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Releases

Budget 2016 a chance for the Premier to do what's right, lift minimum wage workers out of poverty

Vancouver – This budget is a chance for Premier Clark to do right by hundreds of thousands of working people in the province and raise the minimum wage to $15/hour, says the BC Federation of Labour.

"Despite a pathetic 20-cent lift in September, once again BC is at the bottom of the pack when it comes to minimum wage rates across the country," said Irene Lanzinger, President of the BC Federation of Labour. "The Premier and the Labour Minister knew full-well that their small lift would continue to leave minimum-wage earners in poverty. They just didn't care."

In March 2015, the Labour Minister announced a 20-cent lift to the minimum wage – increasing the rate from $10.25/hour to $10.45/hour. At the time, the Minister and the Premier said the lift would put BC in the middle of other provinces and territories. However, documents have shown they knew the lift would leave BC last in the country by April 2016.

"The Premier made a choice to let hard-working people, working full-time jobs, fall behind – earning a wage that leaves them $6,000 below the poverty line," said Lanzinger.

“This budget is a chance for the Premier to change course and do the right thing – increase the minimum wage to $15/hour so people working full-time can afford to support themselves and their families. Paying people a fair wage is good for families, good for communities and good for the economy.”

Currently there are over 110,000 people earning minimum wage in BC. There are over 500,000 (that is one-quarter of the working population of the province) who earn under $15/hour.

The BC Federation of Labour’s Fight for $15 campaign aims to lift the minimum wage above the poverty line. More information about the campaign can be found at www.fightfor15bc.ca.