May 20, 2020 |

Releases

BC has an historic opportunity to build an economy that works for everyone: BCFED

(Coast Salish Territory, Vancouver BC) As BC's economy slowly reopens, the province's labour movement is encouraging British Columbians to think beyond just rebuilding the economy we had before the COVID-19 outbreak.

"We have an unprecedented opportunity not just to restart the economy we had, but the economy we want," said BCFED president Laird Cronk as the federation released its blueprint for BC's recovery.

Titled *Rebuilding Our Economy for All*, the wide-ranging document sets out a full range of policy recommendations for ensuring the economic restart works for all British Columbians, and reflects the new appreciation the province has for its front-line workers – many of them in low-paid, precarious jobs.

"As public respect for the value of their work has grown, so has our recognition of the many gaps this pandemic has exposed," the document says, citing workplace safety and employment standards, the need for robust public services and social supports, and addressing the continued marginalization of vulnerable populations.

“The choices we make in the coming weeks and months are critical. We have an opportunity to create a new economy and build a province equipped to address climate change while prospering along the way. Our choices must acknowledge and genuinely embrace reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and communities. Our choices must secure equity and shared prosperity in every community of this province.”

Rebuilding Our Economy for All lists eight principles crucial for a just, successful recovery, including:

- Focusing on the success of working people
- Recognizing the importance of undervalued work
- Embracing the rights of Indigenous communities
- Investing in and expanding public services
- Strengthening employment standards
- Speeding up the transition to a green economy
- Using large-scale public investment to restart economic growth
- Building long-term community resilience

The document charts a four-phase course for economic recovery:

- In the first stage, the BCFED recommends a month of immediate action to address the ongoing emergency crises British Columbians are facing
- The second stage, running through month four, offers recommendations for a safe return to work and improved supports and services
- The third stage, from month four to month eight, sees the province take the reins of recovery with measures to expand jobs, improve public services and increasing community resilience
- Finally, in the fourth stage, the province actively lays the foundations for a durable, sustainable economy that addresses fundamental inequities and accelerates the shift to a prosperous, post-carbon future

The BCFED also cautions against backward-looking approaches that try to spur business growth by slashing government spending and forcing concessions on working people. “We must reject calls to

cut and slash our way back to what we used to know as normal — now is the time to build a better, fairer, more sustainable and more prosperous future for everyone," the document argues.

"After an unprecedented economic shutdown, we now have an unprecedented restart — and an historic opportunity," Cronk said. "It's a once-in-a-lifetime chance to ask ourselves not just how and when, but what kind of economy we want to restart."

Rebuilding Our Economy for All is available online at bcfed.ca/recovery-for-all.