



Report on the  
**BUDGET**  
**2026**  
**CONSULTATION**

Select Standing Committee  
on Finance and Government Services

August 2025



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

**Second Report**  
**First Session, 43rd Parliament**



August 12, 2025

To the Honourable the  
Legislative Assembly of the  
Province of British Columbia

Honourable Members:

I have the honour to present herewith the Second Report of the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services for the First Session of the 43rd Parliament. This report covers the Committee's work in regard to the Budget 2026 Consultation as approved by the Committee.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Committee,

Paul Choi, MLA  
Chair

# CONTENTS

Composition of the Committee	4
Terms of Reference	5
Executive Summary	6
Consultation Overview	9
Advanced Education	11
Arts, Libraries, and Sport	15
Economic Development	19
Environment	27
Fiscal and Regulatory Policy	35
Health	42
Housing	53
K-12 Education and Child Care	58
Mental Health and Addictions	64
Public Safety and Justice	67
Social Services	75
Transportation and Transit	83
Summary of Recommendations	87
Appendix A:Consultation Participants	92



# COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

## MEMBERS

Paul Choi, MLA, **Chair**

Burnaby South-Metrotown

Elenore Sturko, MLA, **Deputy Chair**

Surrey-Cloverdale

Jennifer Blatherwick, MLA

Coquitlam-Maillardville

Sunita Dhir, MLA

Vancouver-Langara

Steve Morissette, MLA (*from April 9, 2025*)

Kootenay-Monashee

Claire Rattée, MLA

Skeena

Harwinder Sandhu, MLA (*to April 9, 2025*)

Vernon-Lumby

Bryan Tepper, MLA

Surrey-Panorama

## COMMITTEE STAFF

Darryl Hol, Committee Clerk

Natalie Beaton, Committee Research Analyst

Jared Brown, Committee Research Analyst

Aza Bryson, Committee Researcher

Jonathon Hamilton, Committee Researcher

Hanna Kim, Committee Researcher

Danielle Migeon, Committee Researcher

Alexa Neufeld, Parliamentary Committees Officer

Kayla Wilson, Committees Coordinator



# TERMS OF REFERENCE

On February 24, 2025, the Legislative Assembly agreed that the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services be designated as the Committee referred to in section 3 of the Budget Transparency and Accountability Act (S.B.C. 2000, c. 23).

That, in addition to the powers previously conferred upon the Select Standing Committees of the House, the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services be empowered to:

- a. appoint of its number one or more subcommittees and to refer to such subcommittees any of the matters referred to the Committee and to delegate to the subcommittees all or any of its powers except the power to report directly to the House;
- b. sit during a period in which the House is adjourned, during the recess after prorogation until the next following Session and during any sitting of the House;
- c. conduct consultations by any means the Committee considers appropriate;
- d. adjourn from place to place as may be convenient; and,
- e. retain personnel as required to assist the Committee.

That the Committee report to the House as soon as possible, and that during a period of adjournment, the Committee deposit its reports with the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, and upon resumption of the sittings of the House, or in the next following Session, as the case may be, the Chair present all reports to the House.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services (the “Committee”) conducts an annual consultation on the upcoming provincial budget. British Columbians were invited to share their priorities for Budget 2026 between May 30 and June 20, 2025. The Committee held 16 public hearings in Vancouver, Victoria, Surrey, Nelson, Vernon, Penticton, Cranbrook, Quesnel, Fort St. John, Terrace, and Courtenay, as well as virtually using the Zoom videoconferencing platform.

During the consultation period, the Committee received 350 presentations and 406 written submissions. The Committee acknowledges the extensive input received from British Columbians, highlighting a wide range of needs across the province. Members appreciate the dedication and hard work of the many organizations and individuals who took the time to share their views.

This report includes a comprehensive summary of the priorities and ideas shared by British Columbians during the consultation, the Committee’s discussions which led to its recommendations, and the Committee’s 86 recommendations. The report is organized by themes which are presented in alphabetical order; the numbering of recommendations does not indicate priority.

During its deliberations, the Committee reflected on the global trade and financial pressures facing the province and emphasized the need to effectively prioritize resources in the next provincial budget. To ensure long-term fiscal health, the Committee highlights the importance of stabilizing BC’s economy by establishing a fiscal anchor and adopting spending policies aimed at achieving a balanced budget. The Committee notes the need for strategic investments in the coming year to support economic stability and growth, improve future readiness, and address pressing challenges such as housing, health care, and affordability.

## ECONOMIC GROWTH AND STABILITY

To encourage investment, the Committee emphasizes the need to continue efforts to streamline permitting processes and

reduce bureaucratic delays, ensuring development decisions are made in a timely, fair, and transparent manner. Members underscore the importance of supporting value-added strategies and investments in trade-enabling infrastructure to support key sectors like agriculture, manufacturing, and natural resource development. The Committee also acknowledges the arts, culture and sport sector for its role in driving economic growth through tourism. Additionally, the Committee highlights prioritizing local businesses and domestic manufacturing within procurement policies and supports the finalization of interprovincial trade agreements to ensure BC’s economy remains competitive and resilient. Members also highlight the importance of better supporting rural and remote communities—particularly in relation to natural resource projects—by ensuring these initiatives are developed in partnership with First Nations and supported by appropriate infrastructure and services.

## FUTURE READINESS

To prepare the province for future challenges, the Committee acknowledges the need for strategic investments to address climate change and transition to a green economy. Members encourage investment in alternative energy production and storage, and stress the importance of meeting current and future energy demands. To reduce energy consumption, the Committee recognizes the need to refresh energy efficiency and heat pump programs to meet current costs while also addressing rural and remote heating needs. The Committee stresses the need to invest in disaster risk reduction and community resilience—particularly for floods, wildfires, and earthquakes—and to strengthen emergency preparedness and response efforts. Environmental conservation remains a priority, with the Committee advocating for investments that protect coastal areas, parks, and natural spaces for outdoor recreation, tourism, and future generations. The Committee also supports initiatives that enhance environmental stewardship and prevent the introduction of invasive species into the province.

To meet workforce demands, the Committee prioritizes investments in training for sectors facing critical labour shortages, including trades, health care, and education. Members recognize the unique role of rural and remote post-secondary institutions in serving regional work force needs and contributing to local economies. The Committee also calls for expanded public and private child care facilities, especially for shift workers, and supports recruitment and retention of early childhood educators. Finally, Members stress the importance of being responsive to opportunities to attract investment in new technologies and improve digital connectivity.

## TODAY'S CHALLENGES

The Committee recognizes the budgetary pressures faced by both K-12 and post-secondary institutions and affirms the economic and societal importance of education. The Committee recognizes the need for increased funding to address staffing shortages and pursue new capital projects. Members acknowledge the significance of early intervention in identifying and supporting students with support needs and increases in demand for these services. The Committee supports identifying new funding sources and models for post-secondary institutions and school districts to provide greater funding flexibility and sustainability. The Committee acknowledges the challenges faced by northern and rural K-12 school districts and the need for unique, tailored supports. With respect to post-secondary education, the Committee stresses the importance of balancing institutional sustainability with accessible and affordable tuition. The Committee acknowledges the need to ensure fair and consistent access to health and social services across the province to help British Columbians in need.

Regarding health care, the Committee stresses the need for investments to improve the full continuum of care, from access to early diagnosis, to dignified end-of-life care. The Committee highlights expanding coverage for treatments and medications targeting chronic and complex diseases and improving access to mobility, accessibility, and other medical devices. The Committee discusses opportunities to strengthen public health initiatives, such as increasing awareness and testing for infections and expanding access to shingles vaccinations. The Committee also recognizes the need to expand care and investments towards high-need groups, including seniors and those with acquired brain injuries.

With respect to social services, the Committee acknowledges the need to stabilize non-profit and community services organizations so they can continue to provide important services for British Columbians. The Committee discusses additional funding, expanding contracts, and supports for community-based organizations to address operational costs and stabilize the community service workforce. Members emphasize expanding supports and programs for children and youth, seniors, and marginalized groups. The Committee further acknowledges the need to reform and enhance assistance rates and expand services for people with disabilities.

Specific to rural and remote communities, the Committee emphasizes the need for specific consideration and supports to address the unique challenges these communities face in attracting and retaining critical workers. The Committee recommends targeted programs and incentives to attract high-demand workers—such as medical professionals, educational staff, and skilled tradespeople—to rural and remote areas. Additionally, the Committee acknowledges the importance of public transportation as essential for accessing health care, education, and employment, especially for rural and remote communities.

Regarding housing challenges, the Committee discusses the need to support a diversity of housing options in both urban and rural areas to ensure all British Columbians have access to safe, affordable, and accessible housing. To achieve this, the Committee acknowledges the need to support municipalities with the required infrastructure to support housing densification while reviewing development charges and taxes to promote housing development and affordability. Additional supportive housing for vulnerable individuals is a priority of the Committee, which should include integrated recovery focused care and sober living options.

To address mental health and addiction challenges, the Committee emphasizes integrating mental health and addiction care into the broader health system to improve access to essential services. In particular, the Committee highlights the need to improve access, affordability, and quality of mental health and addictions care. Members note inequality in access to support services due to locations, funding, and income thresholds. The Committee endorses monitoring recovery and care outcomes and a review of funding models to ensure equitable access to public recovery centres. The Committee also emphasizes the importance of

mental health services for children and youth, especially, children and youth in or transitioning out of care.

Another area of focus for the Committee was public safety and access to justice. The Committee acknowledges the need to address repeat offenders by expanding Crown prosecutor capacity and addressing court capacity issues to respond to crime and safety challenges. The Committee also discusses the need to review police funding to ensure municipalities can meet their policing needs while bolstering funding for emergency response and communications. The Committee emphasizes the importance of transitioning to integrated justice case management systems and expanding legal aid services to better support individuals navigating the justice system, particular victims of gender-based violence and sexual assault.

# CONSULTATION OVERVIEW

## BACKGROUND

The *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*, S.B.C. 2000, c. 23, requires the Minister of Finance to issue a budget consultation paper each year, which includes key issues to be addressed in the next provincial budget. The paper must be referred to a select standing committee of the Legislative Assembly to conduct a consultation and report on the results of that consultation. The Legislative Assembly assigns this responsibility to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services. This year, the Budget 2026 Consultation Paper was released on May 30, 2025 and the consultation was held between May 30 and June 20, 2025.

## BUDGET CONSULTATION PAPER

The *2026 Budget Consultation Paper* highlighted the provincial government's efforts to address current economic uncertainty. The paper identified priorities such as diversifying the economy, strengthening health care, education and social services, creating safe communities, and addressing the cost of living and housing affordability. Initiatives aligned with these priority areas were outlined, highlighting both the government's current efforts and future plans to address key issues. The paper requested input from British Columbians on priorities for the provincial budget and how the government can create a stronger future.

## MINISTER OF FINANCE BRIEFING

On June 2, 2025, the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Brenda Bailey, appeared before the Committee to present the *Budget 2026 Consultation Paper*. In her opening remarks, the Minister emphasized the significance of the annual budget consultation process, noting that it provides an important opportunity for the provincial government to hear directly from British Columbians to help shape the upcoming budget. She also addressed the current climate of economic uncertainty, particularly in relation to global trade policy, and outlined how Budget 2025 responded to these concerns.

The Minister noted that the government's top priorities are addressing affordability, protecting essential public services, and strengthening the economy. The Minister explained that key investments in Budget 2025 reflected these priorities, including supporting affordable child care, school food programs, family benefits, and rent assistance. The Minister also highlighted investments in public safety, including increased funding for policing and initiatives to combat shoplifting, robbery, and violent crime.

To respond to the province's growing population, the Minister highlighted funding for new hospitals, additional long-term care beds, and the establishment of a new medical school. Investments in school infrastructure were also detailed, including renovations, new builds, and prefabricated projects that will collectively add more than 6,000 new student seats across 16 school districts. The Minister also discussed continued investments in transportation infrastructure including the Surrey-Langley SkyTrain extension and repairs to roads in the Cariboo region.

With respect to economic development, the Minister emphasized the government's commitment to fostering growth through opportunities in critical minerals, technology, and science. She also highlighted efforts to eliminate interprovincial trade barriers and reduce reliance on U.S. markets. In addition, the Minister outlined a \$1.5 billion savings target for the government, with all ministries tasked with eliminating inefficiencies, reducing administrative costs, and ensuring that government programs deliver value for money.

The Minister concluded by reaffirming the government's core budgetary priorities—economic growth, affordability, health care, education, and public safety—and encouraged British Columbians to participate in the upcoming budget consultation.

## CONSULTATION PROCESS

British Columbians were invited to share their input in two ways: appearing before the Committee at a public hearing or submitting a written submission. All participants were asked to focus their input on up to three recommendations for the next provincial budget.

Several approaches were used to encourage participation in the consultation, including: a media release; advertisements in local and multicultural newspapers; online advertisements; social media; and direct outreach to Members of the Legislative Assembly, constituency offices, stakeholders and public libraries.

The Committee received requests to present from over 400 organizations and individuals and was able to accommodate 350 presentations at its public hearings, which were held over three weeks from June 2-19, 2025. In addition to the presentations, the Committee received 406 written submissions.

Public hearings were held virtually using the Zoom videoconferencing platform and in-person in Vancouver, Victoria, Surrey, Nelson, Penticton, Vernon, Cranbrook, Quesnel, Fort St. John, Terrace, and Courtenay. A list of organizations and individuals who participated in the consultation is available in Appendix A.

The Committee carefully considered all input received during its deliberations.

## MEETING SCHEDULE

### 1st Session, 43rd Parliament

March 5, 2025	Planning
April 30, 2025	Planning
June 2, 2025	Public Hearing (Victoria)
June 3, 2025	Public Hearing (Surrey)
June 4, 2025	Public Hearing (Vancouver)
June 5, 2025	Public Hearing (Vancouver)
June 9, 2025	Public Hearing (Nelson)
June 9, 2025	Public Hearing (Penticton)
June 10, 2025	Public Hearing (Vernon)
June 10, 2025	Public Hearing (Cranbrook)
June 11, 2025	Public Hearing (Quesnel)
June 11, 2025	Public Hearing (Fort St. John)
June 12, 2025	Public Hearing (Terrace)
June 12, 2025	Public Hearing (Courtenay)
June 16, 2025	Public Hearing (Victoria)
June 17, 2025	Public Hearing (Virtual)
June 18, 2025	Public Hearing (Virtual)
June 19, 2025	Public Hearing (Virtual)
July 14, 2025	Deliberations
July 15, 2025	Deliberations
July 23, 2025	Deliberations
July 24, 2025	Deliberations
July 30, 2025	Deliberations; Adoption of Report

# ADVANCED EDUCATION

Key themes relating to advanced education included the need for increased operational and capital funding to address the financial sustainability and aging infrastructure of post-secondary institutions. The Committee heard how the federal government's policy changes related to international students have financially impacted institutions. Recommendations regarding expanding tuition fee limits for international students, financial assistance, and student supports were also raised throughout the consultation. Many noted that investments in program funding can help address labour shortages. The Committee also heard that there is a need for additional investments in skilled trades training and rural, remote and northern institutions.

## CAPITAL FUNDING

The Committee heard about the need for investment in capital projects at post-secondary institutions. The Research Universities Council of BC proposed a strategic partnership with the provincial government to fully leverage available federal infrastructure funding and help secure sustained, long-term investment in post-secondary capital projects, particularly in student housing and academic and research infrastructure. Similarly, Royal Roads University recommended sustainable funding that represents both an investment in post-secondary education and support for key capital projects. With regards to aging infrastructure, the Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC recommended that there needs to be increased capital infrastructure funding to post-secondary institutions to support the renewal of deteriorating facilities. Similarly, Simon Fraser University noted that it is about to turn 60 years old and that the institution has several needs in terms of its existing infrastructure.

The Committee received several recommendations regarding capital projects for specific universities including accessibility upgrades at Corpus Christi College; renovations at the UBC Okanagan Fire, Innovation, Research and Education facility; expanding Kwantlen Polytechnic University's campus; as well

as a request to support the creation of a new medical school at the University of Victoria.

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The Research Universities Council of BC noted that recent federal policy changes—particularly the cap on international student enrolment—has resulted in intensified financial pressures on post-secondary institutions, necessitating difficult budgetary decisions including cuts to staffing and programs. Additionally, North Island College Faculty Association recommended that the province should lobby the federal government to reverse the policy decreasing the number of international student permits, with a focus on regional needs and conditions, especially in smaller cities and remote or rural communities. The Capilano Students' Union added that government funding continues to decline as the share of institutions' total revenue resulting in many institutions being forced to increase international student tuition fees to generate revenue.

Regarding health care for international students, the Capilano Students' Union stated that international students are the only people in BC who continue to pay a monthly fee for access to primary health care. The Simon Fraser University Graduate Student Society shared that international students contribute to health care costs through medical premiums paid through employment, yet they are excluded from the MSP coverage benefits received by other taxpayers. Both organizations recommended eliminating health care fees for international students to reduce the financial burden.

## OPERATIONAL FUNDING

Several organizations, including CUPE BC, CUPE Local 4879, and the University of Victoria Faculty Association, emphasized the need for increased funding for the post-secondary education system. The organizations highlighted that institutions are overly reliant on international student tuition which has led to instability. Simon Fraser University

and the Pacific Association of Institutes and Universities advocated for a long-term, sustainable funding model for post-secondary institutions. The Students' Union of Vancouver Community College noted that provincial funding has dropped from covering 68 percent of institutional operating costs in 2000 to just 40 percent in 2025, forcing institutions to rely heavily on tuition fees. The Union highlighted that without stable funding, students will face higher costs, fewer program options, and diminished education quality.

Also with respect to operational funding, the BC Federation of Students, Students' Union of UBC Okanagan, and Vancouver Island University Students' Union called for the completion and implementation of the post-secondary funding formula review. The organizations stressed that a revised model should ensure long-term financial stability, reflect inflation, and align public investment with BC's evolving education and workforce needs. Additionally, BC Colleges emphasized that financial instability leads to program cuts, weakened industry partnerships, job losses, and negative impacts on local economies—especially where colleges are major employers. The Emily Carr Students' Union requested an adjustment to base funding to address the university's chronic structural deficit.

## PROGRAM FUNDING

Many organizations and institutions described the need for specific program funding. Capilano University shared the need for funding to launch two new programs at its Squamish campus: a Bachelor of Education and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. The University noted that the programs are designed to address critical workforce shortages in education and health care while also expanding access for Indigenous and rural learners in the Sea-to-Sky region. Other institutions and organizations echoed the need for targeted investments in post-secondary education to meet workforce demands. The Canadian Association of Physician Assistants advocated for the establishment of a physician assistant education program, ideally at the University of British Columbia, to build a sustainable pipeline of health professionals. The University of Victoria requested continued investment in training seats and infrastructure for its new integrated Faculty of Health, which supports rural primary care through partnerships like the one with Selkirk College.

Royal Roads University and the College of the Rockies emphasized the importance of government support for

regional campuses and partnerships, and Core Education and Fine Arts Early Learning called for more funded training seats in early childhood education to address staffing shortages in licensed child care. Additional recommendations included expanding graduate-level training in behaviour analysis, increasing funding for professionals who support children and youth with disabilities, and implementing a credentialing program for safety professionals. CWB Group noted the importance of micro-credentials in addressing workforce shortages, and advocated for policies and programs that promote and encourage continuous training and upskilling in the welding sector.

## RESEARCH, TECHNOLOGY, AND INNOVATION

The Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC emphasized the urgent need for increased investment in academic research at public universities. The organization highlighted that deferred maintenance is growing, and the lack of modern, functional research space is limiting innovation and collaboration. They further advocated for funding for exploratory research to enable researchers to address critical societal challenges and support student-led inquiry. CUPE BC similarly called for targeted funding to the post-secondary sector, specifically directed toward BC-based innovation and research. The organizations shared that such investments are essential to spark a more diversified and resilient economy. The University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) advocated for strengthened education and research supports to help build a more sustainable and locally responsive health care system. The University underscored the importance of aligning research funding with provincial priorities such as life sciences and climate mitigation. Thompson Rivers University also called for increased funding for research and innovation, particularly in response to complex and growing challenges like wildfires. In addition, the Committee heard the need to support technology programs. Technology Professionals of BC proposed a partnership with the province to develop a "Tech Talent BC" program. This initiative would aim to raise awareness of technology education and careers, and highlight the contributions of highly skilled technology practitioners.

## RURAL COMMUNITIES

The Committee heard about the need to support rural universities. UNBC highlighted that northern post-secondary

institutions face unique challenges, including higher delivery costs, smaller class sizes, and limited infrastructure. UNBC emphasized that stable core funding would help regional campuses deliver education close to home and ensure programs remain accessible, high quality, and relevant to local needs. They further noted that without post-secondary education situated in the North, the province would face higher costs in delivering the skilled workforce, economic development, and services that northern communities require. Thompson Rivers University highlighted the distinct role regional universities play in local economies and labour markets. Similarly, the College of the Rockies proposed the establishment of a targeted investment fund to support colleges advancing innovative solutions to meet local and regional workforce development priorities.

## STUDENT SUPPORTS

Many organizations and student unions noted the financial hardships faced by students and advocated for increased supports. Capilano Students' Union shared that students are struggling to afford basic living expenses, including food. Similarly, Camosun College Faculty Association stated that many students graduate with significant debt, and further noted that research indicates that cancelling student debt boosts economic activity more than tax cuts. They recommended that provincial student loan debt be eliminated, and a grant-based system be created that prioritizes access for low-income, rural, and Indigenous students. The Simon Fraser Student Society indicated that the University previously had temporary funding for expanded services tailored to BIPOC students, 2SLGBTQIA+ community members, mature learners, and survivors of gender-based violence. The Society stated that restoring and expanding this funding would support students' overall well-being, ultimately leading to higher completion rates and better postgraduate success.

## TRADES AND SKILLS TRAINING

Many organizations emphasized the need to expand skilled trades training to address critical labour shortages and support economic resilience. The Canadian Home Builders' Association of BC projected a need for 43,000 additional workers in residential construction by 2034, while the CWB Group advocated for increased support for training institutions, micro-credentials, and recognition of stacked credentials across trades. Several organizations emphasized the

importance of scaling up trades programs and highlighted the need to train domestic workers in light of changes to Canada's immigration system.

Sector-specific concerns were also raised. The Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Institute of Canada highlighted the need to align CleanBC rebate expansions with HVACR workforce development, while the New Car Dealers of BC warned of a looming shortfall of 20,000 workers in the auto sector, particularly for EV technicians. The Skilled Trades Training Council proposed a \$150 million investment over three years to expand construction trades seats and address nearly 100,000 job openings. Additional funding requests came from BC Insulators 118 and BC Building Trades, who noted that BC's per-seat funding is the lowest in Canada. Colleges like the College of the Rockies called for faster program development and competency-based models. Meanwhile, organizations such as CUPE Local 4879, the BC Real Estate Association, and the BC Centre for Women in the Trades advocated for inclusive access to training. Additionally, the Mechanical Contractors Association of BC recommended early exposure to trades in K-12 education to broaden participation.

## TUITION AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Regarding the Tuition Limit Policy that placed a two percent limit on domestic tuition fee increases, the BC Federation of Students and the Students' Union of Vancouver Community College discussed how institutions have begun introducing other ancillary fees that increase costs for students. The Students' Union of Vancouver Community College emphasized that maintaining and strengthening the Tuition Limit Policy by including ancillary fees is crucial to ensuring that students can access affordable education. The BC Federation of Students stated that closing these loopholes would ensure fees remain transparent, consistent, and fair. Also related to the Tuition Limit Policy, the College of New Caledonia Students' Union suggested that it be applied to international students. It explained that there are still many cases where international students are relying on community food banks and working unsafe and unregulated jobs to pay high international tuition fees. The Justice Institute Students' Union indicated that while still in the consultation phase, the Justice Institute of BC was planning to introduce a new mandatory fee to provide funding for services such as mental health support. The Union advocated for the continuance of the tuition fee limit as

well as preventing institutions from bypassing this limit by reclassifying existing fees or introducing new ancillary fees.

