September 11, 2017 |

Releases

BC NDP budget update brings relief for working families

Victoria – Working families will see some relief and new opportunities based on the priorities set by the new NDP government's budget update, says the BC Federation of Labour.

"Finally we see a government ready to invest in vital public services," said BCFED President Irene Lanzinger. "After 16 years of underfunding and neglect, this budget takes the first steps to address the affordability crisis and support working families."

"It's a big job to fix the mess created by the BC Liberals, and this budget is a good start."

Lanzinger said she is pleased that the NDP government is following through with budget update funding for key election commitments, including:

• almost $500 million for a $100 per month increase in social assistance rates;

• funding to restore free Adult Basic Education and English as an Additional Language training to help British Columbians develop job skills;

• increasing taxes for high income earners and corporations; and

• maintaining the previous government's undertaking to help the resource sector maintain jobs by phasing out the PST on electricity.

Part of the BCFED's ongoing Fight for $15 minimum wage campaign is the call for a poverty reduction strategy. And Lanzinger says she's pleased to see a number of spending commitments that underpin a poverty reduction plan reflected in the budget.

"In a province as wealthy as BC, our poverty levels are unacceptable. We've been calling on government for years to establish a poverty reduction plan. Many of the initiatives proposed today by the new government—including the Fair Wages Commission—will help advance this important work," said Lanzinger.

On the employment front, Lanzinger says a three-year commitment of $15 billion in capital funding to build schools, health facilities, housing and transit will create good-paying construction jobs and build much needed infrastructure.

"There are many areas that need attention if the government is really going to support working families, but this budget update is a step in the right direction to address affordability, create jobs and build an economy that works for everyone," said Lanzinger.

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