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Releases

Another worker's death sparks renewed calls for Clark government to do more to make workplaces safer

Vancouver-The tragic death of a New Westminster restaurant worker last week has renewed concerns of the BC Federation of Labour that the provincial government needs to do more to make BC workplaces safer.

"We extend our condolences to the family and colleagues of the worker who died," says BCFED President Irene Lanzinger.

"In our view, every workplace accident and death is preventable," she says. "All workers must enjoy the basic right to health and safety protections at work and to come home safely to their families at the end of their shift.

"But this death—along with many others so far this year are a sign that more needs to be done to protect workers," she says.

While the accident is under investigation by the Workers' Compensation Board, Lanzinger says worker safety isn't a priority of Premier Clark's government. "Health and safety protections are weak and not always rigorously enforced. Employers whose negligence kills or seriously injures workers are let off with a slap on the wrist. And injured workers and families of deceased workers have

endured deep cuts in WCB benefits under the BC Liberals.”

News of the death comes only days after the Clark government announced it was siphoning off the WCB’s budget surplus as a gift to employers. Lanzinger says the money—which could amount to hundreds of millions of dollars—should be used to fund workplace safety programs, tougher rules, greater enforcement, more criminal prosecutions of negligent employers, and improved benefits for injured workers.