The Committee heard about the importance of the BC Access Grant. The Thompson Rivers University Students' Union stated that the BC Access Grant reduces financial barriers, leading to greater enrolment as well as increasing a student's likelihood of completion. The Union recommended a gradual and continuous funding increase to the BC Access Grant. Additionally, the Alma Mater Society of UBC noted that the BC Access Grant has been capped at \$4,000 per year since 2020 despite annual tuition fee increases. The Society added that graduate students are excluded from this grant, despite often facing even greater financial strain. The Society suggested that student financial aid programs, including the student aid living allowance and the BC Access Grant, should be enhanced. The Committee also heard about the importance of providing grants for postgraduate studies for students with disabilities.

Corpus Christi College noted that its students are not eligible for many of the scholarships and bursaries available to public university students to support learners including low- and middle-income students, former youth in care, and Indigenous students. They shared that many of these students would benefit from being in a smaller institution like Corpus Christi College and asked that the College be eligible for such scholarships and bursaries.

## COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

The Committee expressed concern over the financial instability facing post-secondary institutions, which is challenging their ability to maintain programs, services, and staffing levels. The Committee recognized that recent policy changes by the federal government, which limit international student permits,

have led to a significant decline in revenues for colleges and universities. Committee Members stressed the importance of enhancing financial flexibility for post-secondary institutions, particularly by enabling them to pursue self-sustaining initiatives, such as leveraging land assets to provide new funding streams.

The Committee emphasized the important role of post-secondary institutions in meeting evolving workforce demands. The Committee underscored the need to prioritize training in sectors facing critical labour shortages, including trades, health care, and education. Members also discussed investing in targeted skills training to support British Columbia's future clean energy workforce. The Committee highlighted the value of micro-credentialing to quickly respond to labour demands and the need to streamline the Degree Quality Assessment Board process to accelerate program implementation. Additionally, Members noted the importance of supporting research universities, particularly in areas like wildfire management. The Committee also highlighted that rural and remote institutions serve distinct regional needs and contribute significantly to their local economies and workforces.

Committee Members reflected on concerns raised by many student groups that some institutions may be using ancillary fees to circumvent the Tuition Limit Policy. The Committee supported a review of the Tuition Limit Policy to ensure it remains responsive to the evolving realities of post-secondary institutions and students. The Committee reaffirmed the importance of a balanced approach that supports the financial sustainability of institutions in delivering high-quality education and services, while also protecting the accessibility and affordability of post-secondary education for students across the province.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

1. Conduct a comprehensive review of post-secondary funding, including the exploration of innovative and flexible funding models, an assessment of the Tuition Limit Policy, and a review of practices that circumvent tuition limits, to promote institutional sustainability and ensure accessible, affordable education.
2. Prioritize funding to support post-secondary institutions that are advancing innovative solutions to meet local and regional workforce development priorities.

# ARTS, LIBRARIES, AND SPORT

Submissions from the arts, libraries, and sport sectors described the unique values and challenges of each sector while highlighting the funding and support required. The Committee heard about the financial difficulties experienced by these sectors due to a lack of stable funding and increasing inflation.

## ARTS AND CULTURE

Multiple organizations emphasized the value of arts and culture and recommended increased funding. The Nelson and District Arts Council explained that although the arts sector contributes a significant amount to the economy, the sector experiences challenges including job losses, cancelled events and venue closures. The Council also stated that a significant number of travellers to Canada engage in cultural activities and emphasized the importance of leveraging cultural tourism. The Coastal Jazz and Blues Society suggested establishing a task force to engage artists, Indigenous leaders, cultural workers, and policy experts to develop a comprehensive arts and culture strategy. The ProArt Alliance of Greater Victoria recommended creating a provincial action plan for arts, culture and heritage that supports regional cultural planning and aligns with municipal development, housing, and community wellness strategies. reThink Community Education highlighted the need for increased support for a cultural fund, particularly for marginalized communities. Additionally, Heritage BC indicated that the heritage sector is actively advancing reconciliation and advocated for increased funding to support cultural identity and diversity.

The Committee heard several recommendations regarding increased funding for fairs, festivals, and events. The Canadian International Dragon Boat Festival Society noted the need for increased support for smaller community-serving events that provide a localized economic impact. The Society recommended implementation of a dedicated fund that supports smaller, local events. The BC Music Festival Collective stated that music festivals face increasing threats of cancellation due to wildfires and noted the need for a

contingency fund for festivals and events impacted by climate change. The organization also requested increased support for the Destination Events Program.

Several organizations including the Greater Vancouver Professional Theatre Alliance and the H.R. MacMillan Space Centre advocated for investment in arts infrastructure to modernize venues, improve accessibility and ensure long-term sustainability. Science World echoed the recommendation, emphasizing that a substantial number of arts and culture venues require maintenance. The BC Museums Association and the Museum of Vancouver both requested investment of \$150 million towards arts and culture infrastructure, including museums, heritage houses, parks, aquariums, and science centres. Several organizations recommended investing \$100 million per year for three years in cultural infrastructure. The Western Front explained that arts venues are at risk of closing due to rising demands for maintenance. The BC Coalition of Arts, Culture, and Heritage recommended the implementation of a creative land trust formed by representatives across the region as well as reputable arts and community leaders and experts from the real estate industry. The Nelson and District Arts Council noted the need for targeted municipal funding towards maintenance of cultural infrastructure and the Kilby Historic Site requested adequate funding for the care of BC's Provincial Heritage Properties.

Several museums, organizations, and centres advocated for increased support. The Victoria Chinatown Museum Society requested funding to highlight existing museums in Victoria and Vancouver and to hire staff, further explaining that the Chinatown Museum is currently operated by volunteers with minimal staff. Organizations including the Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin and the Quesnel Rodeo Club recommended increased support for rural museums, noting challenges in hiring employees and having to rely on volunteers. Additionally, the Pacific National Exhibition, Science World, and the Vancouver Maritime Museum requested investment for their respective projects. On the topic of reconciliation, the Museum of Vancouver and the BC Museums Association

recommended establishing ongoing funding to support repatriation and reconciliation in partnership with Indigenous communities and cultural organizations. The Museum of Vancouver stated that ongoing support for repatriation would be a meaningful step towards reconciliation.

The Committee heard that increased funding for the BC Arts Council would demonstrate the importance of heritage and museums, visual and performing arts institutions, and Indigenous cultural centres. Organizations, including the Greater Vancouver Professional Theatre Alliance, recommended increasing the BC Arts Council's annual funding to \$58 million. The BC Museums Association echoed this recommendation, highlighting that funding for the BC Arts Council provides increased community access to arts and culture, stable jobs, and operational capacity for cultural institutions. Additionally, the Pro Art Alliance of Greater Victoria stated the need to maintain support for arts and culture organizations to help them continue to recover from the pandemic and economic instability.

Multiple organizations spoke to the importance of increased investment in the film and media industry. The Canadian Media Producers Association noted the importance of encouraging the production of Canadian content and protecting jobs, highlighting that many BC companies were able to survive and thrive during the COVID-19 pandemic because they controlled their own production. The Association, along with the Union of BC Performers, Directors Guild of Canada, Thompson-Nicola Regional District, Screen BC, and the Vancouver Island North Film Commission, recommended the renewal and expansion of the domestic picture fund with an emphasis on supporting rural-based producers. The Commission also explained that the current BC Film and Television Tax Credit requires domestic producers to own 51 percent of the intellectual property, which imposes unrealistic constraints for interprovincial or international partnership. The Commission and other organizations suggested that further review and expansion of various tax incentives would allow rural and remote production companies to access graduates from the industry and increase local employment in regional districts. Additionally, the Directors Guild of Canada and the Union of BC Performers recommended increased provincial support for BC projects and advocacy for better regional funding from Telefilm Canada. Screen BC noted that Creative BC and the BC Film Commission function as the primary gateway and brand ambassadors for BC's film industry, advocating for robust funding for Creative BC.

The Committee heard from organizations about the creation of a live entertainment labour tax credit system. The International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Local 168 and BC Music Festival Collective noted that a tax credit system for live entertainment would allow arts creators and presenters to manage some costs of a show. Local 168 suggested that the tax credit system requires a story to be based on BC; written, produced and performed by British Columbians; and presented in BC venues.

The Association of Book Publishers of BC recommended the continuation of the BC book publishing tax credit. Both the Association of Book Publishers of BC and the Union of BC Performers recommended strengthening copyright protection for BC creators, noting that weak copyright protections discourage and harm creators. The Association of Book Publishers of BC also requested increasing market expansion funding through Creative BC, which would enable book publishers to explore new audiences and revenue streams internationally.

The Committee also heard from the BC Apparel and Gear Association regarding the apparel industry. The Association stated the need for increased support towards the apparel industry, including increasing access to grants and support programs. Additionally, the Association suggested the development of incubators, which provide a shared space with equipment and mentorships, could support small and mid-sized businesses.

Lastly, several organizations advocated for funding literacy. Family Services of Greater Vancouver emphasized the importance of ensuring access to streamlined, clear, and consistent financial literacy programs. Similarly, the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy requested increased funding to literacy outreach coordination, emphasizing that community literacy leads to a stronger and more skilled workforce.

## PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The Committee heard about the significant role that libraries play in the communities. Several organizations, including the BC Library Association, the BC Libraries Cooperative, and the BC Library Trustees Association, recommended increasing the core annual provincial grant for libraries to \$30 million. The Nelson Public Library also highlighted the key role public libraries play, including offering core services and supporting family literacy. CUPE Local 374 emphasized that libraries also provide community warming and cooling spaces for

vulnerable people as well as offering tools to lower-income and unhoused people. Fort St. John Public Library and the CUPE Local 402 similarly emphasized the role public libraries play in providing space, technology, and programs for communities. The Kootenay Boundary Patient Advisory Committee and Community recommended funding libraries to improve internet speed and to create private telehealth spaces. Additionally, the Vancouver Island Regional Library stated an advisory body per section 52(1) of the Library Act should be established to review library funding and make appropriate recommendations.

## SPORTS AND RECREATION

Multiple sport organizations recommended increased funding for sports, specifically an increase of \$15 million over the next three years in the amateur sports sector. Curl BC noted the challenges that the amateur sport sector faces, including financial strain and an over-reliance on volunteers. Sport BC similarly indicated challenges such as financial constraints and insufficient staffing. The Cerebral Palsy Sports Association of BC echoed the recommendation for increased funding and highlighted that more people should be able to experience benefits from sports, particularly underrepresented populations including girls and women, people with disabilities, and Indigenous people. Similarly, Tennis BC highlighted that increasing investment for amateur sports would support high-performance athletes to compete with other markets, attracting sponsorships, events, and boosting economic impact. Tennis BC remarked on the importance of implementing safe sport practices to ensure all participants feel respected and protected. The BC Hockey League requested that provincial funding be provided directly to the league, rather than distributed indirectly through non-profit organizations in the form of grants.

Multiple organizations advocated for investment in specific projects and programs. KidSport BC, with the support of Sport BC, requested increased funding of \$1 million annually. The BC Hockey League requested the opportunity for independent organizations such as itself to advocate for direct government funding through mechanisms like the BC Lottery Corporation. The Committee also heard support for injury prevention through safe swimming from organizations and individuals, including the BC Recreation and Parks Association and the City of Prince George. Additionally, Tennis BC highlighted that early engagement with tennis fosters lifelong interest and

development, supports affordable recreation, and improves health, advocating for increased funding towards tennis. Lastly, Galint Gaming Inc. recommended recognizing e-sports – electronic sports – as its own emerging industry and investing in the industry through supporting community events and funding BC Esports Association. The organization emphasized that the esports industry could attract considerable investment from international companies.

## COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

The Committee reflected on the important role of arts and culture, including in supporting people's mental health and quality of life. The Committee acknowledged the current fiscal reality of limited resources and emphasized the importance of prioritizing economic growth. In this context, Committee Members discussed the value of targeted funding for arts and culture, with a focus on tourism initiatives, such as fairs, festivals, and sporting events, that would maximize economic impact. The Committee also discussed the economic potential of the growing e-sport industry.

The Committee acknowledged that many participants noted the need to increase funding for the BC Arts Council and indicated its continued support towards the arts and culture sectors. Furthermore, Members discussed the importance of continued support for the film industry through reviewing tax measures and other incentives, especially for productions in rural areas. Some Members suggested that reducing the current BC Film and Television Tax Credit's requirement for 51 percent Canadian ownership of intellectual property to 25 percent could better support the film and television industry. Lastly, the Committee discussed the need to support both cultural institutions, such as museums, and First Nations in carrying out the important and difficult work of repatriating cultural belongings.

Regarding public libraries, the Committee recognized the challenges libraries face due to insufficient funding, including aging infrastructure, lack of staffing, and limited technology and further reflected on the importance of libraries in our communities. Committee Members recognized the important roles libraries play in communities and noted they are relied on for a variety of services including access to technology.

The Committee also discussed input received on sports and recreation. Members noted the importance of safe swimming education, especially among newcomers, and supported funding to prevent drowning.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

3. Provide sustained grant funding for fairs, festivals, and sporting events, including e-sporting events, while expanding support for the Destination Events Program.
4. Review tax measures and other incentives to support and promote film production, including amending the requirement for 51 percent Canadian ownership of intellectual property.
5. Establish permanent funding to support cultural institutions and First Nations to engage in the work of repatriating cultural belongings.
6. Provide increased stable annual funding for libraries to address capital and operational issues, including infrastructure, technology, and staffing.
7. Increase access to lifeguard training and swim-for-survival programs to support safe swimming and prevent drowning.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Committee heard from agricultural producers and food security organizations about the need to secure the province's ability to produce and distribute food. Regarding natural resource development, submissions discussed ways to improve the regulation of industry while supporting First Nations participation to advance sustainable resource development and reconciliation. Opportunities to increase economic development through adopting technology and innovation were provided to the Committee, including strengthening the province's workforce and employment standards. Additionally, the Committee heard the need to improve trade opportunities both globally and nationally.

## AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOODS

The Committee heard a variety of recommendations focused on providing increased supports to the agriculture sector. The BC Shellfish Growers Association and the BC Salmon Farmers Association explained that additional funding for the Ministry of Agriculture and Food is needed to deliver programs and regulatory supports that underpin the ability to produce food in the province. The BC Landscape and Nursery Association stated that without adequate government capacity in the agriculture sector, food producers are at risk of being harmed by administrative delays and backlogs within the Ministry. BC Dairy added that increasing funding for the Ministry of Agriculture and Food's budget would ensure the Ministry can support food producers across BC by scaling successful programs.

The Mid Island Farmers Institute noted that net farm income is at an all-time low and the number of farms has decreased in recent years. The organization explained that smaller farms lack the finances to cover upfront capital costs for farm infrastructure and recommended increasing the funding portion of the Food and Safety Program under the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC. FarmWatch Richmond discussed opportunities for the province to purchase farmland to lease to farmers and provide financial incentives to help farmers protect farmland, end land speculation, and enhance

farming viability. LUSH Valley Food Action Society and the BC Association of Farmers' Markets suggested increased investment in Buy BC programs to promote the sustainability of local food systems and agricultural producers. The BC Association of Farmers' Markets also recommended providing funding to the BC Farmer's Market Nutrition Coupon Program to increase access for families to fresh BC grown vegetables, fruits, and other agricultural products.

Recommendations to support livestock and fisheries were also received by the Committee. The Quesnel Cattlemen's Association discussed initiatives to ensure cattle ranching continues to contribute to BC's food security and economy and recommended starting programs to compensate ranchers impacted by wildlife and to establish range fencing. The BC Cattlemen's Association and BC SPCA both advocated for improvements to the oversight and monitoring of livestock animal health and welfare conditions. One individual advocated for greater provincial management of fisheries and discussed international agreements that have harmed BC's fish farms, hatcheries, and fishery industry.

Submissions also described the need for additional funding and supports for agricultural production. LUSH Valley Food Action Society noted Vancouver Island communities are highly vulnerable to instability in food transport and trade and recommended increased funding for food infrastructure that supports local food processing, storage, and distribution. Cowichan Green Community similarly noted that Vancouver Island's reliance on imported foods requires robust local supply chains and supports for food producers in the face of climate change, trade volatilities, and rising costs. Several organizations recommended recognizing agriculture as an essential service critical to food security and to implement measures that ensure the continuity of food production during emergency periods.

BC Dairy noted that to fully realize the economic and food security potential of agriculture, the province should strengthen domestic processing capacity through modernizing

processing facilities with targeted investments. Food Banks BC recommended establishing regional distribution centres, as centralizing food collection would support farmers and allow for food to be received, processed, stored and distributed on a regional scale. A growing area of concern described by participants was access to water for agricultural purposes. The BC Agriculture Council noted that many agriculture producing regions are facing prolonged drought and the BC Cattlemen's Association advocated for prioritizing investment in water storage and management for food production to ensure food security. The BC Landscape and Nursery Association highlighted that agricultural needs should also be integrated into watershed planning and emergency water management, including designating water allocations for food-production during periods of scarcity.

## CLEAN AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

The Committee heard from participants on the need to expand the province's energy mix to include additional renewable or alternative energy sources such as wind, solar, and geothermal power. One individual advocated for increasing supports for BC Hydro to adopt solar power as climate change reduces the snowpack required for hydro power generation. The Pembina Institute discussed strategies to modify consumer energy demand to improve energy efficiency and reduce consumption. The organization recommended developing clear direction on demand side management and to prepare for significant increases in demand side management expected by major utility companies in future years. Geothermal Rising Canada highlighted a need to modernize BC's geothermal regulatory process and establish a Geothermal Procurement Standard. The organization also described high upfront capital costs as a barrier to geothermal energy exploration and recommended including financing and incentive parity for geothermal development under provincial energy programs.

Financing energy projects was highlighted as an issue by other participants. Energy Storage Canada suggested developing a made-in-BC input tax credit to support clean energy development and storage while Innergex Renewable Energy and Clean Energy BC both discussed the need to implement a Tariff and Tax Credit Adjustment Clause in energy Power Purchase Agreements. The organizations explained that clean energy projects are financed and developed under the assumption of policy stability and that import tariffs or changes to federal tax credits can dramatically alter a project's feasibility. Clean Energy BC explained that without

a mechanism to adjust for new tax or tariff policies after an agreement is finalized, clean energy projects could collapse and lead to a loss of investments and local employment.

## FORESTRY

The Committee received several recommendations to increase the actual yearly forestry harvest to 45 million cubic metres. The BC Council of Forest Industries explained that the actual forestry harvest level in 2023 was 35 million cubic metres, below the allowable annual cut of approximately 60 million cubic metres. The organization highlighted that if the actual annual cut continues to fall below the allowable annual cut there will be further mill closures, job losses, and a decline in government revenues. The Coast Forest Policy Coalition explained that part of the reason for the actual harvest being below the annual allowable cut is the length of time for permits to be processed. The BC Pulp and Paper Coalition noted that 70 percent of the fibre used by pulp and paper mills comes from chips and other residuals from sawmills, but the availability of fibre is declining as sawmills continue to close. The Coast Forest Policy Coalition added that BC's forestry sector is unable to respond to growing global demand for lumber products due to policies constraining the fibre supply and discouraging investment into new and existing mills or equipment for contractors. Domtar explained that achieving an annual harvest of 45 million cubic metres is required for the viability of BC's forestry sector and is essential for mill operations, fibre security, and economic certainty across BC's forestry sector.

The Committee received other recommendations to provide support to the forestry sector. The BC Council of Forest Industries recommended accelerating a new model for forest revenue sharing with First Nations to enable economic self-determination, support sustainable harvest levels, and enhance investment certainty in the forest sector. Nature United noted that dedicated funding is needed to help drive improved forest management and sustainable practices, including supporting the forest bioeconomy and creating markets for low-value biomass products. Domtar and the BC Council of Forest Industries both suggested implementing a biomass investment tax credit and incentives to meet growing demand and create economic incentives for the collection of wood wastes and non-merchantable trees. The BC Council of Forest Industries noted that BC has the largest third-party certified biomass resources, but the lack of biomass tax incentives has left the forestry sector at a competitive disadvantage.

## INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND RECONCILIATION

The Committee heard the need to ensure greater consultation and participation among Indigenous peoples to promote economic development and reconciliation. reThink Community Education highlighted that reconciliation can empower economic growth and environmental stewardship through Indigenous conservation efforts, resource development, and job creation. The Kitselas First Nation Treaty Information Source discussed the Renewable Energy Projects (Streamlined Permitting) Act and noted that accelerated consultations with First Nations brought by the legislation will require additional funding for First Nations to ensure effective consultations. The Mining Association of BC described the importance of ensuring that First Nations have the governance, administrative, and technical capacity to meaningfully and effectively participate in reviews and consultations of major resource projects. The Guide Outfitters Association of BC explained that BC currently lacks a provincial reconciliation framework or structure for Indigenous communities, businesses, and the public service. The organization recommended implementing a framework that includes timelines, how consultations should be conducted, and how reconciliation decisions are made. Island Coastal Economic Trust suggested making legislative changes to enable First Nations representation on regional advisory committees, as currently only mayors, regional district chairs, and Members of the Legislative Assembly can participate in regional advisory boards.

The Committee also received submissions that discussed opportunities for economic and energy development in partnership with First Nations. Clean Energy BC noted the importance of funding clean energy programs for First Nations and remote communities as these projects are critical to emissions reduction, affordability, and energy security for these communities. Energy Storage Canada recommended increasing support for the BC Indigenous Clean Energy Initiative and the BC Hydro non-integrated area clean renewable energy offer. Coast Funds noted that if the province aims to advance sustainable resource development, Indigenous economic self-determination, and coastal resiliency it will require prioritizing support for Indigenous-led infrastructure and capital projects in coastal regions. Innergex Renewable Energy advocated for accelerating the expansion of the First Nations Equity Financing Framework to ensure that Indigenous communities can continue to lead and benefit from the transition to clean energy.

## LABOUR AND IMMIGRATION

Several submissions discussed the need to improve labour standards and safety for the province's workforce. CUPE Local 402 described a need for stronger oversight and meaningful penalties for employers who do not comply with health and safety laws and noted that without proper health and safety protections workers are experiencing burnout, mental health impacts, and physical harm. One individual recommended amending the Employment Standards Act to increase the length of job-protected leaves for serious illness and injury.

The Committee also received several recommendations to provide additional funding for the Labour Relations Board and Employment Standards Branch. CUPE Local 2278 explained that the Labour Relations Board helps level the playing field between employees and employers, but it lacks the capacity to effectively process decisions. The Alma Mater Society of the University of British Columbia noted that although cases at the Labour Relations Board are supposed to be resolved within 180 days, persistent underfunding and backlogs have led to delays of over a year. CUPE Local 3999 highlighted that increased funding for the Labour Relations Board should include the hiring of additional industrial relations officers to ensure workers can access timely, fair, and effective dispute resolution processes. The Movement of United Professionals advocated for new policies to be established to ensure that any additional resources provided to the Labour Relations Board are used effectively. The BC Employment Standards Coalition recommended increasing funding for the Employment Standards Branch to increase accessibility, keep pace with the growth in provincial employment, and ensure efficient complaint resolution.

Regarding workforce development, DIGITAL noted that digital adoption and artificial intelligence (AI) integration are changing how businesses operate across sectors and noted the importance of ensuring BC's workforce is equipped with industry-driven, future-ready skills that align directly with employer demands. March of Dimes Canada discussed the need for additional focus on employment inclusion and recommended supports for people with disabilities to gain skills for tech-enabled employment. Life Sciences BC noted that the growth of BC's life science sector has been constrained due to a lack of workers and recommended working on talent creation and retention to attract, retain, and develop the life science sector's workforce. The BC College of Family Physicians highlighted that in rural and

remote communities, family physicians deliver primary care, emergency services, anesthesiology, surgical, and maternity services to meet the full spectrum of needs of their community and called for expanded initiatives and funding to address the shortage of rural family physicians.

