ruth Thomas
Town of Creston
Nina Tryggvason
Stan Turner
University of the Fraser Valley
Valley Community Services Society
Vancouver Electric Vehicle Association
Vancouver Public Library - Board of Trustees
Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter
VMware
Raynard von Hahn
Brian Voth
Alexis Wardle
ES Warwick

Watershed Watch Salmon Society
Elizabeth Watts
Ian Weber
Mike Wei
West Vancouver Memorial Library
Janice Whitehead
Gordon Willard
Bill Grant Windley
Alex Wolfe
YWCA Metro Vancouver
Zero Waste BC
Jenny Zheng

