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Releases

Government taking positive steps to modernize taxi industry

The BC government announced this morning a first step series of measures that will modernize the taxi industry and lay the ground work to introduce ridesharing services at a later date.

“Generally, these are positive moves,” says BC Federation of Labour President Irene Lanzinger, “and a good first step to improve existing services for passengers as the government moves to fulfill its promise to introduce ridesharing services under a level playing field down the road.”

Highlights include:

- Improve service by increasing the number of taxi licenses by 15%.—that means 300 more cabs in the Lower Mainland, and 200 across the rest of the province;
- Allow the taxi industry to offer fare discounts when trips are arranged through a booking app; and
- Create a database to help identify demand issues and generate solutions and require taxi companies to collect and share a broad range of information.

Next on the government’s agenda is developing a framework that will allow ridesharing services to operate in BC. The framework must include measures to protect the safety of passengers and drivers, and create a level playing field for the traditional taxi industry and ridesharing multinationals.

The BCFED wants protections for all drivers included in the framework to create good paying stable jobs rather than adding to the crisis of precarious work. Lanzinger says workers must be classified as employees not independent contractors, be protected by a modernized Employment Standards Act, paid at least the minimum wage, and covered by the Canada Pension Plan and Employment Insurance at a minimum.