In the construction sector, the BC Construction Association described significant labour shortages and recommended steps to increase the number of construction workers and tradespeople to build housing and infrastructure. This includes investments in industry-led workforce solutions to connect employers with workers in real time and dedicated funding for construction-focused training and upskilling. Concrete BC highlighted a need for employment training initiatives with dedicated funding to support the recruitment, training and retention of new concrete truck drivers, as the costs of becoming a concrete truck driver are significant for both employees and employers. The Chamber of Shipping of British Columbia noted that the marine industry is short more than 3,600 workers and funding should be prioritized to recruit entry level mariners, expand training capacity, and provide certification upgrades for existing mariners.

The Committee received submissions discussing access to international talent and integrating newcomers into the economy. The BC Federation of Labour noted that many workers are excluded from fully taking part in BC's economy and advocated for the province to reduce factors and barriers that marginalize workers in workplaces. The Council of Canadian Innovators noted that recruiting highly-skilled international workers is currently an administratively burdensome process and recommended improving these processes to expand access to international talent. Mosaic BC advocated for targeted funding to allow employers and service organizations to provide newcomers with occupation-specific training and hands-on workplace experience through internships. Pearson Canada noted that immigrants can face barriers accessing learning opportunities and language learning services in rural areas and recommended leveraging existing tools to support newcomer integration in rural locations. The Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of British Columbia explained that anti-immigration sentiment has grown exponentially in the province and recommended continuing anti-racism promotional and support programs and developing an all-ministry approach to newcomer integration.

## MANUFACTURING

The Manufacturing Safety Alliance of BC discussed the need for additional funding to help support BC's manufacturing sector. The Canadian Institute of Steel Construction - BC Region noted that BC's steel fabrication industry is increasingly facing global trade pressures, offshore competition, and rising costs and without measures to support the industry it will lack capacity to build infrastructure. The organization recommended strengthening public procurement practices to prioritize domestic Canadian steel fabrication and investing in industry innovation and competitiveness.

## MINING AND NATURAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

The Northern Confluence Initiative discussed a need to reform mineral tenure and compensation laws when expropriating mineral tenures or areas for exploration. The Association for Mineral Exploration highlighted industry concerns with BC's new mineral claims consultation framework and the need for the framework to deliver timely decisions to provide greater certainty. The organization also recommend reducing the notice of work permitting timelines for mineral exploration activities, as there is a significant backlog of permits waiting for approval. The Mining Association of BC noted that BC must adopt a streamlined, efficient, and predictable permitting framework that continues to respect First Nations' rights and maintains environmental protections. The organization also highlighted that the development of new mines will require expanding the electrical grid, roads, and rail access particularly between Terrace, Bob Quinn, and the Golden Triangle. The Village of Fruitvale described the West Kootenay's potential as a future battery production hub and discussed expanding the area's critical mineral output.

The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers noted that natural gas and oil are critical trade drivers and that an integrated natural gas value chain and export strategy could boost provincial revenues, drive innovation, and support energy production. FortisBC described an ongoing global energy transition to reduce marine shipping emissions and discussed ways to make Vancouver the liquified natural gas port of call in the west coast through investments in increased fueling, liquefaction, and storage capabilities. The Canadian Propane Association noted that during shifting global trade policy and rising economic uncertainty, propane represents

a secure made-in-Canada energy solution and advocated for exporting propane through the Northern BC Corridor.

The Committee also received submissions outlining improvements to the regulatory environment of natural resource development. The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade highlighted that BC needs to streamline permit processes in partnership with First Nations and provide greater certainty to industry to promote economic growth. The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers advocated to finalize the new royalty system framework to provide a predictable, principled approach that supports the competitiveness of industry. Resource Works Society suggested reviewing CleanBC to ensure that emissions goals align with economic realities and reconciliation commitments to restore investment confidence. The organization noted that clarity on natural resource extraction and emissions would unlock private capital, expand Indigenous equity, and strengthen the revenue base. Advanced Biofuels Canada discussed implementing a cost-benefit analysis of the Low Carbon Fuel Standard and implementing new policies to improve the affordability of clean fuels.

## TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

BC Tech explained that the technology industry's ability to create jobs is limited by the lack of available workers and talent. The organization recommended providing additional funding for tech-related post-secondary and training programs and encouraged the province to invite more private capital investment into the technology industry. Life Sciences BC noted that access to capital funding is critical to support the life sciences sector's growth and discussed improving the ability for the sector's early-stage companies to access funding. The Council of Canadian Innovators described initiatives to shift to value-added strategies across all sectors, including the resource sector, to strengthen the data-driven economy that prioritizes intangible assets like intellectual property and data. TELUS highlighted a need to improve digital equality, support digital service delivery, and enhance security and data sovereignty to support economic development and growth. CUPE Local 4653 highlighted gaps in cellular and internet connectivity between many rural and remote communities and recommended ensuring sufficient connectivity on remote roads and highways to enable safer travel. The H.R. MacMillan Space Centre discussed the need to expand mobile science initiatives that connect youth to career pathways in clean technology and artificial intelligence.

The BC Chamber of Commerce highlighted that BC has the potential to be a leader in AI productivity and growth but must make further investment in the technology and remove barriers to widespread AI. D-Wave Quantum discussed how BC can modernize its economy through strategic investments into quantum computer and AI innovation to address key challenges like port logistics, health care resourcing, and trade corridor optimization. In the construction industry, the BC Construction Association discussed accelerating the adoption of technology and tools to improve the sector's productivity. Life Sciences BC advocated for continued investments in infrastructure and research for organizations such as Genome BC and Michael Smith Health Research BC, including new lab space with advanced equipment.

## TOURISM

The Committee received submissions advocating for increased supports and the promotion of BC's tourism economy, which Thompson Rivers University's Adventure Studies Department noted provides significant economic and community benefits in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities. The organization recommended supporting adventure tourism through longer-term tenures for adventure tourism businesses. The Guide Outfitters Association of BC noted that for the adventure tourism industry to grow, an adventure tourism branch and supportive legislation is needed. The Tourism Industry Association of BC described the economic impacts of the tourism industry and the need for increased funding for Destination BC to support marketing of the industry. The BC Craft Brewers Guild recommended increasing the Marketing Co-op Program budget under Destination BC to sustain successful tourism partnerships. Regarding accessible tourism, Spinal Cord Injury BC highlighted that investing in accessible tourism would boost the tourism economy and support meaningful employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

## TRADE

The Committee received several recommendations to improve interprovincial trade to bolster the province's economy and promote growth. The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade explained that the province should finalize interprovincial trade agreements that includes mutual recognition of goods, credentials, and services as business are navigating a volatile trade environment, inflationary pressures, and

rising costs. Metro Vancouver highlighted that provincial and local governments can work together to expand BC's access to international investment and build a stronger and more resilient regional economy in the face of trade tensions. The Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce noted that the province lacks a dedicated funding mechanism to help small and medium sized businesses pursue new markets and recommended providing funding to support businesses find new export opportunities. First West Credit Union noted that removing interprovincial trade barriers in the financial service sector would provide a level playing field in the financial services sector, streamline regulations, and support provincial credit unions to operate nationally. The organization noted that credit unions are constrained by outdated, duplicative and fragmented financial service regulations and are unable to lend or take deposits from members outside the province.

## COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Investing in the province's ability to produce, process, and distribute its own food was identified by the Committee as an opportunity to add value throughout the agricultural supply chain and ensure a self-sufficient and resilient food system. Members also discussed the value of supporting local agricultural producers and those facing food insecurity through expanding the BC Farmer's Market Nutrition Coupon Program. The Committee discussed expanding the province's role and responsibilities in the management of fisheries along BC's coasts to ensure greater provincial involvement in decision-making processes related to fisheries management. Members also identified the need for greater investment in Crown land planning that considers the importance of livestock rangeland for foraging and the need for range fencing. The Committee further discussed ongoing land use decisions that may limit access to rangeland.

Regarding forestry, the Committee discussed the gap between the allowable annual cut and the actual volumes being harvested and deliberated on ways to improve the sustainability and predictability of forestry management to better support the sector. Members discussed opportunities to develop value-added strategies to support the forestry sector to ensure that the province is maximizing the value of its forestry resources. Members further identified the potential for a biomass investment tax credit and streamlining access to harvest wildfire-burned timber as opportunities to support BC's forestry sector.

The Committee emphasized the need to continue ongoing work towards streamlining permitting processes for mining and natural resource development projects. Members highlighted that improving permitting efficiency is essential to support timely decision-making and provide regulatory certainty needed to attract project investment. Members noted the need to prioritize the infrastructure required to support additional natural resource projects, such as rail access and transmission lines. The Committee also highlighted the West Kootenay's potential to expand its battery recycling capacity to include all batteries in Western Canada or the Pacific Northwest.

The Committee noted the unique impact of natural resource development projects on rural and remote communities. The Committee discussed reviewing the Northwest BC Resource Benefits Alliance to allow for greater stability and equity in funding for rural and remote communities to address downstream effects of living near natural resource development projects. The Committee also concluded that rural and remote communities near natural resource development projects face shortages of in-demand professionals essential to supporting local needs. Members noted that the lack of medical and family supports contributes to challenges in attracting and retaining the workforce required for natural resource development projects and supporting local needs. The Committee emphasized the importance of expanding initiatives that encourage medical professionals, early childhood educators, and other essential workers to live and work in these regions.

Regarding labour and immigration, the Committee reflected on the shortage of industrial relations officers and other staff within the BC Labour Relation Board and the impacts of delayed contractual negotiations, wage and labour disputes, and workplace condition assessments. Members noted that increasing resources for the board would help shorten decision-making timelines and enhance the effectiveness of dispute resolution processes for both employees and employers. The Committee also supported continued advocacy for the federal government to review immigration policies to ensure there is sufficient housing, employment, and services to enable successful integration of newcomers. The Committee further discussed the need to continue efforts to reduce barriers that prevent skilled immigrants from securing employment in their fields of expertise.

On the topic of technology and innovation, the Committee considered the growing use of AI and expressed concerns over the lack of a provincial AI strategy. Members noted that while the federal government is examining AI frameworks and regulations, these technologies may have significant, immediate implications for BC. The Committee emphasized the need for the province to establish its own AI framework or set guidelines to ensure responsible adoption of AI technologies and enable future investments. Members also discussed the importance of strengthening the province's digital capabilities as a key driver of economic growth and highlighted that digital connectivity remains particularly limited in rural and remote communities and emphasized the need for expanded cellular and internet infrastructure. The Committee noted that many rural areas also lack cellular or internet connectivity when travelling between communities, requiring further investments to support safe traveling between communities. Members also highlighted that the province is falling behind other jurisdictions in attracting technology investment and critical technology infrastructure such as data centers, requiring supportive policies or incentives to increase investment into BC's technology sector.

While discussing current and future energy needs, the Committee highlighted the need for proactive planning to meet the significant electricity demand expected in the province's future to ensure BC can generate, store, and deliver sufficient energy required to transition to a green economy. Members highlighted the need for robust supply and demand-

side management strategies to reduce straining electrical infrastructure and encouraged additional investments in alternative energy and distributed energy production and storage. The Committee encourages the province to proactively plan for its energy demand and storage needs to ensure power sustainability and electricity grid capacity.

The Committee acknowledged the importance of advancing reconciliation and building strong partnerships with Indigenous peoples to promote economic growth across the province. Members highlighted the need to ensure First Nations and Indigenous communities are equipped with sufficient governance, administrative, and technical capacity to meaningfully participate in consultations and support effective decision-making. Members also discussed supporting land tenure holders and businesses reliant on land access that may be impacted by land use planning decisions related to reconciliation. The Committee reflected on input regarding the transfer of land management authority to First Nations.

A variety of perspectives were discussed regarding transparency and consultation.

The Committee highlighted the importance of maintaining provincial manufacturing and steel fabrication capacity and emphasized the need to prioritize domestic manufacturing in public procurement processes. The Committee further emphasized the importance of improving interprovincial trade flows to enhance economic efficiency, labour mobility, and competitiveness. Members also discussed the need to remove

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

8. Seek out and invest in opportunities that promote value-addition and unlock unrealized economic activity, including:
  - a. investments toward strengthening provincial food production, processing, and distribution capacity and supportive agricultural water infrastructure;
  - b. expanding the BC Farmers' Market Nutrition Coupon Program to address food insecurity and support local farmers; and
  - c. exploring a refundable biomass investment tax credit and streamlining processes to access wildfire-burned areas to harvest forestry resources.

9. Expand program initiatives and incentives to keep high-demand professions in rural and remote areas, including:
  - a. medical professionals;
  - b. teachers;
  - c. early childhood educators; and
  - d. support workers for children and adults with disabilities.
10. Increase core funding to the BC Labour Relations Board to reduce case backlogs and hire additional industrial relations officers to ensure prompt access to collective bargaining and effective dispute resolution processes.
11. Finalize interprovincial trade agreements that include mutual recognition of goods and services to enhance domestic trade integration, economic efficiency, and competitiveness.

# ENVIRONMENT

British Columbians highlighted the need for the province to provide more resources and action towards mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change. The Committee received several submissions advocating for increased protection of the environment, including providing additional funding for parks and protected areas. The preservation of fresh water and coasts was also an area of concern among participants.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

The Committee heard from several organizations and individuals advocating for the province to address climate change by funding climate adaptation and mitigation efforts, including sustained funding for CleanBC. West Coast Environmental Law explained that climate change is damaging infrastructure, straining the health care system, and disrupting the economy. Stand.earth noted that BC needs a new economic vision that moves away from dependence on resource extraction and prioritizes sustainable and equitable growth. The East Kootenay Climate Hub noted that polluting corporations place the costs of increased emissions, end-of-life cleanup, climate created disasters, declining public health, and water scarcity onto taxpayers. The organization recommended the creation of a Disaster Relief Fund that would be funded by polluting industries, reported publicly, and used to invest in clean energy projects. World Wildlife Fund Canada highlighted that climate change now costs the province billions of dollars a year through both the emergency response to climate events and the loss of natural assets. World Wildlife Fund Canada recommended that any remaining funds from the current \$3.9 billion dollar contingency fund for emergency response be dedicated toward climate resiliency.

For Our Kids noted that funding for climate mitigation and adaption is particularly important for the health of kids as schools experience the impacts of climate change, while Parents 4 Climate Victoria noted that climate anxiety among young people is becoming more prevalent. The Starfish Canada highlighted the importance of engaging with youth as part

of any climate strategy to create community-oriented climate actions. The Committee heard from several individuals and organizations that recommended providing additional funding to Youth Climate Corps BC to expand programs supporting climate action and provide youth with workforce training. The BC Climate Emergency Campaign recommended that the province partner with the federal government to create a national Youth Climate Corps, noting that these programs advance the transition to a clean economy while supporting youth employment.

The Committee received several recommendations to eliminate subsidies for resource extraction industries, such as oil and gas, to reduce the province's emissions. The BC Climate Emergency Campaign noted that subsidies for these industries incentivize pollution while the province is grappling with related climate change costs. Other individuals expressed concerns over the expansion of the Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) industry's impact on climate goals. Individuals and organizations recommended eliminating any subsidies for these industries and reallocating funding to cleaner or renewable energy sources.

The Committee also heard recommendations to implement a cap on industrial emissions. The BC Sustainable Energy Association shared that industrial activity is responsible for a significant portion of the province's greenhouse gas emissions while other individuals and organizations noted that the oil and gas sector is not on track to meet 2030 emission reduction targets. Wildsight highlighted a need to ensure that resource extraction industries are held responsible for any pollution caused by their operations. The organization noted that fracking operations must be subject to strict bonding requirements to ensure companies, not communities, cover cleanup costs when operations cease. Other individuals and organizations also discussed introducing additional regulation to address the significant use of water for hydraulic fracking and properly treating any wastewater.

Regarding the maritime sector, the Vancouver Maritime Centre for Climate recommended funding maritime decarbonization

initiatives for marine terminals and the scaling of low-carbon technologies in the maritime industry. Global Container Terminals Canada similarly recommended decarbonizing marine terminals by supporting infrastructure investments such as terminal charging stations and electricity capacity upgrades. The Chamber of Shipping of British Columbia noted that domestic marine transportation companies have set greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets that will rely on shore power infrastructure availability and cleaner fuel systems.

The Chemistry Industry Association of Canada discussed the need for industrial carbon pricing frameworks to be modernized to better support long-term investment and reduce emissions. The Cement Association of Canada recommended that BC's Output Based Pricing System be updated to incentivize the use of low-carbon biogenic fuel sources. The Association also recommended implementing programs through CleanBC to ensure continued competitiveness and investment attraction for BC's cement and concrete sector. Nature United recommended making additional investments into carbon finance to enable the province to more effectively evaluate and regulate carbon initiatives and ensure any initiatives are scientifically and economically viable.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The Committee heard a variety of approaches to increase the adoption of heat pumps, including providing free units and increasing existing installation rebates. First Things First Okanagan and other participants highlighted that heat pump rebates require homeowners to pay the full amount for heat pumps and installation before they are reimbursed, which creates a barrier for lower-income households. First Things First Okanagan and others recommended directly funding heat pump installation to eliminate financial barriers, reduce administrative overhead, and accelerate uptake. Ecotrust Canada highlighted that including full cost coverage of heat pump upgrades under the Partners in Indigenous Energy Efficiency and Resilience program would ensure equitable support and enhance uptake. The organization further explained that due to rising costs, incentives under the CleanBC Energy Savings Program should be increased to meet current installation costs.

The Building Owners and Managers Association of British Columbia noted that there needs to be a variety of incentives

and programs available for commercial buildings to support climate action, as all commercial buildings are different. The Pembina Institute discussed mechanisms, such as Property Assessed Clean Energy programs, to support property owners with the up-front cost of energy efficiency upgrades. Vancity Credit Union highlighted a need to provide sustained investment in existing energy saving and retrofit programs while looking for opportunities to incentivize energy retrofits. The Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Institute of Canada noted that to meet emission reduction targets for commercial buildings and homes, the heating and ventilation sector will require investments toward increasing its workforce.

The Canadian Home Builders' Association of BC shared its concern that CleanBC has committed significant resources to retrofitting existing homes with energy efficiency upgrades but does not provide similar funding or initiatives for new constructions. The organization recommended reallocating CleanBC funding to include support for new constructions and restoring funding for the Better Homes New Construction Program. The Vancouver Island Strata Owners Association highlighted that strata corporations currently lack the ability to apply for CleanBC programs, which is creating legal complexities for property owners and strata corporations. The organization recommended allowing for strata corporations to apply for CleanBC programs and rebates to provide equitable opportunities for strata corporations and owners.

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTIONS

The Committee heard recommendations advocating for increased funding for environmental conservation and restoration. RTOERO noted that the province should continue progress towards environmental stewardship to provide for a sustainable future, while the Castlegar Parks and Trails Society recommended increasing funding for environmental protection and restoration. The Spruce City Wildlife Association highlighted that both the extraction and recreational use of natural assets impact the environment and recommended that all industries, whether mining or ecotourism, should contribute to natural resource conservation and restoration.

Several individuals and organizations recommended implementing frameworks and legislation that prioritize biodiversity and ecosystem health. BC Nature noted that BC is home to a rich diversity of plants and animals, but also the highest number of species at risk. The organization noted that

BC is one of the few remaining provinces without stand-alone legislation to protect at-risk species and that management and conservation funding is essential. Participants noted that the current patchwork of legislation prioritizes resource extraction with scattered environmental protections. Several individuals and organizations advocated for the province to implement immediate measures to ensure at-risk ecosystems remain intact and implement the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework. West Coast Environmental Law explained that the Biodiversity Ecosystem Health Framework prioritizes the management of ecosystem health, rather than just resource extraction.

The Committee also heard from individuals and organizations advocating to protect air quality and forests. The Kitimat Airshed Group explained that an airshed is a confined geographical area where emissions from industries and community activities collect and affect air quality, human health, and the environment. The group recommended dedicating more funding to airshed groups and initiatives to manage air quality, particularly in areas with significant industrial activity. The Peachland Watershed Protection Alliance explained that inland and rural communities are required to actively protect their watersheds from overlogging and recommended reviewing forestry related subsidies to affirm they are beneficial to the province. The Wondrous Tree Fellowship highlighted that recent housing densification legislation lacks adequate consideration and protections of trees and permeable surfaces and recommended implementing stronger protections. The Ancient Forest Alliance stated there is currently no short-term funding available to support logging deferrals and recommended providing this funding to First Nations and title holders to defer old-growth forest logging.

Several organizations and individuals recommended ensuring that the province protect 30 percent of the land and water by 2030. A significant number of participants also recommended tripling funding for land use planning to support Indigenous-led stewardship, reach environmental protection targets, and prioritize ecosystem health. The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (BC Chapter) highlighted that modernized land use planning is a powerful tool to advance conservation and reconciliation. The Northern Confluence Initiative added that providing additional resources for Indigenous communities to participate in the development and implementation of land use planning will support conservation goals and provide greater certainty for industry. Nature United recommended increasing funding for collaborative

stewardship and planning tables, which it described as increasingly important for climate and ecosystem resiliency. The Nechako Watershed Roundtable explained that community based ecological knowledge, combined with scientific data, is the best way to understand the impacts of climate change and plan for climate adaptation.

To support reclamation, reforestation, and other nature-based climate solutions, World Wildlife Fund Canada recommended issuing a conservation bond to fund necessary restoration work. The Ancient Forest Alliance highlighted a need for a provincial land acquisition fund to acquire and protect endangered or biologically rich ecosystems that are currently on privately owned land. Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region recommended providing core funding to each biosphere region organization to continue their work to conserve biodiversity and cultural heritage while the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust sought funding for the development of a Clayoquot Sound biosphere centre.

## FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildsight noted the importance of increasing the province's investment in fish and wildlife protections and recommended providing a dedicated fund for wildlife protection. Wildlife overpasses and exclusion systems along wildlife corridors were also recommended to prevent wildlife deaths and improve public safety. Wildsight explained that the population health of wildlife depends on the ability to move along corridors and shared its concern that resource and recreational traffic is increasing risks for both wildlife and people. Exposed Wildlife Conservancy noted a need for wildlife-tailored infrastructure solutions through targeted wildlife crossing signage and improved enforcement in high-traffic wildlife zones.

Exposed Wildlife Conservancy also highlighted that more funding for conservation officers is needed to reduce the caseloads of existing officers, who are currently required to cover large geographic areas. Both the BC Wildlife Federation and Spruce City Wildlife Association recommended increasing the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation's hunting and fishing surcharges and dedicating these fees to wildlife conservation and management. The BC Wildlife Federation also highlighted the importance of funding wildlife protection programs, such as the monitoring of chronic wasting disease, while the Pacific Salmon Foundation recommended providing adequate resources and staff to salmon conservation.

The Great Blue Heron Society noted that trees for heron nests and hunting spaces are being lost due to housing development and recommended nesting sites and trees be protected. The organization also noted the toll of unspayed cats on bird populations and recommended providing incentives to spay domestic and feral cats.

## INVASIVE SPECIES

The Invasive Species Council of BC explained that prevention is critical to managing invasive species. The organization and the Invasive Species Council of Metro Vancouver both recommended strengthening regulator tools and providing long-term investments into prevention, monitoring, and management of invasive species. The Invasive Species Council of Metro Vancouver highlighted a need for a single Invasive Species Act, as existing invasive species legislation is ineffective in preventing and managing a variety of invasive species. One individual similarly recommended reviewing current legislation and developing a new provincial invasive species legislation that includes stronger enforcement.

