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Releases

BC Budget predicts growing unemployment, underfunds training and services

Victoria, BC – B.C Federation of Labour President Jim Sinclair today expressed disappointment in a budget that projects increasing unemployment and cuts funding for education and training.

“This is supposed to be a jobs budget, but it predicts growing unemployment1. What’s needed in BC is more good jobs, with better wages,” said Sinclair. “That takes significant investment in education and training, and this budget fails to deliver.”

Relative spending on education is budgeted to fall nearly 10 percent over the next three years2, at a time when government is predicting one million job openings before 2020. Employment program funding is also cut by 45 percent.

Sinclair also expressed disappointment that household budgets were being forced to pick up the costs of balancing BC’s budget.

“British Columbians are feeling the pinch of rising costs for everything from significant increases in MSP premiums to 25 percent increases in hydro rates,” said Sinclair. “As their household challenges rise, it is little comfort that government has claimed a balanced budget. For these British Columbians struggling to make ends meet, a budget that reaches deeper into their pockets is anything but boring.”

Sinclair said that good jobs also need strong public services. “We can’t predict a growing economy and a growing population, and not account for increased demands on services like health care,” said Sinclair. “And we also need to invest in government operations that assess and approve projects. This budget simply doesn’t do that.”

Sources:

1. Page 68 Budget and Fiscal Plan. Unemployment rate predicted to rise to 6.7 percent in 2014-15 and to 6.8 percent in subsequent years.
2. Page 125 Budget and Fiscal Plan. Education spending as a percentage of GDP drops from 5.2 percent to 4.7 percent from 2013-14 to 2016-17.