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Releases

Minimum wage increase exactly what low-income earners need right now: BCFED

(Coast Salish territory, Vancouver BC) - After months of hardship and uncertainty in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, a minimum wage increase is just what British Columbia's lowest-paid workers need, BC Federation of Labour president Laird Cronk said today.

"This is great news for hundreds of thousands of British Columbians," Cronk said, referring to the increase in the minimum hourly wage from $13.85 to $14.60, taking effect today. The BC minimum wage is scheduled to increase again to $15.20 in June 2021.

Increasing the minimum wage to $15 has long had broad support among British Columbians, he noted. And since the pandemic began, BC residents have a newfound appreciation for the value of the work minimum wage earners do. "We've relied on the lowest-paid workers to do some of our most essential work throughout this pandemic," he said.

The BC government has been gradually increasing the minimum wage since September 2017, following well over a decade of stagnation under the previous government. "We had the lowest minimum wage in the country, and froze low-income workers out of the boom times," Cronk observed. "They've borne the brunt of the past several months, and this is a welcome boost for them."

He noted that minimum wage earners are disproportionately women, Indigenous workers, new immigrants, people of colour, people with disabilities and young workers. And he said that increasing the minimum wage is an important part of ensuring BC's economic recovery works for everyone.

The BC Federation of Labour has released a set of proposals for a fair economic recovery titled Rebuilding Our Economy for All, available at bcfed.ca/recovery-for-all.

"I know the government was facing some pressure from the usual suspects to break their promise to low-income earners," Cronk said. "I'm glad they're keeping their word and making life a little better for people."