An individual noted that additional funding for early detection and mitigation of invasive aquatic species, such as zebra mussels and non-native fish, is needed. The Okanagan Basin Water Board explained that invasive mussels can permanently transform aquatic ecosystems and clog critical infrastructure. The organization recommended increasing funding for programs preventing invasive mussel introduction and establishing an invasive mussel emergency response fund. The Fraser Basin Council added that invasive mussels spread between watersheds through watercraft and gear and recommended ensuring that every highway entry-point into BC has a watercraft inspection and decontamination station always open.

## PARKS AND RECREATION

The Committee heard from several individuals and organizations recommending increased funding for parks and outdoor recreation. Participants noted that park access and maintenance is vital to BC's tourism economy and the mental and physical well-being of British Columbians, and funding is needed to address deferred maintenance and aging infrastructure. The Friends of Cypress Provincial Park Society highlighted that Cypress and Mount Seymour Provincial Parks face an increased demand from urban residents, but hiking trails are becoming worn out with insufficient staff to restore

them. One individual noted that not enough hiking areas can be accessed by car, resulting in overcrowding and degradation of existing sites and recommended increasing the number of recreation sites for hiking and backpacking. The BC Lodging and Campgrounds Association noted that BC Parks campsite fees haven't increased in recent years and recommended an increase to campsite fees to support park operations.

The Trans Canada Trail explained that outdoor and recreation organizations are volunteer-led and provide on the ground construction, maintenance and preservation of parks and recreation sites. The BC Snowmobile Federation and Western Canada Mountain Bike Tourism Association explained that outdoor recreation in BC relies on volunteer-run, non-profit organizations, but these organizations face increasing financial and administrative pressure due to insufficient funding. The BC Marine Trails Network Association noted that funding models should be adjusted to recognize volunteer hours and contributions made by these organizations to BC's parks and outdoor recreation. The BC Marine Trails Network Association and several other outdoor recreation organizations recommended providing additional funding to support outdoor recreation in BC.

The Committee received recommendations to prioritize investment in community and recreational infrastructure. The BC Recreation and Parks Association emphasized that much of the province's existing infrastructure is aging and lacks a sustainable replacement strategy. The Association highlighted the importance of funding to support the data input phase of a national inventory, developed by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, which aims to catalogue recreational infrastructure across the country. The Outdoor Recreation Council of BC recommended establishing an Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Fund and explained that BC's outdoor recreation infrastructure is straining due to growing demands and more frequent extreme weather events. The Fraser Valley Mountain Bikers Association and Revelstoke Snowmobile Club both recommended providing more investment in outdoor recreation through the Outdoor Recreation Fund of BC. The organizations explained that the fund provides grants for community-led projects that create and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities. The Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC and Fernie Trails Alliance both noted that the Outdoor Recreation Fund has distributed minimal funding despite receiving a large volume of eligible applicants.

The BC Snowmobile Federation and Quad Riders ATV Association of BC both highlighted that access to public recreation infrastructure depends heavily on resource and forestry roads, but many of these roads have been decommissioned or left to deteriorate. The Revelstoke Snowmobile Club and other organizations recommended providing dedicated funding to maintain key forest service roads and supporting infrastructure critical for accessing parks and backcountry areas. The Fraser Valley Mountain Bikers Association also noted that trail users and maintenance staff need to be able to access trails without vehicles capable of four-wheel-drive and recommended that frequently used forest service roads be repaired. The Monashee Trail Society expressed concern that the BC Trails Strategy has failed to deliver for many communities and recommended revitalizing the strategy through investment in trail planning and development. The North Okanagan Cycling Society noted that a dedicated and flexible funding model for trails should be delivered in partnership with multi-use trail organizations to ensure equitable access and trail sustainability.

The Committee heard from several individuals and organizations which recommended increased funding for BC Parks. Participants recommended strengthening the operational budget of BC Parks to address deferred maintenance and limited accessibility to ensure equitable access and ecological stewardship. The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (BC Chapter) highlighted that demand for outdoor recreation is putting significant strain on parks which requires additional funding for infrastructure, staffing, and ecological monitoring. One individual added that BC will struggle to maintain the ecological integrity of existing protected areas without additional investment. The Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC noted the limited capacity of BC Parks staff hampers outdoor recreation organizations from expanding or maintaining recreational assets for the benefit of the public.

## RECYCLING AND WASTE

Zero Waste BC recommended implementing a provincial zero waste and circular economy strategy, as well as an updated extended producer responsibility action plan. The organization noted that zero waste economies are resilient to price increases, supply chain disruptions, and climate change. Food Stash Foundation noted that an extended producer responsibility system could support the recovery or redistribution of food so it could still be eaten, used for

animal feed, or composted. The organization recommended implementing mechanisms such as an extended producer responsibility system to reduce and divert food waste. The Chemistry Industry Association of Canada recommended recognizing and treating end-of-life plastic as an economic resource in a circular economy, which would enable plastics to be continuously reused in manufacturing. Surfrider Foundation Canada highlighted that hotel amenities are an unnecessary form of single-use plastic and recommended requiring accommodation providers to switch to reusable amenity systems to reduce waste.

## WATER

The Committee heard from several individuals and organizations regarding funding to support local watershed boards. Nechako Watershed Roundtable explained that watershed boards develop solutions to interconnected issues, such as the water demand pressures from various land-use activities. The BC Watershed Security Coalition explained that BC is one of the only provinces without a formal system for local watershed governance. The POLIS Project on Ecological Governance highlighted that BC's lack of a coordinated approach to local watershed management has led to fragmented responses to water governance and created additional pressures on provincial systems. The Vancouver Island Water Watch Coalition noted that a formal local watershed governance system would bring Indigenous and local governments together to co-develop water management solutions. The Raincoast Conservation Foundation similarly noted that community water management is increasingly important during periods of drought or wildfire risk. These organizations and several others recommended providing funding to establish a system of watershed boards. Additionally, recommendations were also made to share a portion of natural resource royalty revenues to support local watershed governance organizations.

Hornby Water Stewardship recommended providing incentives for low-income residents to collect and store water as droughts become more frequent and severe. The organization also recommended providing rebates for low-income residents to install smart irrigation systems to conserve water used for lawns and gardens. The BC Salmon Farmers Association and BC Shellfish Growers Association both recommended investing in shared water storage infrastructure to secure long-term agricultural production and support regional food systems. The organizations noted that agricultural needs should

also be integrated into watershed planning and emergency water management. The Committee also heard from several individuals regarding the need to complete the Cowichan Wier Project to safeguard salmon runs, protect drinking water, and support water-dependent sectors.

The Committee heard from several organizations and individuals recommending that BC's water rental rates be increased. The Rivershed Society of British Columbia noted that BC's industrial water rental rates are among the lowest in Canada while the BC Watershed Security Coalition explained that the rates do not cover basic licensing costs and staff needed for a robust water management system. World Wildlife Fund Canada similarly noted that the current rates do not provide sufficient cost recovery to manage and implement the Water Sustainability Act. Wildsight and other organizations recommended that water rental rates be raised and directed towards water stewardship as climate pressures intensify.

The Committee also heard similar recommendations from several individuals and organizations that industrial water rental rates should be raised, and annual funding be dedicated to the Watershed Security Fund. BC Water Legacy noted that BC collects approximately \$500 million annually in water rental revenue and shared its concern that minimal funding from this is dedicated to improving watershed health. The Victoria Golden Rods and Reels Fishing Club explained that the Watershed Security Fund provides cost effective support for organizations addressing watershed concerns. The BC Watershed Security Coalition and other organizations recommended dedicating \$50 million annually to the Watershed Security Fund. The Lower Fraser Floodplains Coalition recommended dedicating additional funding to the Watershed Security Fund for flood risk assessments and updated floodplain mapping to prevent flooding similar to what was seen during the November 2021 atmospheric river event. The Vancouver Island Water Watch Coalition recommended amending the Forest Act to protect watersheds and preserve water sources in communities impacted by forestry operations.

Several individuals and organizations noted that coastal communities depend on a healthy ocean for food security, recreation, and culture and recommended that the province implement the BC Coastal Martine Strategy. Participants explained that the marine strategy includes key actions that protect costal habitats and develops frameworks for marine incident preparedness. CPAWS-BC explained that

coastlines help coastal communities adapt to climate change by absorbing waves, reducing erosion, and providing refuge for wildlife. The Georgia Strait Alliance emphasized that the Coastal Marine Strategy and other initiatives will enhance the stewardship of BC's coastal zones, bolster local economies, and uphold Indigenous rights. One individual recommended providing additional funding to support Indigenous Nations and coastal stakeholders to participate in the co-development and implementation of the Coastal Marine Strategy. Surfrider Foundation Canada noted that coastal communities are also being impacted by a lack of funding to manage the ongoing buildup of marine debris. The organization recommended creating an ongoing provincewide marine debris monitoring and response program and eliminating the use of expanded polystyrene plastic in aquatic infrastructure.

## COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

While discussing climate change, the Committee reflected on how to achieve immediate economic development while being mindful of the province's climate goals and transition to a cleaner, future ready economy. The Committee deliberated on the various supports provided to resource extraction industries and discussed a potential review of these supports to ensure environmental considerations are fully integrated. Members also noted the importance of initiatives that support the decarbonization of the marine sector, the use of alternative fuel sources such as LNG, and highlighted the impact of the Vancouver Maritime Centre for Climate's contributions to the commercial and recreational tourism economy.

The Committee identified the importance of advancing energy efficiency improvements to reduce demand on the province's electricity infrastructure and capacity. Members reflected on the current costs of heat pump installations, which were described to the Committee as cost-prohibitive by many participants, and discussed strategies to review these programs to increase their utilization. Members highlighted a need to increase incentives for retrofitting gas, furnace, and boiler heating systems in many rural and remote communities, as the current suite of incentives does not adequately cover installation costs or provide sufficient energy savings to offset these costs.

The Committee would like to see the province explore enabling strata corporations to apply for programs under CleanBC. Members noted that the current application processes for strata corporations under CleanBC lack flexibility,

which limits residents and strata corporations from pursuing energy efficiency improvements. The Committee discussed that providing builders with a one-time rebate to support implementing the Zero Carbon Step Code would help increase the energy efficiency of buildings across the province.

Members identified a need to implement measures to reduce the number of vehicle-wildlife collisions within high-traffic wildlife corridors, particularly in rural and remote areas. Members further noted the potential to reduce conflict between livestock and wildlife through the implementation of range fencing. The Committee discussed the portion of fees charged on hunting and fishing licenses that are dedicated to fish and wildlife conservation and the need to review these fees to enhance conservation efforts to ensure alignment with other jurisdictions. The Committee emphasized the importance of urgently preventing the spread of invasive species and noted the significant impact of many species on BC's sensitive ecosystems and critical industries. The Committee acknowledged that investment in invasive species prevention and enforcement, particularly invasive mussels, is cost-effective when compared to the expenses associated with mitigation and removal efforts.

With respect to parks and recreation, Members noted the importance of maintaining forestry service roads and other backcountry access routes as they enable critical access to parks, outdoor recreation destinations, and remote areas. The Committee discussed reviewing BC Parks campsite fees with other jurisdictions to ensure these fees adequately contribute to the maintenance, operations, and service improvements required to provide these sites. The Committee recognized the

importance of volunteer-led outdoor recreation organization's work towards supporting public access to nature and providing outdoor experiences. Members also noted that many parks in the Lower Mainland and on Vancouver Island receive sufficient funding to remain open year-round, while parks in rural areas are forced to seasonally close due to financial constraints.

The Committee reflected on the input received calling for increasing recycling and reducing waste across the province and discussed a range of strategies to achieve these goals. The Committee deliberated on prohibiting single-use amenities by accommodation providers. Members noted the environmental benefits of prohibiting single-use amenities but highlighted the potential economic impacts that would be placed on accommodation providers.

The Committee discussed potential increases to the province's water rental rates and strengthening water management and watershed health. Members deliberated on strategies to regulate groundwater and protect drinking water, respond to droughts and floods, and implement watershed monitoring and information systems. The Committee agreed that water rental rates should be reviewed to ensure that British Columbia is in line with other provinces and is effectively managing its water resources. The Committee also highlighted the need to protect marine waters and coastal communities by eliminating the use of expanded polystyrene plastic in aquatic infrastructure that contribute to marine debris along BC's coastlines.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

12. Review and enhance heat-pump rebates and energy efficiency programs to ensure alignment with current installation costs and include specific considerations for rural and remote area energy needs to reduce reliance on gas or propane heating systems.
13. Consider providing builders with a one-time rebate to cover transition costs to implement the Zero Carbon Step Code.
14. Dedicate additional funding to prevent the introduction of invasive mussels into the province.
15. Ensure equity between BC Parks' operating dates for parks in rural and remote areas, and those in urban areas.

16. Review the following provincial charges to ensure alignment with other provinces:

- a. hunting and fishing license surcharges and the portion of these fees being dedicated fish and wildlife conservation initiatives;
- b. BC Parks campsite fees and the dedication of fees to supporting campsite maintenance and improvements; and
- c. water rental rates and the portion of these rates being dedicated to strengthening water management, including drinking water protection and watershed monitoring.

# FISCAL AND REGULATORY POLICY

The Committee received a number of recommendations with respect to specific taxation and regulatory measures. Other key themes included support for local municipalities and small businesses, as well as recommendations concerning general budgetary policy.

## BUDGETARY POLICY

The Committee heard from several individuals and organizations who recommended the province return to a balanced budget. The Association of Reformed Political Action Canada highlighted that massive deficit spending increases the proportion of the budget required to pay interest on the debt, raises the cost of borrowing as lenders demand a higher interest rate to compensate for a riskier investment, and increases risk of default. The Business Council of BC suggested establishing a timeline to balance the budget, reducing debt servicing costs to below three or four percent of expenses, lowering the provincial debt-to-GDP under 20 percent or other forms of fiscal anchors would demonstrate fiscal discipline. Further, the Chartered Professional Accountants of BC advocated for a long-term fiscal anchor to ensure fiscal sustainability, including guidelines on the government's spending, indebtedness, and debt servicing costs.

Regarding taxation, the BC Society for Policy Solutions suggested tax reforms to reduce economic inequality and increase provincial revenues, including increasing the top two income tax brackets by two points each, increasing the corporate income tax rate by one point, taxing high-value land wealth and convening a citizen's assembly on fair tax reform. The BC Federation of Labour stated that the government has a responsibility to ensure there is enough revenue to deliver the programs and services families rely on, and advocated for increasing corporate and personal income taxes as a potential source of additional revenue. CUPE Local 374 shared that as the gap between the wealthy and the remainder of society continues to expand, strengthening and expanding the progressive taxation system is a way to ensure better funding for critical investments in housing, childcare, health care,

education, and other public services. Other taxation reforms the Committee heard included individuals advocating to close tax loopholes, eliminate harmful subsidies, and to reward high tax payers for paying more taxes.

Organizations and individuals shared recommendations regarding public spending. The BC General Employees' Union stated that additional funding to strengthen public programs and increase public sector pay would contribute to strong, well-resourced public services and programs that would fuel production and growth for the wider economy. The Northern Confluence Initiative stated that the government should avoid reducing the public service in order to monitor mining activities and protect communities and watersheds from harm. Further, the BC Federation of Labour suggested that a thorough review of BC's privatized services could find opportunities to bring services under public administration and delivery, which would ensure that the government is providing services to British Columbians instead of profits to large corporations. The BC Humanist Association spoke to the need to ensure government spending goes to secular and inclusive programs to ensure that public funds are not used to subsidize programs that may discriminate providing services based on religion.

Regarding public infrastructure spending, the BC Construction Association stated that investing in long-term infrastructure planning by reducing interprovincial trade barriers and diversifying supply sources would enhance economic resilience. The Cement Association of Canada noted that as domestic cement manufacturers face decreased demand due to economic uncertainty and other challenges, the government can support local manufacturing by accelerating public infrastructure projects and prioritizing made-in-BC building materials in public procurement. NUQO Modular advocated for an aligned procurement policy across ministries and Crown agencies to explicitly prioritize BC-owned businesses, including Indigenous-led companies, as vendors and builders of public infrastructure. The Canadian Welding Bureau stated that contracts awarded by the government for infrastructure

and building projects, including welding, should incorporate the appropriate CSA welding standards to ensure the highest degree of weld quality, infrastructure resiliency, and public safety. The Committee further heard from the Visual Thinking Company that investments in integrated planning solutions could result in large cost-savings on future infrastructure projects.

## LIQUOR, CANNABIS, AND TOBACCO REGULATION

The JTI Macdonald Corp. stated that freezing provincial tobacco taxes until measurable progress is made in reducing the illegal tobacco market would help to stabilize the market, reduce the incentive to buy illegal products, and allow time for enforcement efforts to catch up. Imperial Tobacco Canada shared that by increasing access to all flavoured vaping products and Health Canada-approved nicotine pouches in convenience stores, the government could reduce the illegal market share of those products and capture significantly more tax revenue from legal sales. Further, the Convenience Industry Council of Canada advocated to allow convenience stores to sell alcohol, stating that the convenience store sector has consistently demonstrated its reliability in responsibly selling age-restricted products.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Multiple individuals and organizations shared their priorities on local government funding. CUPE Local 402 highlighted that municipalities are being asked to deliver affordable housing, upgrade infrastructure, respond to the climate crisis, and support fast-growing populations, and modernizing the funding formula for local governments could include sharing provincial revenues such as property transfer taxes or enabling new tools like a local sales tax. CUPE Local 374 additionally highlighted that municipalities need long-term, stable funding for local governments to respond to modern challenges. Metro Vancouver recommended exploring funding solutions that respond to population growth while maintaining local government revenues. The Association of Interior Realtors recommended funding to modernize municipal property documents, which would improve and digitize systems to make the planning, development and conveyancing of housing much more straightforward.

The Committee heard recommendations regarding infrastructure funding for local governments. The City of

Prince George recommended implementing a \$650 million annual local government infrastructure program modeled on the Canada Community-Building Fund, which would help to create immediate jobs, stimulate local business, and attract private capital, as well as improve productivity, reduce service costs, and build the reliable framework that rural and northern communities need to grow. The City of Penticton further advocated for consistent, multi-year infrastructure funding to enable cities to plan and deliver projects with greater certainty and efficiency as they work to meet housing targets under the Housing Supply Act. The City of Kelowna also recommended establishing a new fiscal framework with municipalities to meet targets set by the Housing Supply Act. The Village of Fruitvale stated that small rural municipalities required support to update infrastructure and support the development of new housing.

The City of Maple Ridge recommended establishing an industrial projects fund to help municipalities and regional governments finance planning, site servicing, and redevelopment of industrial lands, ensuring long-term prosperity, competitiveness, and economic stability.

## PROVINCIAL SALES TAX

The Committee heard several recommendations for rebates and exemptions regarding the Provincial Sales Tax (PST). The Tax Executives Institute called for amendments including amending the PST-related party transaction exemption from 95 percent to 90 percent ownership of voting shares, amending PST export rules to allow exemptions for customers using their own conveyance, and limiting PST on legal services when the subject matter is in BC. R. J. Anderson and Associates Ltd. recommended exempting software purchases and related services from the PST when purchased by businesses, protecting vendors from lawsuits while they are attempting to comply with the Provincial Sales Tax Act, and simplifying and broadening PST exemptions to make it easier for businesses to apply. The Business Council of BC recommended exempting capital inputs from the PST to improve the return rate on new investments. Other recommendations for exemptions included a PST exemption on the purchase of emergency vehicles, on small-scale farm equipment, and from dog and cat food, pet clothes, and veterinarian bills.

Telus recommended that the Provincial Sales Tax Act be amended to avoid double taxation and higher compliance costs for technology businesses. The Chartered Professional

Accountants of British Columbia stated that the PST imposes additional costs on businesses and results in reduced investment, and recommended that BC adopt a value-added tax system to rectify these problems. An individual recommended increasing the PST on all non-essential goods and to use the additional revenue to provide more funding for schools. The Committee also heard from the BC Craft Brewers Guild, which recommended lowering the provincial markup rate on beer that is linked to the amount produced by the brewer. Specifically, the Guild recommended that the bottom markup threshold be moved from 15,000 hls to 2,000 hls, and that the top threshold be moved from 350,000 hls to 500,000 hls. The Guild stated that these changes would ensure BC craft breweries receive relief to help grow their businesses, while larger multinational producers pay a fairer share.

## SPECIFIC TAXATION MEASURES

The Committee heard recommendations from various organizations and individuals regarding specific tax measures in a wide variety of areas. CUPE BC noted that despite substantial government investments, the affordability crisis for low- and middle-income families is deepening, and the gap between the wealthiest and everyone else continues to widen. CUPE BC suggested that BC's personal income tax brackets and flat rate system continue to benefit the highest income earners, and that strengthening progressive taxation would increase fairness. The Business Council of British Columbia recommended reducing the top marginal personal income tax rate to under 50 percent, as skilled workers, senior leaders, and entrepreneurs are needed to expand businesses, but the high-income tax rate makes it difficult to attract these individuals to BC.

The Committee heard recommendations on changes to the employer health tax, including to lower costs for small businesses by tying employer health tax thresholds to inflation, to raise the employer health tax exemption threshold to \$1.5 million in payroll and index it to inflation, and to make the exemption a deduction from total payroll. The Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses and the Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce both stated that payroll taxes impact small businesses' ability to hire workers and grow, and that raising the employer health tax threshold would help small businesses save money. The BC Chamber of Commerce recommended that employer tax thresholds be tied to the rate of inflation, similar to what has been done for minimum wage.

The Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association recommended developing a tangible plan to reduce and eventually eliminate insurance premium-based taxes. The Association stated that premium taxes directly increase the cost of insurance, causing existing employers in BC to provide fewer insurance benefits to their employees and driving individual consumers to purchase less protection than they would without these taxes.

The Committee heard recommendations on changes to the motor fuel tax. The Canadian Propane Association recommended changes to the motor fuel tax to support clean transportation fuels like auto propane, which would help municipalities and businesses reduce costs and emissions in public and commercial fleets. The Canadian Groundfish Research and Conservation Society stated that ensuring commercial fishers are exempt from fuel taxes would make them more competitive with US fisheries in Washington and Oregon and level the playing field nationally. The Deep Sea Trawlers Association of BC added that BC is currently the only province that does not provide a provincial fuel tax exemption to its seafood sector, despite other agricultural producers being exempt. Federated Co-operations Limited described how moving to an online fuel tax claims system will streamline the refund process, reduce administrative burdens, and leverage technology for efficiency. The Tax Executives Institute indicated that exempting wholesale propane transactions from the Motor Fuel Tax would support BC's natural gas sector development, enhance the province's competitiveness, and align with interprovincial trade objectives.

Organizations recommended several tax measures related to housing. The Association of Interior Realtors recommended funding a formal review of housing related taxes to see if they are meeting their intended goals of building more homes for people to live in. Strand recommended reinvesting property transfer tax revenues into local infrastructure to offset funding gaps from deferring payments of development cost charges, as well as eliminating the anti-flipping tax and foreign buyer tax on housing to encourage investment in housing supply. The Canadian Mortgage Brokers Association – BC stated that raising the property transfer tax threshold and simplifying the rules and language around property transfer tax exemptions would reduce confusion for homebuyers and modernize the homebuying process. Mortgage Professionals Canada advocated for increasing the property transfer tax exemption threshold for existing homes, arguing that if a first-time buyer is purchasing an existing home rather than a new build, they

should not be penalized by a lower property transfer tax exemption threshold. An individual recommended increasing the school tax for properties to fund the education of future generations.

The Committee heard recommendations regarding wealth and luxury taxes. The New Car Dealers of British Columbia recommended eliminating the luxury vehicle tax, stating that the luxury vehicle tax threshold has not been adjusted for 20 years resulting in many vehicles now being subject to the tax. The Committee heard from several individuals who advocated implementing a targeted wealth tax, as well as increases to corporate taxes, with some individuals recommending using the revenues to fund education and health care. The BC General Employees' Union recommended increasing the income, corporate, property, estate, and resource royalty tax rates for the highest earners to address inequality.

