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Releases

Three-year wait for $15 minimum wage disappointing, says BCFED

Vancouver – The BC Federation of Labour is pleased that BC's minimum wage will be boosted to $15 an hour, but disappointed that the Horgan government's planned implementation timeline will see low wage workers wait three-plus years to reach it.

"Let's be clear that achieving a $15 per hour minimum wage is an accomplishment, and better than anything the previous BC Liberal government would have done to address poverty wages and inequality," said BC Federation of Labour President Irene Lanzinger.
"But making 500,000 low paid workers who currently make less than $15 wait until June 1, 2021 to climb above poverty wage rates is not fair."

She points out that other provinces have moved more boldly, like Ontario and Alberta, where the timelines to achieve $15 are much faster.

"Poverty and inequality are rampant in our province while BC is Canada's most expensive place to live," says Lanzinger. "In light of the slow timeline to achieve $15, we expect that the government will move more decisively in the next phase of its fair wage process around exemptions from the minimum wage, like the punitively lower wages for restaurant servers and farmworkers, and the concept of a living wage," she says.

Lanzinger also praised the dedication of hundreds of community groups and union members who worked hard to put the fight for a higher minimum wage on the political radar screen and mobilized significant public support for $15 an hour.

Currently about half a million BC workers, or 25% of the province’s labour force, earn poverty level wages—less than $15 per hour. Some 60% of low wage workers are women. Eighty percent are adults. And one in seven holds a post-secondary degree.