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Releases

Christy Clark’s minimum wage announcement: 10 cents an hour more than planned won’t lift 500,000 BC workers out of poverty

Vancouver - Responding to today’s announcement of a small increase in the minimum wage, BC Federation of Labour President Irene Lanzinger says “it simply isn’t enough to help address the plight of 500,000 low wage workers in BC.”

The increase to $11.35 September 1, 2017 will still leave a minimum wage worker in an urban centre more than $4,000 below the poverty line. Almost a year ago, the Clark government set the minimum wage rate for September 1 at $11.25, and added 10 cents per hour to that today.

“The increase allows the Liberals to pretend they’re doing something about poverty when they’re really not. What we really need from government is a concrete plan to address poverty, low wages and rampant inequality in BC,” says Lanzinger

“We need a $15 an hour minimum wage that will lift 500,000 low-wage workers in BC out of poverty. Lanzinger says the plan for $15 has been adopted in Alberta and in Seattle. BC NDP leader John Horgan has also promised to implement a $15 an hour minimum.

“The Clark government could choose to do this, but they won’t,” says Lanzinger. “And that speaks to the choices they make and whose side they’re on.”

Lanzinger says a sub-poverty minimum wage rate minimum wage is just one of the many ways the Clark government promotes a low wage economy.

The announcement leaves in place exceptions that allow employers of farmworkers and liquor servers to pay even lower minimum rates.