The Committee heard from an individual who recommended reinstating the carbon tax in a revenue-neutral fashion to prevent delays to action to combat climate change.

The Committee heard recommendations from several organizations and individuals regarding tax exemptions. An individual recommended removing the tax-exempt status of religious organizations and removing funding for private schools, on the basis that these limit benefits for non-religious people and perpetuate social hierarchies. The Committee heard from the BC Humanist Association and several individuals who recommended that religious property tax exemptions be ended, to alleviate the tax burden on homeowners and local businesses. One individual stated that the tax-exempt status for religious institutions should remain, on the basis that religious institutions of all denominations play a vital community role and must remain financially viable.

## SPECIFIC REGULATORY MEASURES

The Committee heard recommendations from two organizations regarding gambling regulations. The BC Gaming Industry recommended increasing and extending the British Columbia Lottery Corporation's temporary commission adjustment for casinos, community gaming and bingo operations and investing in made-in-BC solutions to legal online gaming. The Industry further recommended refraining from adopting an open model of regulation for current unlicensed online operators, and working with the federal government to strengthen enforcement on illegal gambling operators. The organization stated that these measures would

help industry members retain more earnings, and help clamp down on illegal operators. The Canadian Online Gaming Association recommended prioritizing responsible gaming prevention and consumer protection and strengthening anti-money laundering safeguards, as well as regulating the online gaming sector, starting with a public consultation on online gaming sector regulations.

Regarding insurance, the Movement of United Professionals recommended mandating ICBC to expand into new product areas, such as landlord, property, life, disability, and critical illness insurance, on the basis that this expansion would improve affordability for customers. The Insurance Bureau of Canada recommended opening the auto insurance market to more competition to help lower premiums and increase the services that drivers receive.

The Committee also heard from the Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association that changes to the Pension Benefits Act and the Employment Standards Act, such as enabling employers to use automatic features like payroll deductions, would combat the savings shortfall caused by declining pension coverage experienced by British Columbians.

On the topic of red tape reduction, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business recommended extending net-zero increase commitments for red tape reduction to 2030, and provided examples such as unilateral recognition of goods and services from other provinces, ensuring that goods and services from BC are recognized in other provinces, and ensuring that legislated or enforced timelines for certification of professional occupations are upheld.

## SMALL BUSINESS

The Committee heard recommendations from several organizations regarding small businesses. The Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce recommended lowering the cost of doing business and enabling workforce growth by freezing new provincial fees and levies that are affecting businesses and their inputs. The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade and the Building Owners and Managers Association of British Columbia further recommended reducing business costs, prioritizing tax competitiveness and prioritizing economic growth. The Business Improvement Areas of BC advocated to review the five-day mandatory sick leave policy for options such as rebates, subsidies or other mechanisms that reduce the financial liability for businesses without placing an administrative burden on them. The Hispanic

Canadian Chamber of Commerce told the Committee that with businesses facing inflation, sluggish economic growth and tariffs, support for Hispanic-Canadian small- and mid-size businesses is necessary. Further, support for minority Chambers of Commerce to assist these groups in securing grants and resources would directly benefit small- and mid-size businesses, helping them scale, create jobs, and contribute to economic prosperity.

Regarding entrepreneurship, Futurpreneur Canada recommended support for young entrepreneurs to start, buy, and grow businesses, as well as providing \$1.2 million to Futurpreneur to help young entrepreneurs launch, buy, and grow their businesses. This funding would help provide mentorship programs, loans, and workshops for entrepreneurs. The BC People First Society recommended providing support for disabled entrepreneurs to hire staff.

Regarding tax and regulatory measures for small businesses, the BC Chamber of Commerce recommended reducing taxes for businesses, increasing research and development tax credits and addressing inter-provincial competitiveness to incentivize innovation. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business stated that providing targeted tax relief for small businesses would encourage owners to invest more in their businesses.

The Mechanical Contractors Association of BC and the Electrical Contractors Association of BC recommended the acceleration of prompt payment legislation, which would provide payment certainty, minimize escalation in building costs, and create financial security for workers and their families. The Canadian Bankers Association recommended supporting the adoption of a financial consumer protection regime for payment service providers and extending these standards to entities that embed payment processing for merchants. The Association stated that failure to address financial transactions risks can decrease consumer trust in the financial system.

## OTHER

The Vancouver Foundation recommended updating the Unclaimed Property Act to ensure unclaimed property is returned to rightful owners.

First West Credit Union recommended re-establishing BC as a centre of excellence in cooperative banking by removing interprovincial trade barriers in financial services, streamlining

regulations, and supporting provincial credit unions to operate federally. Further, First West Credit Union urged the government to partner with credit unions on housing, small business growth, digital infrastructure, and financial literacy to advance BC's economic goals. The Committee also heard recommendations to promote the interoperability and harmonization of financial services regulatory regimes across Canada, and reinstate the \$1,000 grocery rebate.

## COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Reflecting on the input they received with respect to fiscal policy, Committee Members highlighted the importance of developing a roadmap for the province to return to a balanced budget and noted the need to follow fiscally responsible public spending principles. The Committee also discussed progressive tax systems, and the desire to ensure any changes to progressive tax systems did not negatively impact middle-class families. Members further expressed the importance of ensuring spending on public sector positions, particularly in the health care sector, is focused on front-line positions that serve the public.

The Committee considered ways to discourage purchasing tobacco from illegal markets, including by supporting policies that allow purchasing legal non-tobacco nicotine products beyond pharmacies, while protecting minors from access. Some Members highlighted that by providing accessible alternatives to cigarettes, people may be more likely to utilize these options to assist in quitting smoking. Members agreed that by allowing businesses that are already approved to sell cigarettes, like convenience stores, to sell other nicotine products, the government would be able to capture more tax revenue from these legal sales. They also reflected on the importance of ensuring funds received from the legal sale of tobacco are used for tobacco, vaping, and nicotine control initiatives, preventative measures, and cessation programs.

The Committee noted receiving several recommendations regarding funding models for municipalities and ensuring local governments have the funds they need to provide a high level of service, particularly funds for infrastructure projects that support increased housing density. The Committee acknowledged that municipalities of all sizes have highlighted the importance of a renewed funding model, and discussed the importance of tying funding solutions to population growth.

With respect to taxation, the Committee discussed the merits of providing PST exemptions in targeted areas, including for small-scale farm equipment and emergency vehicles, as well as more broad reforms to the PST to ensure a competitive environment for businesses. The Committee acknowledged the recommendation for mark-up reform from the BC Craft Brewers Guild, noting the difficulties imposed on craft brewers who sometimes have to pay more per unit than larger multi-national producers. In addition, the Committee noted the need to update the luxury vehicle tax, highlighting that the threshold has remained unchanged for several years while the average price of vehicles has continued to rise, impacting the cost of vehicles purchased by working British Columbians. The Committee further noted the unintended consequence the luxury vehicle tax has on incentivizing the purchase of heavy-duty trucks rather than light-duty models. Reflecting on input from small businesses regarding financial challenges associated with the employer health tax, Committee Members agreed the exemption threshold should be indexed to inflation, with some Members advocating for an increase to the threshold. The Committee also discussed the motor fuel tax, highlighting its impact on the commercial fishing sector in particular, and expressed support for exemptions in this area. The Committee further noted the merits of streamlining the fuel tax claims and reporting process through a modern online system. Regarding housing-related taxes, the Committee noted the importance of ensuring they reflect inflation and the rising costs of home ownership, as well as simplifying the language around property transfer tax exemptions.

The Committee highlighted the need to regulate grey-market gaming platforms. Members noted how enhanced regulations could protect local jobs and ensure gaming revenues continue to support essential public services like health care and education. The Committee discussed the merits of expanding the mandate of ICBC to include other forms of insurance, in particular expanding ICBC to offer insurance to those living in high-risk areas for natural disasters, to ensure that homeowners had some form of coverage. The Committee further discussed the potential outcomes of opening up vehicle insurance in the province to further competition.

Regarding support for small businesses, the Committee acknowledged options like lowering costs, enabling workplace growth and improving competitiveness. Members highlighted that supporting entrepreneurs is important to ensure new businesses can succeed. Members also discussed the five-day mandatory sick leave policy, and ways in which the policy

could be adapted to reduce the financial liability for small businesses, including by implementing a rebate, subsidy or lowering the number of mandatory days. Members noted the importance of prompt payment legislation and ensuring contractors, subcontractors, and suppliers in the construction industry get paid on time for the work they perform. Members also acknowledged the merits of incentivizing research and development to spur innovation and address interprovincial competitiveness. The Committee noted a need to improve policies for small liquor distributors to sell their products at BC Liquor Stores and for small independent businesses, such as local theatres, to be able to sell alcohol to increase overall revenues.

Members reflected on various recommendations made to update legislation and regulations. Members acknowledged recommended updates to the Unclaimed Property Act to ensure the rightful owners of property are identified quickly and efficiently. Members discussed recommendations advocating for the interoperability and harmonization of financial services regulatory regimes across Canada. Some Members advocated for a grocery rebate or income tax rebate to help consumers with affordability.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

17. Consider increasing access to Health Canada-approved nicotine pouches by allowing their sale alongside tobacco products as a smoking cessation aid.
18. Exempt the collection of the PST on emergency vehicles and small-scale farm equipment used for food production.
19. Consider indexing the exemption threshold for the employer health tax to inflation.
20. Review the fuel tax system to consider exempting auto and wholesale propane, and reinstating exemptions for seafood harvesters and commercial fishers.
21. Raise the threshold of the luxury vehicle tax to better reflect the average price of vehicles in BC.
22. Review the thresholds for provincial markup rates on beer, to create a more equitable taxation model for craft breweries.
23. Regulate a secure online gaming sector that prioritizes responsible play, consumer protection, and strong anti-money laundering safeguards.
24. Review the five-day mandatory sick leave policy and structure.
25. Accelerate the implementation of prompt payment legislation.
26. Provide access to local BC Liquor Stores for small regional liquor producers and allow independent theatres to sell alcohol to customers.

The input received by the Committee with respect to health care highlighted concerns related to the treatment and diagnosis of chronic and complex diseases, expanding access to health care services, and improving seniors' care. Other key themes included the recruitment and retention of health care professionals, support for hospices and palliative care, and additional coverage for medical devices and supports.

## CHRONIC DISEASES AND COMPLEX CONDITIONS

The Committee heard from several organizations and individuals about the need to provide support for people living with chronic diseases and complex conditions. BC Rehabilitation and Recovery Strategy noted the need to provide resources for community organizations that support people with chronic neurological injuries, highlighting that most funding received by these organizations is not permanent. The Brain Injury Alliance further highlighted the need for secure, annualized and ongoing funding to support community programs to maintain vital services. The Victoria Brain Injury Society explained that acquired brain injuries are linked to housing instability, substance use, and involvement in the justice system, further highlighting the need for a consistent approach to brain injury care in the province. The Fraser Valley Brain Injury Association noted that survivors of brain injuries face cognitive, emotional, or physical challenges that make it difficult to secure or maintain housing without support, and that investing in affordable housing options and caregiver assistance can reduce system strain, prevent crises, and promote dignity, safety, and independence for survivors.

The Alzheimer Society of BC advocated for a clear clinical pathway for dementia and to attract more geriatricians, sharing that a timely diagnosis of dementia can give people the opportunity to plan for the future, and access treatment and support which may slow the progression of the disease. Further, the Society highlighted that stigma has a profound impact on people affected by dementia, and that a public

awareness campaign would help to combat stigma and address misconceptions facing people living with dementia.

Diabetes Canada highlighted that with an aging population and increasing rates amongst at-risk populations, the prevalence and cost of diabetes care in BC continue to rise. Diabetes Canada stated that a diabetes management plan should always be individualized, but current provincial policy often reflects a one-size fits all approach, with administrative and cost barriers that may deny or delay access to needed diabetes medications, devices, and supplies. Breakthrough T1D advocated for coverage of automated insulin delivery systems under BC Pharmacare, and further indicated that several systems are Health Canada-approved and are associated with the best health outcomes in both adults and children.

The Centre for Epilepsy and Seizure Education in British Columbia stated that the number of organizations within BC that serve people living with epilepsy is very small and that they are entirely reliant on grant funding and donations to sustain operations. The Centre noted that permanent funding could help prevent burnout for existing staff and gaps in support for those who need it. The BC Epilepsy Society highlighted that it offers unique programming including mental wellness support provided by counsellors with lived experience of epilepsy, memory strategy support, and health care system support to help address concerns about epilepsy, and further noted the need for permanent funding to sustain those supports.

The Committee heard from the Heart and Stroke Foundation that more than 137,000 British Columbians currently live with heart failure and it is a leading cause of hospitalization. The Foundation highlighted that people with heart failure face limitations in access to important testing, diagnostic procedures and medical therapies, as well as a lack of awareness in general, often resulting in delays in treatment. The Foundation emphasized that a comprehensive system of rehabilitation would be a vital tool to help BC's health care system address increasing demand.

The HeartLife Foundation highlighted that N-terminal pro b-type natriuretic peptide blood tests are an affordable, effective, and available blood test that can support early diagnostics of heart failure and could help the province save on heart failure-related health care costs. Edwards Lifesciences (Canada) Inc. noted the benefits of access to transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) and recommended increased funding to perform more of the operations, as well as establishing a centralized provincial waitlist registry.

The BC Rehabilitation and Recovery Strategy highlighted the need to prioritize management and coordination of transitions from acute care to outpatient care to community settings. The organization suggested that creating an agency responsible for coordinating neurorehabilitation and recovery services could repair the current state of administrative fragmentation and disparities in services. The Committee also heard from an individual who highlighted the need for increased outpatient care for stroke survivors. The BC Hepatitis Network noted that enhancing laboratory capacity to increase the accessibility and timeliness of hepatitis B (HBV) and hepatitis C (HCV) diagnosis is a critical step in strengthening viral hepatitis care. PAN highlighted that early detection of HBV and HCV allows for timely treatment and management, preventing or delaying the progression to chronic liver disease and related complications.

The BC Lymphedema Association stated that access to essential treatments for lymphedema is often inadequate and inequitable, and that early diagnosis and treatment can help prevent serious complications and improve quality of life. The Association stated that investment in treatment for the early stages of lymphedema decreases overall health care system costs by requiring fewer referrals and hospital visits.

The Committee heard from an individual regarding treatment for multiple sclerosis. The individual advocated for BC PharmaCare funding for disease-modifying therapies approved by Health Canada to treat multiple sclerosis.

Several organizations and individuals outlined challenges related to myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME). The ME FM Society of BC advocated for the establishment of specialized care pathways for ME patients, while also highlighting that many ME patients need home-based medical services and telehealth supports. One individual highlighted that there are no MSP billing codes for ME, and without such codes it is impossible to track statistics on the disease, which can result in a lack of tests and treatments, incorrect physician education, and improper diagnosis. The Committee heard from other

individuals who advocated for increased funding to evaluate treatment options for central sensitization in patients with Long Covid, ME, fibromyalgia, hypermobility disorders, and other conditions, and increased funding for education and resources to diagnose and treat Chronic Fatigue Syndrome.

Parkinson Society BC highlighted the need to increase access to neurologists who are movement disorder specialists, particularly in Northern BC. The Society further highlighted that BC only has two neurologists who are able to perform deep brain stimulation, a neurosurgical procedure for patients with advanced Parkinson's Disease. The Society noted that patients who receive the procedure are able to resume a normal life, and results can last up to ten years.

## DENTAL CARE

The BC Dental Association (BCDA) highlighted the need to review basic dental coverage amounts to ensure they are still meeting the needs of low-income and disability assistance clients, noting that dental coverage rates have been frozen for almost 20 years and that current rates cover only 30 percent of the BCDA recommended fee guide. The Canadian Society for Disability and Oral Health noted that many people with disabilities require dental treatment under general anesthesia but most BC hospitals do not provide suitable facilities for dental surgery. The Society recommended funding the revitalization of the Community Dental Partners Program to provide greater access to dental treatment for children and adults with disabilities who are not medically complex, as well as additional funding for the Faculty of Dentistry at UBC to provide special care dental education. Individuals highlighted the need to implement MSP funding to support those born with congenital medical conditions that will require restorative facial, oral and dental surgery, as well as the need to increase the amount families receive under the Severe Oligodontia Funding Program.

## HEALTH HUMAN RESOURCES

The Health Sciences Association of BC, the Hospital Employees' Union, Save Our Northern Seniors, and some individuals discussed the need to invest in practices to address workforce shortages and recruitment and retention challenges in health care. The Hospital Employees' Union further highlighted its support for forward-thinking recruitment and retention strategies that sustainably grow the health care workforce, provide access to career development opportunities, and

improve job stability, financial security, and workplace support. Options for Sexual Health stated that sustainable multi-year funding is required to support the recruitment and retention of its workforce, and that without stable funding, its clinics are at risk of closing, and in many rural and remote communities, this would leave residents without access to sexual and reproductive health care. The City of Mission stated that increased funding for primary care and recruiting family physicians are critical to address shortages and improve access in fast-growing communities, and suggested that provincial support for dedicated housing for health care workers would aid recruitment and retention, especially in regions facing high housing costs. The Committee heard from the City of Fort St. John of the need to streamline licensing processes for out-of-province and international health care professionals to work in BC. An individual further advocated for strategies to make it easier for internationally-trained doctors and nurses to practice in BC. The Committee also heard from an individual who had recently received support from care workers, and advocated for increased compensation on their behalf.

The Committee heard several requests for increased support for specific health care roles. The BC Dental Association highlighted the need to implement strategies to address the acute dental staff shortage, noting that solutions to address the shortage could include innovative training modules, such as work-integrated learning programs available in other provinces. The Association further discussed pausing the implementation of the Health Professions and Occupations Act to allow for consultations with stakeholders to ensure health professionals are not deterred from working in BC. The Canadian Association of Medical Radiation Technologists (BC Division) spoke to the need for further financial supports for students in medical radiation technologist education programs, as well as structured onboarding to clinical placements and ongoing professional development for medical radiation technologists. The Canadian Association of Physician Assistants noted that in BC, physician assistants (PAs) work exclusively in emergency rooms where they help doctors treat patients with less complex issues faster, limiting the number of people leaving without being seen and helping patients be seen faster. The Association emphasized that allowing PAs to work in all areas of medicine would increase patient access to care, decrease physician burnout, and save health care system costs. Speech and Hearing BC emphasized that attracting international professionals would be one of the most efficient ways to address the gap between the supply

of speech-language pathologists and audiologists and the pressing demand for their services. Speech and Hearing BC further highlighted the need to invest in additional seats in speech-language pathologist, audiologist, and assistant training programs.

The Committee heard recommendations regarding scope expansion of certain health care professionals. The British Columbia Association of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture Practitioners recommended updating traditional Chinese medicine regulations and updating the scope of practice to include point injection therapy. The BC Chiropractic Association recommended allowing chiropractors to provide needle stimulation services and the ability to directly refer patients to publicly funded radiologists for X-ray tests.

## HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE

The BC Hospice Palliative Care Association noted that an updated end of life strategy in BC would recognize the work of hospice societies, as well as provide funding and community capacity. The Association also noted the need to recognize grief and bereavement as a public health priority, and added that when left unsupported, grief can contribute to isolation, emotional distress and strain on social supports including schools and the health system. The Canadian Cancer Society stated that BC's cancer incidence is expected to increase with an aging population and hospices will remain an integral part of the province's ability to deliver community-based palliative care, and called for further investments in BC's palliative care system. The Canuck Place Children's Hospice Society called for increased investment to ensure adequate specialized grief and bereavement care for caregivers and siblings experiencing the death of a child, noting that there are gaps in specialized support for neonatal and infant loss, traumatic deaths, and sibling and family support. Butterfly Support Network stated that the emotional and psychological toll of perinatal loss is profound and indicated that there are no or very few publicly funded supports in BC, and the health care system is difficult for impacted families to navigate. The Network added that funding would allow it to expand access and to reduce the burden on emergency rooms and the mental health care system.

## MEDICAL COVERAGE

The organization Motion discussed the need to review procurement practices for mobility and accessibility equipment

across government and agencies, noting that policies that prioritize not only quality of equipment but also allow for support and training to ensure it is used effectively, will lead to better outcomes and prevent further strain on health care resources. Motion further called for increased funding for mobility-equipment purchases for people with disabilities and to expand the Home Renovation Tax Credit to include mobility-equipment costs and provide a broader provincial refundable tax credit of up to \$2,500 for seniors. HME Home Health called for the funding cap on ceiling lifts for the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction to be on par with other government entities, highlighting that modifying a person's house with a lift allows them to stay at home, which is better for patient outcomes and less expensive for the health care system. HME Home Health noted that the current cap limits HME Home Health's ability to provide lifts to group homes, people with disabilities and low-income individuals.

The Prosthetics and Orthotics Association of BC called for the creation of a dedicated prosthetic and orthotic plan within the Fair PharmaCare system, stating that for persons on income assistance, paying for orthotic devices is not a realistic option as they balance food insecurity, rent, and their health. The Association further discussed the benefits of eliminating the age cap for orthotic care coverage, stating that eliminating the cap would provide more people with access to the services they need.

Medicines Access Coalition BC called for an increase in funding for BC PharmaCare to ensure fair, equitable, and timely access to medications. The Coalition further called for BC PharmaCare coverage for essential devices, stating that non-drug benefits are often not covered by BC PharmaCare and include compression garments, syringes, and needles for certain medications. The Pulmonary Hypertension Association of Canada also called for increased funding for public coverage of medications, highlighting that some patients with rare diseases must use the Special Authorization process to access medications, which takes weeks for a decision, and adds administrative burdens for health care providers. Innovative Medicines Canada highlighted that without additional investment in BC PharmaCare, drug coverage for patients in the province would decline.

The Committee heard several requests from organizations and individuals to increase coverage offered by MSP supplementary benefits. The Physiotherapy Association of BC called for increased coverage for up to 12 paramedical visits

a year, and to increase coverage for physiotherapy visits to \$60 as soon as possible and to \$90 by 2029. The Association stated that this would be an investment in prevention, equity and system sustainability. BC Naturopathic Doctors, Kaslo Community Acupuncture Society, and the British Columbia Association of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture Practitioners further advocated for an increase in coverage per session, as well as increases to the number of visits covered per year. The organizations further advocated to increase the income eligibility threshold for MSP supplementary benefits.

Mosaic BC recommended waiving the waiting period and the minimal residency requirements for MSP coverage for essential temporary foreign workers, stating that without access to health care, migrant workers are left to use private insurance.

## MEDICATIONS

Merck Canada recommended funding coverage for more innovative medicines to ensure British Columbians have access to newly recommended treatments. AbbVie advocated to prioritize funding for new medicines that address areas of high unmet patient need. AbbVie further recommended BC commit to a predictable timeline of funding new medicines in no more than 90 days following the successful completion of the pan-Canadian drug assessment processes, and to funding medications that have undergone Canada's health technology assessment process and have concluded an agreement with the pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance. Innovative Medicines Canada noted that currently BC patients wait an average of 704 days to gain access to innovative medicines after regulatory approval, and that if BC can contribute to reducing Canada's time to patient access, it would create a more attractive destination for research investment, clinical trials, and biomanufacturing.

## PRIMARY CARE

The BC College of Family Physicians shared that the current health care system forces family physicians to spend approximately 30 percent of their time on administrative work, which takes away from the time that they could spend on direct patient care, and that by reducing administrative burdens, the provincial government could support family physicians seeing more patients. The College further advocated for investments in family physician-led team-based care, sharing that family physician-led models reduce unnecessary referrals and diagnostic testing and reduce hospital visits,

which leads to lower overall health costs. The Pulmonary Hypertension Association of Canada called for increased health spending on primary care and specialist care, noting that increased access to primary and specialist care closer to where people live will help reduce diagnosis delays and thus improve access to life-enhancing care.

