February 17, 2015 |

Releases

BC Budget misses the mark. Gives a break to the highest earners, and leaves the rest of us behind.

VICTORIA – The BC Budget has missed the mark when it comes to creating opportunity and supporting working families in British Columbia, says the BC Federation of Labour.

“It is extremely disappointing that the government is giving a tax break to the highest earners in our province, but are willing to leave our lowest paid workers living in poverty,” said Irene Lanzinger, President of the BC Federation of Labour.

Budget 2015 confirms that the personal tax rate for incomes above $150,000 will be eliminated. The loss of revenue to the province from this move is estimated to be more than 200 million dollars a year. The government has also confirmed that it will not increase the minimum wage, which has been stagnant for three years.

Currently there are more than 120,000 people in BC earning minimum wage. 47 per cent of those are over 25, and 63 per cent are women. At the current wage of $10.25 per hour, a person working a full-time job at minimum wage is living thousands of dollars below the poverty line.

“The government is essentially giving a raise to the highest earners. And the rest of us are being left behind with stagnant wages and paying more in fees and premiums, like MSP, ferry fares, tuition fees

and hydro rates," said Lanzinger. "Further, this budget makes no substantial improvements to the public services people rely on every day, including health care and education."

Lanzinger also pointed to the capital infrastructure program outlined in the budget as a missed opportunity.

"The government is proposing a full capital program, but there is no commitment to use these projects to train apprentices," said Lanzinger. "The BCFED continues to call on the government to ensure every public infrastructure project employs apprentices. We must ensure we are taking advantage of the opportunities for apprentices to complete their training and get into the workforce."

"If the government were serious about a Jobs Plan, then trades training and apprenticeship opportunities would be front and centre."

-30-

Media contact: Jaime Matten 604-561-2663