Options for Sexual Health called for stable multi-year funding that recognizes the administrative and overhead costs of non-profit health care service delivery. The Kootenay Boundary Patient Advisory Committee and Community called for funding to improve the content and enhance the use of patient portals, noting that patient portals are associated with reduced health care system needs, improved scheduling processes with fewer no-shows, and overall improved outcomes. The Consultant Specialists of British Columbia discussed funding for specialist team-based care to allow specialists to see more patients in consultation.

Regarding virtual care, TELUS recommended increasing coordinated efforts to market online health services to improve health outcomes, access and cost-effectiveness. An individual who experienced a stroke added that they were able to receive help via online meetings and similar supports, and recommended the province centralize and market online health services.

Abbott Rapid Diagnostics called for funds to advance the use of rapid molecular point-of-care testing, which can be used for the diagnosis of influenza, RSV, Strep A and COVID-19 and in the management of chronic diseases such as diabetes that require monitoring and testing. The Pulmonary Hypertension Association of Canada noted that better access to diagnostic tests would enable faster diagnoses to identify people with treatable diseases such as pulmonary arterial hypertension earlier in their illness. The Committee also heard from an individual who was concerned about the closure of blood collection sites operated by public health authorities, sharing that the closure of sites could cause access issues for those in rural communities.

The BC Pharmacy Association discussed the need for an increase to the dispensing fee, which has not changed since 2011. These fees include all patient interactions regarding prescriptions, plus the preparation and materials for these medications. The Association called for an increased role for community pharmacies in health care service delivery, as well as having the ability to assess, test, and treat strep throat, including by administering point-of-care testing. Abbott Rapid

Diagnostics further supported enabling pharmacists to conduct point-of-care testing for strep throat.

Options for Sexual Health noted that sexual reproductive health care is delivered differently in each health authority and it is the only organization that works at a provincial scale looking at all services to see how they integrate. The organization called for funding to develop a comprehensive and collaborative sexual and reproductive health plan. Access BC discussed IUD insertion, calling for funding to mandate standardized education in IUD insertion and pain management, as well as establishing MSP billing codes for pain management. Access BC further discussed the need for a provincial infrastructure fund to ensure all clinics, especially in underserved areas, have the tools for safe, dignified IUD care. The BC Hepatitis Network called for funding for a dedicated team in Correctional Health Services to support testing, treatment, and care of sexually transmitted and blood borne infections during incarceration and after release.

The Committee heard several recommendations regarding community health centres (CHCs). The BC Association of Community Health Centres highlighted that the lack of stable and consistent funding for CHCs limits growth and the ability to address community needs, and will result in many CHCs closing, leaving people without the support services they need. The Association advocated for funds to develop and launch 10 new CHCs in high-need communities, as well as annual funding to support the Association's work. The Engaged Communities Canada Society highlighted the need for community hubs in Surrey, while individuals noted the need for a CHC in Port Coquitlam. Vancouver Today highlighted that establishing more local clinics would provide easier access and less stress to intensive and emergency care so that priority patients can be treated faster.

The Committee also received specific recommendations for a number of projects. Nanaimo Regional Hospital District called for accelerated approval processes for the new patient tower and cardiac catheterization lab at the Nanaimo Regional General Hospital. Langley Community Health & Hospital Foundation recommended committing to the construction of a new patient care tower at Langley Memorial Hospital, including the renovation and expansion of the current ambulatory day care and surgical theatres. The BC Chiropractic Association discussed funding a \$2 million, two-year, team-based care pilot project to embed chiropractors into 10 primary care networks. Ronald McDonald House BC & Yukon

requested \$39.5 million to build a second Ronald McDonald House in Vancouver, highlighting the high demand for its current facility.

## PUBLIC HEALTH

The Public Health Association of BC called for an increase in investment in public health to at least six percent to strengthen public health infrastructure, highlighting that funding should be directed to priorities that align with the most pressing issues, including promoting early childhood development, preventing and reducing substance use harms, improving population mental health, addressing climate-related health threats, and preparing for future pandemics.

Regarding shingles, the Committee heard calls from multiple organizations to increase access to the shingles vaccine. GSK Canada and the Office of the Seniors Advocate both advocated for funding to provide the shingles vaccine for free to seniors 65 and older. immunize.io highlighted that including the shingles vaccine as part of Fair PharmaCare would ensure equity for individuals with lower socioeconomic status who suffer disproportionately from vaccine-preventable diseases such as shingles, while providing the shingles vaccine to older populations could reduce physician visits and medical costs.

Also regarding vaccinations, the Canadian Association of Retired Persons recommended providing free access to expert-recommended vaccines including the “big 5” vaccines for seniors: high-dose quadrivalent influenza, pneumococcal, shingles, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and COVID-19. Merck Canada recommended funding be used to strengthen BC’s Pediatric RSV Prevention Program, and to dedicate funding to ensure high human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination rates to prevent HPV-related cancers.

The Committee heard from a number of organizations and individuals regarding COVID-19 health measures. Moderna Biopharma Canada Corporation called for dedicated and continued funding for COVID-19 vaccine procurement and delivery beyond 2025 to protect British Columbians from illness, as well as for ongoing free COVID vaccinations for all British Columbians on the National Advisory Committee on Immunization’s priority list. The Committee heard from several individuals who advocated for funding to ensure continued COVID-19 vaccine access and choice, as well as funding to procure CAN95 masks and to ensure ongoing public supply of COVID-19 tests.

The Committee also heard from a number of organizations and individuals regarding air quality. The BC Lung Foundation called for the adaptation of a smoke-free generation policy, as well as investments in grants to reduce the costs of radon testing and mitigation. Individuals advocated for funding to prioritize developing clean indoor air legislation, and enhanced use of ventilation and filtration as public health measures. Individuals also called for investments in clean air infrastructure by ensuring new construction is aligned with international air quality standards ASHRAE 241 and 44P, implementing a retrofit program for older buildings, and introducing an indoor air quality monitoring program in indoor public spaces.

Dynacare called for funding to reform BC’s laboratory testing system to improve the availability of services to patients, including increasing capacity, and the involvement of all laboratory service providers in BC with community providers.

The Canadian Men’s Health Foundation noted that supporting preventative health measures creates a healthier society, and a more sustainable health system. The Public Health Association of BC discussed that funding is essential to strengthen critical public health functions, including disease prevention, population health surveillance, emergency preparedness, and workforce capacity. The Kootenay Boundary Patient Advisory Committee and Community suggested targeted funds for community agencies to expand patient services to address social determinants of health.

## RESEARCH

Michael Smith Health Research BC called for continued investments in health research and the life sciences sector, and noted that sustained funding for health research drives the economy, incents innovation and provides the platform to advance better care for all British Columbians. The Canadian Cancer Society called for additional funding to ensure that all British Columbians have access to clinical trials, highlighting that clinical trials provide significant economic benefits to the health care system, including guiding clinical decision-making, extending lives, and improving quality of life. Kids Brain Health Network discussed the benefits of investing and supporting the scaling up and commercialization of research that is ready to be deployed in homes, clinics, and communities across the province. Next Gen Men suggested funding better data systems to track men’s health outcomes—disaggregated by identity, geography, occupation, and age—to understand why

men aren't accessing services. The Vancouver Prostate Centre called for the government to work collaboratively with it on its drug discovery program. Ovarian Cancer Canada called for increased investment in ovarian and related gynecologic cancer research by joining Ovarian Cancer Canada's research initiative. Genome BC and the Praxis Spinal Cord Institute called for continued funding for their work, highlighting the benefits of such investments for all British Columbians.

## RURAL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES

The Consultant Specialists of British Columbia called for expansion of the Northern Isolation Travel Assistance and Outreach Program, highlighting the importance of ensuring there is clinic space and staff to support visiting physicians. The North Pine Farmers Institute shared concerns about levels of care and resources available in Northern BC, and called for funding to address those issues. CUPE Local 4653 echoed the call for increased funding for health services in Northern BC. The Tansi Friendship Centre Society called for investments in community-based, culturally-safe mental health and addictions services in remote and northern regions, delivered in partnership with Indigenous-led organizations like Friendship Centres. Community Futures North Okanagan requested funding to develop and operate the North Okanagan Community Health Centre, noting that the centre would provide 6,000 patients with primary care and serve marginalized populations in the North Okanagan. The BC Rural Health Network recommended providing \$50 million annually to establish a Rural Health Equity Fund that would be intended to support new programs and to strengthen existing programs and would not simply be a mechanism to distribute existing funds to existing programs. The City of Castlegar called for an investment of \$3.5 million toward building a primary care health hub in Castlegar. Hope Air requested \$30 million dollars over the next three years to provide health care access to people living in rural and remote communities, highlighting that it is the only charity delivering a province-wide integrated medical travel support program focused exclusively on low-income residents, regardless of their health issue.

## SENIORS

The organization RTEORO called for expanded geriatric health care and to establish a provincial seniors' health strategy, noting that it could help to add to supports for aging in homes and also to ensure the right framework for care. The Council of

Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC further highlighted that a seniors' health strategy, developed with input from seniors, must incorporate social determinants of health including affordable and accessible housing and transportation. Skeena Valley Seniors Society discussed the need for a national aging strategy grounded on human rights that hears and responds to seniors' issues. Individuals and organizations highlighted the need for funding to expand and sustain the delivery of critical evidence-based programs that support older adult health, mobility, fall prevention, and well-being in support of BC's Age Forward Strategy. The City of Prince Rupert and the BC Recreation and Parks Association highlighted that equitable access to safe, high-quality physical activity programming improves well-being, reduces health care costs, and supports aging in place.

The BC Care Providers Association emphasized the importance of improving funding for assisted living as it acts as a steppingstone between independent living and long-term care and reduces pressure on the long-term care system. The Association further advocated for stable funding to EquipCare BC to supply safety and quality-of-life equipment for assisted living facilities and long-term care homes. The Hospital Employees' Union stated that publicly funded non-profit health care facilities were able to deliver and exceed targeted care hours, surpassing publicly funded for-profit facilities. The Hospital Employees' Union called for common standards for working and caring conditions in seniors' care homes to recruit new workers, retain experienced staff, and promote continuity of care for residents.

The Independent Long-Term Care Councils Association of BC requested ongoing financial support, highlighting the desire to maintain operations and support the goal of establishing family-led and resident-led councils in every long-term care home in BC. The Association also advocated for a diverse, multi-sectoral advisory forum to develop comprehensive long-term care system reform using recommendations from the Action for Reform of Residential Care report and Health Standards Organization's National Long-Term Care Services Standards.

CareRx Pharmacy requested the province raise the capitation rate for pharmacy services to \$125 per long-term care bed, tied to the Consumer Price Index, and to phase the rate increase in over three years, as well as add a rural/remote modifier of \$15 a bed. QMUNITY recommended investing \$144,000 annually in long-term funding to protect and expand

2SLGBTQIA+ seniors programming that fosters inclusion, connection, and health system avoidance through drop-ins, peer support, and affirming service navigation. Langley Community Health & Hospital Foundation recommended prioritizing the construction of a long-term care home in Langley, the Dr. REM Lee Hospital Foundation recommended expanding the Terraceview Lodge long-term care health facility, and Save Our Northern Seniors highlighted the need to build a third house at the Peace Villa long-term care home in Fort St. John.

The Committee heard several recommendations regarding aging in place. Century House: Time for Change stated that seniors' organizations and care providers across the province are concerned about the lack of affordable, appropriate housing and home health care support services. The organization indicated that many people only require a few small changes to their home or some in-home support to age in place and highlighted that aging in place reduces costly hospitalization admissions and premature residential care. March of Dimes Canada called for an increase in funding for supportive living and community care services, noting that more people require upfront financial support to modify their home or vehicles as their needs change over time. The Office of the Seniors Advocate noted that eliminating the charge for home support would facilitate aging in place, and the Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC further supported eliminating the daily rate for publicly funded home support services. The BC Care Providers Association suggested a tax credit towards the cost of qualified home support services for those aging in place, and the Canadian Association of Retired Persons supported expanding paid home care staffing and waiving or reducing fees for low-income seniors.

Speech and Hearing British Columbia noted that providing expanded funding for hearing care for seniors would help prevent cognitive decline, increased fall risk, social isolation, depression, and higher hospital readmission rates. The organization added that since three in four seniors experience hearing loss in both ears, the province must strengthen access to speech-language pathology and audiology services through targeted investments.

## SURGERIES

Arthritis Society Canada noted that arthritis is the leading cause of joint replacement, and suggested that potential solutions to reduce wait times for joint replacement surgeries

could include adopting innovative care models, implementing digital technologies, increasing access to community-based joint management programs and standardizing patient data collection and reporting. The Consultant Specialists of British Columbia noted that implementation of the Specialist Waitlist Management Initiative would provide much needed data and enhance efficiency in the referral process, ensuring British Columbians have quicker access to surgeries.

## OTHER

The Committee heard several recommendations from individuals and organizations on the need to ensure appropriate funding levels for the health care system overall.

BC Complex Kids recommended investing an additional \$70 million annually in respite funding to ensure that every family receives essential support as many continue to face long wait lists due to high demand. BC Complex Kids also recommended investing in enhanced respite to allow more families to access robust options, including overnight respite care with well-trained staff close to home.

ARPA Canada stated its belief that abortion, MAiD, and medical gender transitioning are non-medically necessary and touch on deeply held moral, conscientious, or religious convictions, and that public funding should be ceased for these procedures.

## COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

The Committee recognized the challenges facing many people with chronic and complex conditions and acknowledged the need to increase investments in the prevention, early diagnosis, and effective treatment in this area. Specifically, Members noted the importance of having a unified strategy for treating acquired brain injuries from all causes. The Committee also supported the development of a dedicated institute for the purposes of coordinating research and treatment for acquired brain injuries. The Committee further noted the importance of dedicated, affordable housing that is suitable for those suffering from acquired brain injuries, including a dedicated facility.

In considering the continuum of care, the Committee emphasized the importance of ensuring smooth and well-supported transitions across different stages of the health care system. In particular, the Committee discussed the importance of prioritizing the management of transitions from hospital

care to community care, to ensure that individuals receive the correct types of support after receiving treatment in a hospital. Regarding seniors, the Committee discussed the necessity of a provincial strategy for geriatric care. Members stated the importance of measures that support aging in place, and the need for better support for home care. Regarding hospice and palliative care, the Committee highlighted the importance of providing appropriate end-of-life care, including the need to provide funding to stabilize hospice societies and invest more into palliative care systems. Members also noted the need for grief and bereavement services, particularly those for siblings of children who die.

The Committee considered a range of strategies to improve health care accessibility across the province. The Committee acknowledged the importance of a comprehensive review of the system of health care authorities and the effectiveness of their service delivery to British Columbians. Members noted that expanding access to virtual care could improve overall access to health care, reduce the burden on acute care centres, and provide more equitable access to health care for those living in rural and remote communities. Members further noted that increasing access to and usage of patient portals could help patients and health care professionals access patient information. To further improve access, the Committee agreed on the need for funding to establish community health centres, especially in rural areas. In addition, Members discussed the crucial role that transportation options, including public transit, intercity transit agencies and air options, play in improving access to health care for those living in rural and remote areas. The Committee also highlighted the benefits of specific infrastructure projects it heard about, including the new patient tower and cardiac catheterization lab at the Nanaimo Regional General Hospital, the construction of a new patient care tower at Langley Memorial Hospital, and a second Ronald McDonald House in Vancouver.

With respect to health human resources, the Committee noted the importance of addressing staffing challenges in health care. Members recognized the need for the recruitment of highly sought-after medical professionals, including nurse practitioners, physician assistants, medical radiation technologists, and speech language pathologists. The Committee discussed ancillary supports for recruiting new health care professionals, such as ensuring appropriate housing options, as well as streamlining licensing processes for out-of-province and internationally trained medical professionals. Members also discussed the difficulties rural

and remote communities face in recruiting and retaining high-demand professionals and emphasized the importance of considering strategies to assist these communities in attracting and keeping the workers they need (see Recommendation 9 under Economic Development). Members noted that enhanced safety measures to protect health care professionals and other health care settings are important to ensuring staff safety and would also help with retention issues. Some Members discussed the possible merits of pausing the implementation of the Health Professions and Occupations Act to allow for further consultations with stakeholders.

The Committee explored opportunities to expand the roles of health care professionals and improve team-based care models to enhance access and reduce strain on the system. The Committee discussed the ability of pharmacists to take a more involved role in patient care, including by conducting tests for routine diseases, and prescribing additional medications without a doctor's note. Members noted that a unified patient record management system could assist pharmacists in providing expanded services. The Committee also acknowledged the possible outcomes of permitting chiropractors to expand their scope of practice to include dry needling and the ability to refer patients for X-ray tests. The Committee further noted a more involved role for nurse practitioners and physician assistants in the health care system could increase the number of patients who receive timely and appropriate care. Members also supported finding additional ways to reduce the administrative burden on family physicians, in consultation with the BC College of Family Physicians. Finally, Members noted the merits of a model of family physician team-based care, including patient-centred care and the reduction of unnecessary referrals and hospital visits.

The Committee discussed input received regarding the effective treatment and management of several medical conditions. The Committee noted that new medications may be more effective and could ultimately serve as a cost-saver for the province as they reduce hospital visits, and agreed on the value of having a predictable timeline for providing BC PharmaCare coverage for new and innovative medications that have received Health Canada approval. Members further agreed that BC should take advantage of all avenues of federal funding to pay for rare medications or new treatments. The Committee discussed diabetes, and the need to ensure efficient and up-to-date treatment options for diabetics are covered by BC PharmaCare. The Committee also acknowledged the importance of funding any approved

treatments for multiple sclerosis, as well as developing medical education and guidelines and MSP billing codes for myalgic encephalomyelitis. The Committee further highlighted the benefits of amending Fair Pharmacare coverage to include a prosthetic and orthotic plan. As part of this discussion, some Members highlighted that coverage for prosthodontics is not guaranteed for people who have cancer, and that having even a base level of dentures would assist cancer patients in improving their mental health and recovery. Regarding heart disease and strokes, the Committee noted the importance of diagnosing, treating and managing these medical conditions, and reflected on the role that NT-proBNP blood tests could play in effectively diagnosing heart failure.

The Committee considered ways to improve access to essential medical and dental treatments, particularly for individuals facing financial or systemic barriers to care. The Committee discussed the importance of expanding MSP coverage for treatments related to congenital medical conditions that require reconstructive surgery, as well as increasing the funding limits for the Severe Oligodontia Funding Program. The Committee further noted the need to increase dental coverage fees for low-income and British Columbians with disabilities in recognition of inflation and rising costs. Members noted the need for further education and training for physicians involved with IUD insertions, and to expand MSP coverage for treatments used to manage patient pain and provide a better patient experience. Further, Members noted the benefits of expanding MSP supplementary benefits to increase the amount of paramedical benefits people receive, in recognition of the role those benefits play in ensuring people do not need to access acute care for minor ailments.

Members highlighted that the capitation rate for pharmacy services provided to seniors in long-term care should be reviewed, including the possibility for rural and remote rate modifiers. The Committee also discussed the importance of providing supports for seniors experiencing hearing loss, and acknowledged the impact that hearing loss can have on a person's overall health. The Committee also acknowledged the importance of having cross-ministerial funding equity, along with funding equity between different groups of applicants, for medical equipment that assists in mobility and accessibility. While discussing surgeries, the Committee acknowledged the benefits of the Specialist Wait List Management Initiative and highlighted that the initiative would help British Columbians access specialist physicians.

The Committee discussed recommendations regarding public health measures. In particular, the Committee highlighted evolving treatment options for Hepatitis C, and the need to provide widespread testing options to help with early diagnosis of the disease. Members further acknowledged the need for more widespread awareness and testing for all bloodborne diseases, including HIV. With respect to shingles, Members noted the benefits of providing the shingles vaccine to vulnerable segments of the population. The Committee further discussed access to COVID-19 vaccines, and generally highlighted the effectiveness of vaccine programs, particularly the "big 5" vaccines, which include the high-dose quadrivalent influenza, pneumococcal, shingles, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and COVID-19 vaccines.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

27. Increase targeted investments in the prevention, early diagnosis, and effective treatment of chronic diseases and complex conditions.
28. Develop a provincial strategy for the identification, treatment, and long-term support of people with acquired brain injuries, including the development of a centre of excellence to advance research and implement best practices throughout the province.
29. Provide funding for home and community care services and prioritize the management and coordination of transitions from hospital care to other forms of care, including home care, long-term care or other community-oriented care options, recognizing the unique challenges of rural, remote, and northern communities.

30. Invest in end-of-life care, including providing core funding for hospice societies and increased funding for palliative care, and increasing access to bereavement, grief, and counselling programs.
31. Support the establishment of community health centres in rural and remote communities.
32. Expand access to health care by further investing in digital health care solutions, including:
  - a. virtual health care, including to virtual opioid dependency programs; and
  - b. access to patient information for both health care professionals and patients.
33. Improve transportation options, including public transit, intercity transit services, and air options, for patients in rural and remote communities to access health care.
34. Review funding across government ministries and health authorities to ensure equitable funding assistance for mobility and accessibility equipment including prosthetics.
35. Invest in enhanced safety measures to protect health care professionals in hospitals and other health care settings.
36. Continue to identify and implement innovative ways to reduce administrative burdens for family physicians, including team-based care, through consultation with the BC College of Family Physicians.
37. Increase the involvement and scope of practice of allied health workforce professionals, in line with other Canadian jurisdictions and in consultation with their professional associations.
38. Expedite approval and prioritize a predictable timeline of coverage under BC PharmaCare for new medicines approved by Health Canada.
39. Expand BC PharmaCare coverage to provide equitable access to medications and devices including automated insulin delivery systems for people with diabetes and ofatumumab (Kesimpta) and ocrelizumab (Ocrevus) for the treatment of relapsing multiple sclerosis.
40. Amend Fair PharmaCare coverage to include a prosthetic and orthotic plan and include prosthodontics in the list of approved prostheses for people who have cancer.
41. Expand MSP coverage to include essential health services that currently fall outside the plan, including:
  - a. restorative facial, oral, and dental surgery for individuals with congenital medical conditions; and
  - b. pain management related to IUD insertion.
42. Increase the funding limit to reflect rising costs for the Severe Oligodontia Funding Initiative.
43. Expand MSP supplementary benefits to increase the number of paramedical and mental health visits a year, increase the dollar amount of coverage per visit, and increase the income eligibility threshold.
44. Expand access to hearing aids and to audiology and speech-language pathology services for seniors.
45. Renew education and testing efforts for HIV and Hepatitis C.
46. Increase funding for at risk age groups to receive the shingles vaccine.

# HOUSING

Participants highlighted a need to support municipalities with the infrastructure required to meet the province's housing needs. The Committee also received recommendations to reduce the cost of developing housing to improve overall affordability, which included reducing development cost charges and related taxes. The Committee overwhelmingly heard for a need for more affordable, low-income, or nonmarket housing to ensure all British Columbians can access stable and safe housing options. Expanding social and supportive housing was additionally identified as an area of priority to support individuals struggling with drug addiction or mental health challenges.

## DEVELOPMENT AND DATA

The Committee heard from individuals and organizations regarding the role of municipalities in housing development. The City of Vancouver explained that infrastructure limitations are creating significant barriers to housing development and recommended ensuring that infrastructure funding aligns with land use and housing policy to accommodate growth. Homes for Living recommended providing funding to municipalities that exceed their provincial housing development targets, particularly municipalities that deliver urban or infill housing over suburban or low-density housing. The Victoria Residential Builders Association advocated for implementing regional planning for housing and associated infrastructure, particularly in areas such as the Capital Regional District that have several municipalities. The organization also recommended creating a single, uniform energy and building code in every municipality. Regarding housing data, Chartered Professional Accountants noted that housing data lacks granularity, and certain information is only available through a census held every five years. The organization recommended implementing a more comprehensive system to measure housing statistics by municipality that includes housing stock, regulatory timelines, and affordability measures.

Development costs and the financing of housing projects were noted to the Committee as another barrier to increasing

the housing supply. Wesgroup Properties explained that homebuilders are contending with financing constraints driven by higher interest rates, rising input costs, and increasingly volatile demand. The Canadian Home Builders' Association of BC noted that these economic and regulatory pressures in the building sector requires a reform of BC's development finance framework to improve cost certainty. Homes for Living highlighted that housing development requires significant upfront risk which makes financing development projects challenging. The organization recommended expanding BC Builds financing to include all types of housing projects to support smaller, non-market housing projects secure funding. Vancity Community Foundation explained that smaller community developers lack the resources required to support the permitting and study phases of many affordable housing projects and recommended providing early-stage financing and grants to accelerate affordable housing development.

The BC Real Estate Association discussed alternative funding mechanisms to reduce the burden on home builders, such as allowing municipalities to defer development cost charges until a housing project is complete. The Victoria Residential Builders Association recommended reducing and capping development cost charges and amenity agreements, which they noted make many projects unaffordable to build. Strand explained that the additional school tax charged on undeveloped land substantially increases the cost of developing housing. The organization recommended exempting any residential land that has an active rezoning application, development permit application or building permit application from the additional school tax.

Participants also discussed expanding modular or prefabricated homes to increase the housing supply. The BC Real Estate Association noted that modular and prefabricated housing technologies can allow homes to be built off site and more efficiently and recommended investing in innovative housing solutions. Nuqo Modular recommended creating a dedicated modular housing funding stream within BC Housing programs while ZED Kyshan Homes Ltd recommended creating

a direct, Indigenous-focused transferable line of credit to enable the delivery of pre-manufactured housing. ZED Kyshan Homes Ltd noted that pre-manufactured homes do not qualify for conventional mortgages, and the line of credit would be used until the home is delivered and the owner can assume a conventional mortgage, at which point the line of credit would be moved to the next project.

## HOUSING SUPPLY

The Committee heard from several organizations and individuals recommending that the province dedicate more resources towards non-market or other forms of affordable housing. Living Wage BC noted that housing costs in the province have spiked in recent years, while vacancy rates have declined. The BC Alliance for Healthy Living recommended investing in affordable housing and Homes for Living recommended redirecting real estate taxes towards a permanent funding stream for below-market housing.

The BC General Employees' Union recommended reserving public land contributions for new affordable housing and explained that with sufficient investment, housing programs funded and run by the provincial government could deliver housing more quickly. Metro Vancouver similarly recommended increasing the supply of non-market homes by leveraging public lands, advancing modern construction methods and streamlining approvals processes. The BC Society for Policy Solutions advocated for the province to significantly increase capital grants to projects under the Community Housing Fund. Expanding the Community Housing Fund was also recommended by the BC Non-Profit Housing Association, which noted that income-based rental units developed under the fund remain in high demand.

The Pacifica Housing Advisory Association noted that subsidized housing providers are struggling to manage the costs of infrastructure upgrades and maintenance costs and recommended that the province invest in the continual maintenance and renewal of existing affordable housing buildings. The BC Non-Profit Housing Association noted that property taxes, utilities, and insurance costs have all increased and recommended ensuring operating agreements with non-profit housing providers account for these non-manageable costs. One individual noted that affordable housing should be developed with working families in mind. Disability Alliance BC explained that most housing being built is one-bedroom or studio units and advocated for developing affordable and

accessible multi-bedroom units. The BC Poverty Reduction Coalition recommended scaling the BC Builds program to invest in a continuum of non-market housing, including accessible and family-oriented units across BC to prevent people from being priced out of their communities.

The Committee also heard a need to expand affordable housing options specifically for vulnerable populations. Dr. REM Lee Hospital Foundation explained that in Terrace, many seniors on fixed incomes are struggling with rising rent costs and are now reliant on food banks. The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs noted that housing affordability disproportionately impacts racialized and ethnocultural communities, whose traditional centres are in increasingly unaffordable neighbourhoods. Mosaic BC noted that many non-profit housing programs lack capacity and are diverting refugee claimants to homeless shelters, which lack the trauma-informed, culturally appropriate support needed. The organization recommended providing additional targeted funding to expand housing capacity for refugee claimants to match the federal housing assistance programs. The Fraser Valley Brain Injury Association noted that many survivors of brain injuries face cognitive, emotional, or physical challenges and recommended investing in affordable housing with long-term supports for those with acquired brain injuries.

Regarding student and on-campus housing, CUPE Local 2278 recommended expanding affordable on-campus housing at universities and colleges across the province. The University of British Columbia similarly recommended investing in student housing as housing continues to be one of the largest cost pressures for students, faculty, and staff. The University of Victoria advocated for the province to support its new real estate strategy to utilize university-owned lands on and off-campus to address student and regional housing needs. Capilano University recommended providing provincial support for two student housing projects through the BC Student Housing Loan Program to address affordability and advance regional development at both its Squamish and North Vancouver campuses. One individual made recommendations to increase dock access and marina-related infrastructure for individuals living aboard boats or other vessels, along with dedicating funding to study those living on vessels within the province.

## INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND RECONCILIATION

The Aboriginal Housing Management Association noted that funding is needed for integrated critical supports to meet the needs of Indigenous tenants, including those affected by health issues or who are at risk of homelessness. The organization also recommended providing funding to Indigenous housing providers to address non-controllable cost pressures and build additional Indigenous housing units.

## OWNERSHIP

The Canadian Mortgage Brokers Association (BC) noted that the implementation of a rescission or cooling-off period when purchasing a home provides critical time for home buyers to arrange finances and home inspections. The organization recommended lengthening the cooling-off period, which is currently set at three days. The Canadian Mortgage Brokers Association (BC) also recommended advocating for the federal government to commit to CRA-enabled income verification in mortgage applications to prevent mortgage fraud. The Association of Interior Realtors highlighted that a lack of digital municipal property documents and delayed document access is impacting housing planning and conveyancing and recommended creating a municipal property document modernization fund.

## RENTAL HOUSING

Participants highlighted a need to maintain and expand rental assistance to support British Columbians. The Pacifica Housing Advisory Association explained many of its clients directly rely on rental supplement programs and that the Supported Rent Supplement Program and Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters program should continue. Vancity Community Foundation noted that the BC Rent Bank is an eviction prevention program that provides no-interest loans and support to renters facing critical financial crises. The organization recommended providing a sustained funding commitment to the BC Rent Bank to support households facing eviction.

TRRUST Collective Impact recommended providing youth transitioning out of care with a housing supplement like the Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters program to address housing insecurity and reduce the current administrative burdens face by youth. The BC Coalition to End Homelessness also advocated for expanding access to income-based or subsidized units for youth transiting out of care. The organization noted

that youth transitioning out of care also struggle with finding suitable housing and recommended creating a dedicated youth housing strategy.

Regarding rental occupancy, the BC SPCA noted that pets have a strong impact on the wellbeing of their owners; however, challenges with obtaining pet-friendly housing can cause housing instability for many owners. The organization recommended supporting efforts to end bias against pet owners in rental housing and engaging with stakeholders to find cooperative, pet-friendly housing solutions. Together Against Poverty Society recommended implementing a landlord license to provide a reliable source of data on the rental market and allow policy makers to create evidence-based housing solutions or evaluate the effectiveness of existing models.

## SOCIAL AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

The Committee heard from individuals and organizations on the need to expand access, services, and funding for social and supportive housing. CUPE 3742 explained that decamps of unhoused individuals negatively impact transitioning these individuals into secure housing and instead recommended investing in additional supportive housing. The City of Fort St. John highlighted that co-op housing models have proven effective to address housing insecurity but indicated that local governments lack sustainable funding mechanisms to make these solutions viable at scale.

CUPE Local 5536 advocated for more funding towards supportive and non-market housing tied to community health services. The organization highlighted that the toxic drug and housing crises are deeply connected and that stable and adequately staffed supportive housing allows people to access services and build community. Union Gospel Mission recommended investing in integrated, recovery-oriented models of care within supportive housing that is paired with onsite supports, recovery navigation, and long-term case management. Coast Mental Health also explained that the province should invest in a comprehensive and integrated approach to supportive housing that includes access to vital services that promote physical and mental health.

The BC Non-Profit Housing Association explained that the current supportive housing funding is not meeting the challenges or complexity of operations on the ground. The organization added that without additional resources, it is

becoming increasingly difficult to manage safety concerns and staffing levels. The Realistic Success Recovery Society and Hope for Freedom Society both noted that inflation is putting significant financial strain on registered and licensed recovery providers and that their funding should be increased to reflect service delivery costs. The Pacifica Housing Advisory Association noted that supportive housing spaces often receive unequal funding, with some programs receiving \$5,000 a month per unit while others provide only \$250 a year. The organization recommended ensuring that all supportive housing programs provide a monthly per unit subsidy that allows for appropriate support staff, programming, and meals.

TRRUST Collective Impact noted that youth transitioning out of care are often forced to live in unsafe or unstable housing and recommended increasing investments in supportive housing tailored to youth transitioning out of care. Cornerstone Youth Society advocated for dedicated transitional housing for youth aged 17-20 that would allow for stays up to 30 days. The organization noted that vulnerable youth struggle to find adequate housing alternatives and often turn to adult shelter spaces or resort to alternative forms of shelter.

## STRATA CORPORATIONS

The Association of Interior Realtors highlighted that as strata properties become more common, it's essential that individuals can access strata documents in a timely and cost-efficient manner and recommended funding a review of the Strata Property Act that examines document costs, delivery timelines, and rush fees. The Vancouver Island Strata Owners Association noted that BC has approximately 34,000 strata corporations, but there is currently no way for provincial or local governments to track or contact strata corporations regarding policy or regulatory changes that would impact the strata. The organization recommended implementing a strata corporation registry or adding strata corporations to the BC Registry. They also explained that due to an increasingly complex landscape of regulatory requirements, owners and volunteer strata councils need policy support to operate. The organization recommended launching a strata housing branch of government to address policy changes and support strata corporations.

## COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

The Committee reflected on the challenges of increasing housing development while ensuring that housing-related

infrastructure is in place. Members discussed the role of municipalities in housing development and supporting local governments with the delivery of infrastructure to enable sustainable housing growth, including increasing regional planning for energy, transportation, and other supportive infrastructure. Members highlighted that developing this infrastructure is particularly difficult for municipalities in rural and remote communities, which have a smaller tax base and limited capacity to pursue these projects. The Committee discussed a review of development cost charges and taxes to ensure these costs are not significantly limiting potential housing development. However, Members acknowledged that these development charges support municipalities with financing local infrastructure and considered ways to balance these challenges while reducing barriers to housing development.

On the topic of municipalities, the Committee deliberated on improving the digitization and accessibility of municipal permitting and property documents. Members noted that creating a baseline for municipal permitting and property document access across municipalities would streamline permitting processes and enable municipal staff to focus on larger projects.

The Committee reflected on the significant number of submissions received regarding the supply of housing and affirmed the need for the province to continue ongoing work towards ensuring all British Columbians have access to affordable, safe, and stable housing. Members discussed expanding the BC Builds program to include a broader range of housing types, including housing projects in rural and remote areas. The Committee noted the challenges for smaller developers in rural, remote, and northern areas in securing funding in traditional construction loan frameworks. The Committee acknowledged student housing as an area of prioritization, as the availability of student housing on or near campus limits many individuals' pursuit of post-secondary education, particularly in rural and remote areas. Members also noted that the current demand for student housing places additional housing pressures on communities near campuses.

Regarding rental housing and home ownership, the Committee discussed the importance of rental assistance programs that provide short-term financial support to prevent eviction and monthly rental supplements and supported the continuation of these programs. Members also highlighted the need to support pet owners' access to rental housing and discussed

potential tax credits for pet friendly units to reduce hesitancy towards renting housing to those with pets. The Committee acknowledged ongoing issues with mortgage application fraud and associated risks to the housing sector and supports continued advocacy for the federal government to support CRA-enabled income verification on mortgage applications.

Improving accessibility within homes was identified as an area of priority for the Committee. Members emphasized the benefits of supporting accessibility renovations and retrofits to enable aging in place and independent living by seniors and people with disabilities. Regarding strata housing, the Committee discussed the possible benefits of implementing a strata corporation registry, including a government branch to support strata corporations and residents.

The Committee discussed the lack of available housing in rural and remote communities, which Members noted limits the ability to expand economic development in many communities as they lose workers due to a lack of housing. Members highlighted that many development projects being prioritized by the province are in rural and remote areas and for these projects to move forward, additional investments into housing

and related infrastructure in these communities will be required. The Committee also noted the importance of housing for Indigenous peoples and the need to continue partnerships with Indigenous peoples and organizations to deliver on Indigenous focused housing.

On the topic of social and supportive housing, the Committee acknowledged the importance of providing facility spaces that support sober or dry occupancy after receiving addictions treatment and agreed on the need to expand these spaces. Members discussed inequitable funding provided to supportive housing operators, as newer programs generally receive more funding compared to older programs that are still operating. Members noted that more equitable funding would better enable these service providers to maintain staffing and support levels. Members also discussed the housing needs for those with acquired brain injuries and highlighted a need to better evaluate the existing housing supply and types of supports for those with acquired brain injuries (see Recommendation 28 in Health Care). The Committee also agreed on the need for year-round availability of shelter services during severe weather events, such as intensive heat or rain.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

47. Maintain programs supporting municipal infrastructure and regional planning and review development cost structures to allow for reduced or flexible fees, including exempting undeveloped residential land with active rezoning, development, or building permit applications from the additional school tax.
48. Expand the Home Renovation Tax Credit to support accessibility renovations and retrofits for seniors and people with disabilities.
49. Increase the supply and affordability of post-secondary student housing on or near campuses across the province.
50. Invest in integrated, recovery-oriented models of supportive housing that include post-treatment options for sober or dry occupancy.
51. Ensure severe weather shelter services are available on a year-round basis.

# K-12 EDUCATION AND CHILD CARE

K-12 Many school districts and other organizations highlighted challenges with K-12 education operational and capital funding. The Committee also heard about staffing shortages and the need to increase supports for students with support needs. Increasing access to affordable and publicly operated child care in schools and ensuring adequate compensation for early childhood educators were other key themes echoed by multiple organizations and individuals.

## CAPITAL FUNDING

Several organizations, including the Brentwood Park Elementary Parent Advisory Committee and the City of Mission, advocated for increased capital funding to address population growth, and safety and accessibility needs of children. School District No. 23 (Central Okanagan) emphasized that it operates over full capacity and many portables that are being used are funded through its operational budget. In addition, the British Columbia Retired Teachers' Association and the City of Mission explained that in high-growth areas, the funding for school construction is urgently needed to keep pace with residential development. School District No. 20 (Kootenay Columbia) noted challenges in its ability to maintain school infrastructure due to increased costs in building supplies driven by inflation and supply disruptions. Similarly, School District No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay) recommended increased funding to address and replace aging infrastructure of schools. The British Columbia District Parent Advisory Council requested a five-year plan to meet the capital funding gap as identified by the British Columbia School Trustees Association, which included funding for land acquisition, new schools, and maintenance.

The Vancouver School Board recommended investing in safe, accessible, and inclusive school facilities and streamlining approval processes for capital projects, stating the need for improved accessibility across school buildings. School District No. 62 (Sooke) also highlighted the need for safe, accessible, and inclusive facilities such as elevators, washrooms, learning environments, and inclusive playgrounds. For Our Kids

recommended specific funding for safe and climate resilient portables, explaining that the Burnaby School District's portables do not have proper bathrooms, sinks, or cooling infrastructure. Additionally, School District No. 42 (Maple Ridge – Pitt Meadows) highlighted the importance of modernizing capital and technology investments in K-12 schools, particularly for digital infrastructure and classroom-ready technology along with a provincial plan for K-12 cybersecurity.

The Committee also heard specific requests from School District No. 38 (Richmond) regarding capital funding for new schools and the district's seismic mitigation program. The district explained that they have been advocating for two new elementary schools in the city centre to address significant growth. The district also stated that multiple schools in the district, including elementary and secondary schools, have been identified with a high seismic risk rating, which indicates that a significant number of students remain at schools in need of seismic mitigation measures.

## CHILD CARE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Several organizations and individuals, including School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast), School District No. 28 (Quesnel), School District No. 60 (Peace River North), School District No. 59 (Peace River South), and CUPE 3742, supported increased funding for child care and early childhood development. School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast) recommended stable multi-year capital and operational funding for child care and improved cross-ministry and intergovernmental coordination, with a particular focus on coordination between the Ministry of Children and Family Development and local governments.

Several organizations requested the expansion of child care programs. The Coalition of Child Care Advocates of British Columbia recommended expanding child care to every elementary school by utilizing modular buildings. Additionally, Core Education and Fine Arts Early Learning stated that rising commercial rental rates are a significant barrier to opening

new early learning centers and suggested the introduction of incentives or tax relief programs to encourage better collaboration between developers, landlords, and early learning providers. Other recommendations in this area included increased investment in the New Spaces Fund and start-up funding under the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative to help all school districts launch publicly delivered child care programs using education assistants.

In relation to the \$10-a-Day child care program, many organizations recommended expanding to every school district. Inclusion BC recommended investing \$10 million per year into the \$10-a-day child care program to remove regional discrepancies and to support inclusive child care. The Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC indicated that while many operators have applied to become \$10-a-day sites, applicants are not being invited to make the transition. Similarly, YMCA Metro Vancouver advocated for transitioning all existing child care programs to \$10-a-day sites.

The Committee also heard about the need to address recruitment and retention in the child care sector. YMCA of BC and the Early Childhood Educators of BC emphasized the importance of sufficient staffing levels and advocated for increased investment in the recruitment and retention of Early Childhood Educators (ECEs). Early Childhood Educators of BC suggested implementing a comprehensive wage and benefit package and increasing the number of qualified educators through bursaries and other funding options for early childhood education students. MOSAIC Surrey Early Learning Center and MOSAIC BC advocated for ECE wage enhancements. Similarly, the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC highlighted that the current ECE compensation does not adequately reflect their expertise or value and stated that a new wage grid may help recruit and retain skilled educators. In addition, the Pacific Immigrant Resources Society advocated for funding to ECE and ECE assistant training programs for immigrants and refugee women.

Finally, the Conseil Scolaire Francophone de la Colombie-Britannique requested kindergarten funding to include four-year-olds or pre-kindergarten, which would enable students to have a better start for kindergarten.

## CURRICULUM AND PROGRAMMING

Several organizations made recommendations related to expanding the K-12 education curriculum and programming. The BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils emphasized

the need for implementing literacy centres in every school district that offers tier 3 reading interventions and evidence-based screeners, and the AIRS Program advocated for increased funding for sustainable arts education in K-12 education. In addition, the Mechanical Contractors Association of BC recommended dedicated funding for skilled trades education to elevate the reputation of skilled trades as a career. For Our Kids emphasized the importance of adopting climate change curriculums and enabling schools to adopt climate solutions like solar panels, heat pumps, cooling infrastructure, and biodiversity-enhancing landscaping. An individual and the Conseil Scolaire Francophone de la Colombie-Britannique discussed the importance of ensuring and protecting French education, noting the need to make French class mandatory for grades eight to ten. Additionally, the English Language Learners Consortium recommended funding for additional staff at the Ministry of Education and Child Care with English Language Learner and curriculum backgrounds to support English Language Learners and their unique needs. Lastly, the Métis Nation British Columbia recommended investment in Métis-specific education within the K-12 education system. The Nation highlighted that the goal is to develop Métis-specific educational content to reflect Métis learners in the K-12 education system.

The BC Community Schools Alliance Society noted that the current fragmentation of funding streams and the service delivery model for education, health, social services, arts, and culture limit the ability of schools to serve as effective community hubs. The Society stated that joint funding models and service agreements could enable ministries to provide streamlined services at schools.

## INDEPENDENT AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS

The BC Humanist Association along with several individuals advocated for ending or phasing out public funding for faith-based and private schools, noting that a considerable amount of the provincial funding for independent schools goes to faith-based schools. Similarly, the Institute for Public Education BC recommended reallocation of public funding from private schools to public schools to strengthen the public system and restore public school investment as a share of GDP. Additionally, the SelfDesign Learning Foundation requested increased funding for independent online schools, stating that these schools have to meet the same educational standards as public online schools and maintain secure digital infrastructure with less funding. The BC Community Schools Alliance

Society requested the development of a provincial strategy for community schools and further stated its willingness to partner with government to co-develop the strategy and guide the implementation of community school models.

## INTERNATIONAL AND VULNERABLE STUDENTS

Some organizations advocated for additional support for international or vulnerable students. School District No. 41 (Burnaby) discussed a rise in temporary resident registrations (TRRs), which represent students whose families are on work or study permits. The district noted that it welcomes a substantial number of TRRs after the standard funding cycle. Similarly, the English Language Learners Consortium explained that the majority of TRRs enroll after the standard funding cycle, and school districts must provide educational services to these students. The English Language Learner Consortium also recommended removing the five-year limit on K-12 English Language Learning Funding, noting that newcomers and refugee families have complex needs which may require support and funding for longer than five years.

School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) recommended the development of a provincial K-12 gender-based violence action plan. The district stated that gender-based violence policies and an action plan are essential to provide equitable protection, prevention, and support across BC's school communities. The BCEd Access Society requested the expansion of the mandate of the Representative for Children and Youth to include vulnerable students in education.

The need for student health and nutrition was highlighted by several organizations. School District No. 20 (Kootenay Columbia) requested funding for student services and mental health, stating that the district's financial strain has primarily affected its ability to support the mental health and well-being of students. Lastly, the Breakfast Club of Canada recommended connecting with BC food producers and processors and enhancing local food literacy through the Feed BC program.

## OPERATIONAL FUNDING

The Committee heard calls for increases to operational funding. CUPE Local 728 and the Brentwood Park Elementary Parent Advisory Committee recommended revising the funding formula along with increased funding. CUPE Local 728

explained that the existing funding model does not properly account for costs like infrastructure deficits, unstable economic times, and inflation. The BC Teacher's Federation noted the need for additional funding to support new programs and services, staffing, and infrastructure deficits.

Multiple school districts and organizations, including CUPE Local 1260, BC DPAC Coalition, the BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils, and School District No. 38 (Richmond) requested core funding to support operational services and maintain school infrastructure. The BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils stated that school districts are forced to cut support staff to balance their budgets. The BC School Trustees Association noted that increased funding is required to address financial and structural deficits across school boards. School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) recommended investing 15 percent of the 2026 budget in public education, explaining that school districts are under unsustainable financial pressures and seeing declines in student achievement. The district further stated that Grade 10 numeracy rates have declined, and more students display trauma, mental health challenges and complex behaviours.

The Committee also heard from organizations and school districts advocating for rural and remote communities. CUPE Local 4653 highlighted that many rural and remote communities face different challenges than urban areas. School District No. 60 (Peace River North) explained that Northern BC school districts face unique circumstances, such as challenges in recruiting certified teachers and more infrastructure repair costs due to harsh geographical conditions. The Kitselas First Nation Treaty Information Source advocated for strengthening financial support for northern primary and secondary education, noting that data shows lower education outcomes are achieved compared to the southern part of the province.

In addition, School District No. 23 (Central Okanagan) and School District No. 41 (Burnaby) both advocated for the province to fund all costs arising from negotiated collective agreements. The districts noted that the outcomes of recent collective agreements are not fully covered and have added increased financial pressures on school districts. The Conseil Scolaire Francophone de la Colombie-Britannique advocated for a fund for opening new francophone schools, explaining the need for operational fund to cover staffing, maintenance fees, and more. Finally, the Vancouver School Board and School District No. 62 (Sooke) recommended investing in technology

and future-ready learning environments including access to assistive technologies, AI learning resources, and up-to-date science and library materials.

## RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The Committee heard about recruitment and retention challenges across the K-12 education sector. The BC School Trustees Association highlighted that school districts are facing increasing costs for substitute teachers due to higher rates of illness-related absences. The Association recommended investment in hiring and retaining qualified teachers and support staff, particularly in rural and remote areas. School District No. 20 (Kootenay Columbia), the BC Retired Teachers' Association, and the Institute for Public Education BC supported a similar notion emphasizing the need to increase funding toward staffing and teacher replacement costs. School District No. 41 (Burnaby) recommended a review of staff allocation and special purpose funds to ensure equity. Similarly, School District No. 60 (Peace River North) requested commitment to the K-12 workforce strategy as there are significant recruitment and retention challenges in the district, including overreliance on teachers with Letters of Permission.

In relation to specific staff support and benefits, CUPE Local 723 and CUPE Local 1260 both discussed the need to fund wage fairness and provide full-time hours for support workers. They further explained that most education assistants are not given full-time hours and employees in the skilled trades in K-12 earn less wages than those in the municipal sector. The BC Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association noted that a majority of BC Vice-Principals are in their first five years of practice, with many carrying teaching loads. The Association recommended investing in leadership development and prioritizing mental health and psychological safety for school leaders.

The Committee also heard recommendations regarding teacher certification. School District No. 28 (Quesnel) stated that rural and remote school districts are disproportionately impacted by the lack of certified teachers, specialist teachers, and support staff. The district emphasized the need to reduce the barriers to certification. Similarly, School District No. 59 (Peace River South) recommended permitting a Letter of Permission application to cover one teacher to work within all schools of the district or the province to reduce the barriers to teacher certification and developing hybrid and online teacher education programs.

## STUDENTS WITH SUPPORT NEEDS

Many discussed the need for increased funding and resources for inclusive education. The Institute for Public Education BC noted the need to address the gap between actual costs and funding as current funding structures do not appropriately reflect student needs. The First Call Child and Youth Advocacy Society indicated that many children start kindergarten with developmental vulnerabilities and emphasized the need for early childhood intervention measures. Similarly, the Early Childhood Educators of BC suggested the development of a funding model that focuses on early intervention and prevention programs to ensure inclusivity and accessibility. The BC Teacher's Federation noted the need to place one education assistant in every primary classroom and a counsellor in every school, particularly in rural and remote communities.

Multiple organizations discussed the need for increased support towards specific programs or areas regarding inclusive education. The British Columbia Retired Teachers' Association recommended funding for psychoeducational testing to reduce wait times for student testing, indicating that testing delays impact children's abilities to receive support from specialists and appropriate programs. The SelfDesign Learning Foundation requested increased support for children with high-incidence disabilities who attend independent online schools. The Autism Support Network Society advocated for expanding the autism funding model to other disability groups, stating that there are also children with disabilities other than autism who cannot receive funding. Additionally, School District No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay) requested increased funding to address the required supports and services needed to increase the district's graduation rate.

The BC Complex Kids and Inclusion Chilliwack Society emphasized the importance of accessible environments that accommodate developmental, health, and care support needs and recommended additional funding for the Supported Child Development Program. The BCEdAccess Society similarly stated that many organizations and schools do not have the resources to meet the standards of the Accessible British Columbia Act and require additional funding for physical upgrades and training. Finally, the Committee heard from the Down Syndrome Society of BC about the need for an audit on inclusive education funding. The Society emphasized that an audit of inclusive education spending may provide valuable insight on the current funding model.

## COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

The Committee recognized the significant funding pressures that several school districts are experiencing. In particular, the Committee acknowledged the distinct and often complex challenges faced by northern and rural school districts, recognizing the need to consider their unique circumstances including teacher and staff shortages, increased costs for goods and services, and geographical challenges.

Committee Members also noted the many pressures impacting capital projects, including demand for new facilities in line with an increasing population, as well as rising construction costs. The Committee discussed the importance of exploring innovative solutions, such as using mixed-use spaces for schools. The Committee also discussed the importance of providing funding for accessible playgrounds, emphasizing that every child should be able to easily access the playground.

The Committee acknowledged the importance of recruiting and retaining educational staff (See Recommendation 9 in Economic Development). Committee Members reflected on school districts' concerns over increasing violent and dangerous incidents experienced by teachers and support staff. The Committee discussed the negative impacts those incidents have on the physical safety and mental health of educational staff and emphasized prioritizing the safety of school staff. Furthermore, Members recognized the need to reduce barriers to teacher certification in the province which could be done by streamlining processes across both post-secondary institutions and the Teacher Regulation Branch and by decreasing interprovincial barriers for teacher certification. The Committee also discussed how allowing one Letter of Permission application to cover a district or the province for multiple years could reduce administrative burdens.

The Committee also deliberated on the importance of school supports for students. Committee Members acknowledged the significance of early intervention in identifying and supporting students with support needs. In addition, the Committee recognized concerns raised by school districts about staffing shortages for children with support needs, noting that this could create unsafe environments for both students and staff. Members discussed potential solutions, including placing a support worker in every primary classroom and ensuring adequate staffing levels to maintain safety and inclusivity. The Committee further discussed the concerns it heard from school districts about support needs that arise outside of the province's standard funding cycle, including for Temporary

Resident Registration students. Lastly, the Committee emphasized the critical importance of ensuring students have access to comprehensive mental health resources to foster well-being in schools.

The Committee discussed key programs and curriculums for K-12 education that could be further prioritized. In particular, Members deliberated on the importance of introducing skilled trades and health care professions as career options to K-12 students to address the increasing workforce demand in the province. Members also affirmed the importance of providing arts education to K-12 students.

Regarding child care and early childhood development, the Committee recognized the need for more public and private child care facilities across the province. Members acknowledged that many in-demand skilled trades often require shift-based work schedules. As such, the Committee noted that access to child care that is compatible with shift work is essential to enabling increased workforce participation and economic growth. The Committee noted that the expansion of child care facilities would require increased support for recruitment and retention of child care workers and identified the need to review the wage grid for early childhood educators.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

52. Prioritize capital funding to address K-12 school infrastructure issues such as seismic upgrades and accessibility, and explore innovative solutions for capital infrastructure, including the use of mixed-use spaces.
53. Prioritize the mental health and physical safety of school staff.
54. Strengthen inclusive education by ensuring timely student assessments and providing sufficient staffing for safe and effective student support.
55. Continue to work towards providing primary classrooms with an education assistant and schools with a dedicated counsellor to support student well-being and learning.
56. Provide targeted funding to enhance K-12 programs that focus on introducing and expanding pathways into the skilled trades and health care.
57. Prioritize the expansion of child care facilities and the diversification of child care options to meet the different needs of the workforce, including by improving the recruitment and retention of early childhood educators.

# MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

The Committee heard from many organizations and individuals regarding improving access to mental health services and supports as well as addiction treatment and recovery. The Committee also heard about the need to improve mental health services and supports for children and youth. Additionally, organizations and individuals provided recommendations related to increased support for secure and involuntary care, and harm reduction.

## ADDICTION TREATMENT AND RECOVERY

Many organizations recommended increased support for addiction treatment and recovery services. Coast Mental Health emphasized funding for employment and training programs to support recovery, noting that employment provides purpose, social connection, and financial independence. The VisionQuest Recovery Society stated that budget increases for addiction treatment and recovery services should reflect inflationary pressures. The Society also indicated the need to acquire data on populations accessing addictions services, including information about the number of people assisted. Similarly, the Realistic Success Recovery Society explained that reliable data regarding the populations accessing addictions services can assist in ensuring care for substance use is meeting their needs.

With respect to harm reduction, CUPE Local 5536 highlighted the harms caused by the increasingly toxic drug supply and stated that prioritizing access to a safe, regulated supply may be an effective preventative measure. The Union further indicated the importance of supporting overdose prevention and supervised consumption services, as well as peer-led and community-run programs across the province.

The Committee also heard specific funding requests. Canadian Addiction Treatment Centres emphasized the importance of virtual care, stating that in many remote and rural communities, virtual care is the only treatment option. The organization noted that it requires support to expand its virtual care services with health authorities. BC Insulators

Local 118 discussed mental health issues experienced by workers in construction and recommended one-time funding for the proposed Construction Industry Rehabilitation Plan's treatment facility. The City of Kelowna highlighted the lack of a regional facility in the Central Okanagan to support individuals with complex mental health and substance use issues. The City recommended repurposing the Okanagan Correctional Centre in Oliver and expanding the Red Fish Healing Centre to address the issue.

## INVOLUNTARY AND INSTITUTIONAL CARE

The City of Prince George highlighted the lack of resources for individuals requiring high levels of secure psychiatric care and recommended funding for the construction of a secure psychiatric care facility in Prince George. The City of Penticton recommended the development of secure regional mental health care facilities in the Interior, highlighting the lack of infrastructure to support individuals with complex mental health and substance use challenges who are unable to voluntarily seek treatment.

The Cornerstone Youth Society recommended increased funding for additional involuntary or institutional care options for youth up to the age of 19. The Society explained that the Mental Health Act allows for detention and assessment, but the demand is greater than the physical space available. The BC Schizophrenia Society indicated the importance of involuntary treatment provisions in the Mental Health Act as a protection for people who pose a risk to themselves or others. The BC Schizophrenia Society advocated for the maintenance of the judicious use of involuntary treatment, emphasizing the Mental Health Act as a core part of the health system.

## MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

The Committee heard from many organizations and individuals recommending increased funding for mental health services and supports. The Mental Health Recovery Partners – South Island advocated for investment in evidence and community-

based interventions such as peer support, stating that peer support could reduce hospitalization rates and improve long-term stability. The BC Schizophrenia Society recommended financial support for community-based severe mental illness services. The Society emphasized the high economic cost of schizophrenia in Canada caused by direct health care and non-health care costs and lost productivity for people with schizophrenia due to their absences from work. In addition, the Vancouver Island Counselling Centre for Immigrants and Refugees stated that trauma-informed and culturally sensitive counselling services are needed, especially provided in languages commonly spoken by newcomers. Other recommendations included increasing support for other mental health issues, including eating disorders and complex needs.

Several organizations also discussed improving access to mental health services and supports. The Whitevalley Community Resource Centre explained that the lack of infrastructure is the largest barrier rural communities face when offering services and programs. The Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division advocated for continuity and long-term sustainability of the Community Counselling Fund and an expansion of MSP coverage to services from registered clinical counsellors and psychotherapists. The organization highlighted the importance of mental health services that individuals can access before reaching a crisis point.

The Committee heard recommendations related to specific sectors and organizations including QMUNITY and the Canadian Men's Health Foundation, which both recommended continued financial support for their operations. The Vancouver Island Counselling Centre for Immigrants and Refugees emphasized the need to invest in further training for mental health support workers serving refugees and newcomers, and the Manufacturing Safety Alliance of BC described the need for increased mental health support in the manufacturing sector, particularly regarding access to benefits and health care practitioners. In addition, Next Gen Men recommended supporting the campaign to increase awareness for men's mental health and the Butterfly Run BC advocated for mental health supports for families navigating in-vitro fertilization and other reproductive treatments. Finally, Mental Health Recovery Partners-South Island requested supporting the expansion of the Parliamentary Secretary for Community Development and Non-profits' mandate to be focused on mental health and substance use.

## YOUTH

The Committee heard from organizations regarding increased funding for child and youth mental health services. The Whitevalley Community Resource Centre stated that it requires increased support to meet the growing demand for mental health services, especially among elementary school aged children. The Take a Hike Foundation supported the recommendation, noting the increasing demand for youth requiring mental health services. The Take a Hike Foundation also emphasized the critical need for youth to access these services to prevent further mental health, toxic drug, homelessness, and public safety crises and further highlighted its role in providing evidence-based activities that improve the mental health of young people. The BC Society of Transition Houses requested increased support for its PEACE program, noting the high demand. Additionally, Dan's Legacy highlighted that service stability and multi-year funding are critical for organizations that offer wraparound services to youth, allowing organizations to build capacity, retain qualified staff and deliver consistent care. Lastly, the Clements Centre Society advocated for increased investments in publicly funded therapy positions for children and youth, noting that in some regions there are hundreds of children on a waitlist.

## COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

The Committee reflected on the significant need to provide effective and accessible support for people with addictions. Committee Members underscored the importance of collecting reliable data as a way to ensure access to effective treatment and recovery services in all areas of the province, including rural and remote communities. Committee Members supported the development of a single database for tracking addiction services in BC, which would require service providers to register and provide regular reports on the effectiveness and accessibility of their programs. The Committee also discussed the importance of virtual addiction treatment and recovery services, to ensure that these services are accessible in areas where in-person services are not available. In particular, Committee Members noted the importance of expanding access to virtual opioid dependency programs, such as those currently provided by Canadian Addiction Treatment Centres (see Recommendation 32 in Health Care).

The Committee further discussed inequities in the current funding model for addiction treatment and recovery services, including funding disparities for subsidized treatment beds

in different health authorities. Additionally, some Members noted that there are many middle-income individuals who do not qualify to access publicly funded treatment centres due to income thresholds but also cannot afford to pay for private centres. The Committee identified the need to review the funding model and income eligibility thresholds to ensure equity and increase access to public recovery centres.

Committee Members emphasized that mental health care needs to be further incorporated into the public health care system to ensure those who need support and services are able to access them. Members discussed that the majority of mental health services are centered in urban areas and many people living in rural and remote areas have a difficult time accessing these services. Committee Members noted several priority areas for increased access, including harm prevention programs, long-term treatment facilities, counselling services, and treatments for eating disorders. The Committee also discussed the importance of publicly funding mental health care to remove barriers for access to such services, particularly for counselling and therapy, and discussed supporting expanded coverage for mental health services under the Medical Services Plan (see Recommendation 43 in Health Care).

Committee Members further noted the importance of ensuring access to publicly funded counselling services for youth who have experienced domestic, gender-based, and inter-familial violence. Members also noted input they received

regarding the impact of programs that provide outdoor experiences to improve youth mental health. Some Members emphasized that outdoor experiences can encourage youth to engage with mental health services and supports, helping to prevent and address future mental health challenges. Finally, the Committee acknowledged the importance of mental health support for families navigating reproductive health care challenges, including fertility treatments, pregnancy termination, and experiences of pregnancy or infant loss. It is the Committee's hope that support for these families will be addressed through the measures included in the recently adopted Perinatal and Postnatal Mental Health Strategy Act, 2025.

Regarding involuntary and institutional care, the Committee acknowledged the important role that these forms of care can play in supporting people with mental health or addiction challenges. The Committee discussed the importance of expanding psychiatric care facilities with sufficient staffing, particularly in rural and remote areas, and further indicated the need to provide additional forensic psychiatric hospitals in areas where staff are available. For addictions care, the Committee discussed the need to increase the number of intensive housing facilities to provide wrap-around health services and involuntary substance use recovery care, such as the new Alouette Homes treatment facility.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

58. Establish an integrated database to register and monitor addiction treatment and recovery services, enabling evidence-based evaluation of the effectiveness and accessibility of these services.
59. Ensure equitable funding for addiction treatment facilities across health authorities and contracts and revise income eligibility thresholds to improve access to publicly funded treatment centres.
60. Improve access to mental health services in underserved areas.
61. Increase funding for counselling services for children and youth who have experienced domestic, gender-based, and inter-familial violence.
62. Increase funding for involuntary and institutional care, including the expansion of long-term care beds, psychiatric care facilities, and comprehensive wrap-around health and substance use recovery services, supported by adequate staffing.

# PUBLIC SAFETY AND JUSTICE

Several organizations identified a need to increase funding and supports for access to justice, survivors of gender-based violence and sexual assault, law enforcement and bail reform changes. Another key theme was regarding preparation for and response to natural disasters and other emergencies, particularly given the impacts of climate change. The Committee also heard about the need to improve enforcement capacity on contraband tobacco, access to legal aid, and operational capacity for emergency communications.

## ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND LEGAL AID

Regarding access to justice, several organizations raised concerns about court services and processes. The Trial Lawyers Association of BC stated that diverting some applications, such as uncontested and without notice applications, out of regular chambers would increase court time for matters that require a hearing. The Association also advocated for increased funding to address delays in family cases, including to appoint more judges.

The City of Kelowna and the City of Penticton recommended the allocation of additional Crown prosecutors. The City of Kelowna explained that Kelowna's office of Crown prosecutors manages a heavier caseload than the provincial average. The City requested to increase the number of Crown prosecutors in Kelowna to reduce burnout and improve the justice system. Similarly, the City of Penticton spoke of addressing public concern around crime and repeat offenders. The City stated that investing in dedicated Crown prosecutors focused on repeat offenders would help reduce recidivism and alleviate pressure on local police and bylaw services.

The Canadian Bar Association BC Branch recommended expanding early resolution processes. The Association also highlighted the need to invest in technology for court services, indicating that would allow more virtual appearances for routine hearings and easier online filing, removing barriers to justice especially for rural and remote communities. Additionally, the Association stated that Indigenous courts

respond to the needs of Indigenous peoples by supporting rehabilitation, reducing reoffending, and repairing harm done to victims, and advocated for increased funding for Indigenous courts. The Association of Administrative and Professional Staff at UBC recommended increased funding for BC Human Rights Tribunal, noting the need to eliminate the backlog and reduce waiting times.

The Committee heard from organizations about increased funding for legal aid, particularly in relation to family law matters. The Trial Lawyers Association of BC explained that having legal aid coverage for family arbitration would provide an alternative mechanism for obtaining decisions while reducing court applications. Additionally, the Association noted that Legal Aid Limited Representation Contracts should cover the counsel's attendance at mediation to increase the likelihood of settlement and efficiency. The Centre for Family Equity advocated for the expansion of legal aid clinics in Victoria, Surrey, and satellite services across the province. The organization highlighted that there has been increased support for those who are low-income and impacted by family violence, but the demand is still higher than the available legal aid supports.

## ANTI-RACISM

The Committee heard calls related to expanding anti-racism initiatives. The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs stated that in 2023, police-reported incidents of antisemitic hate, including vandalism and arson increased significantly compared to the previous year in Vancouver. The Centre emphasized the need to make the Anti-Hate Community Support Fund permanent. Additionally, Sikh Heritage BC recommended the establishment of an anti-Sikh hate task force, explaining that BC has one of the largest Sikh populations in Canada. The organization further added that Sikh business owners and community leaders have been facing extortion attempts linked to foreign actors and recommended increased support for Sikhs in BC through education, law enforcement, and enhanced protection.

## CONTRABAND TOBACCO

The Committee heard from multiple organizations which expressed concerns over contraband tobacco and recommended enhanced enforcement measures. Rothmans, Benson and Hedges Inc. recommended establishing a cross-ministerial working group focused on contraband tobacco, noting the link between contraband tobacco and organized crime, public health risks, and lost tax revenue. The company further highlighted the need for increased inter-jurisdictional coordination and the development of a national strategy on contraband tobacco.

Similarly, the National Coalition Against Contraband Tobacco recommended the creation of a unified, Pan-Canadian strategy on contraband tobacco. The Coalition indicated that expanding inspection and enforcement authorities under the Tobacco Tax Act would help deter non-compliant behaviors and recommended the establishment of dedicated police enforcement teams to combat illicit tobacco trafficking. JTI-Macdonald Corp. identified that federal action is essential to stop illegal cigarette production, as addressing this issue is critical in protecting legal businesses, safeguarding tax revenues, and ensuring the well-being of communities across the province. JTI-Macdonald Corp. also noted that a provincial education campaign could effectively shift consumer behaviour and complement enforcement efforts.

Lastly, the Convenience Industry Council of Canada stated that the spread of illegal tobacco sales impact not only local retailers but also the province's finances. The Council explained that projected tobacco tax revenue declined last year despite increases in tobacco taxes and recommended an action plan to support small businesses and deter criminal activity. Similarly, Imperial Tobacco Canada recommended shutting down the sale of illegal vaping products and nicotine pouches, emphasizing that organized crime groups, who also traffic fentanyl and cocaine, control the illegal tobacco trade. The organization further added that BC has seen a decline in tobacco tax revenue due to the illegal tobacco market.

## CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

The Committee heard several recommendations related to correctional services. Prisoners' Legal Services raised issues concerning incarcerated people, including the negative impacts of solitary confinement and incarceration of Indigenous peoples. The organization stated that solitary confinement may cause mental health issues, especially to those with pre-

existing mental health conditions. The organization further added that investing in community and peer-led organizations could provide effective ways for people in custody to occupy their time and build connections. On the topic of incarceration of Indigenous peoples, the organization recommended fully implementing the BC First Nations Justice Strategy, including strategy 14, "Expanding Culturally Based Programs in B.C. Corrections," and strategy 15, "Growing Community Justice Programs."

Organizations discussed alternative and restorative justice, particularly increasing support for restorative justice programs and post-releases services. The Vancouver Island Regional Restorative Justice Association noted that restorative justice organizations operate as non-profits, often relying on volunteers and inconsistent funding. The Association requested the annual grant for every certified program be raised to \$10,000. In addition, the Association highlighted the need for a sustainable funding model for restorative justice programs and recommended increased certification of new Community Accountability Programs.

Coast Mental Health indicated that many individuals with mental health conditions are criminalized for behaviours rooted in untreated mental health issues. The organization emphasized that addressing the root causes of criminal behaviour and supporting post-release services could reduce recidivism and lower incarceration rates. Similarly, the Business Improvement Areas of BC acknowledged the importance of restorative justice and diversion programs that place a focus on repairing harm and restoring relationships. However, the organization also emphasized the need for stronger bail and sentencing conditions and advocated for additional investments in the Community Safety and Targeted Enforcement Program (C-STEP) intended to address robbery, shoplifting, and property crimes.

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Committee heard about several issues regarding emergency communications. E-Comm 9-1-1 indicated that revenue from landline levies and local government property taxes are no longer sufficient to cover the 9-1-1 costs associated with increased call volumes, labour shortages, and necessary technology improvements like Next Generation 9-1-1. The organization also highlighted that municipal 9-1-1 services are under considerable pressure. Along with support

from the Union of BC Municipalities, local governments and others, E-Comm 9-1-1 recommended establishing provincial-level oversight of 9-1-1, including governance and service standards. Additionally, E-Comm 9-1-1 noted that the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General announced an independent review of E-Comm and the future of 9-1-1 services. E-Comm 9-1-1 requested the Committee to recommend further consideration of the independent review and a new governance and financial model for E-Comm 9-1-1.

The Emergency Communications Professionals of BC stated that current funding for emergency communication is fragmented and unsustainable, limiting the province's emergency communication system's ability to respond to disasters. The organization highlighted that funding for emergency communication would support transitioning to the Next Generation 9-1-1, enabling 9-1-1 service through text messages, photos, and videos, collecting a levy on cell phones, and using geolocation to identify callers. The Emergency Communication Professionals of BC also recommended integrating mental health support into 9-1-1 systems and properly funding a continuum of mental health responses.

Other organizations similarly advocated for integrating mental health support into 9-1-1 systems. The Canadian Mental Health Association (Kootenays Branch) recommended increased funding for BC crisis lines to navigate and de-escalate crisis situations, effectively reducing the number of calls to 9-1-1. The Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division stated that sustained investment would enable the full crisis response supports such as phone-based support, mobile responses, and facility or residential based crisis stabilization.

## **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT**

Many organizations and individuals advocated for stable funding and increased support for sexual assault centres and survivors of gender-based violence. The Victoria Sexual Assault Centre emphasized that multi-year funding would allow sexual assault centres to offer consistent programming and maintain working relationships with community partners. The Centre highlighted the need for coordinated cross-sectoral programs, as sexual assault centres and health institutions are seeing increased complexity and intersectionality in survivors. In addition, the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre recommended funding sexualized violence prevention education programs,

specifically with Indigenous response networks and racialized youth groups.

Battered Women's Support Services recommended a comprehensive gender-based violence prevention fund, which may include public education to shift harmful attitudes, safe and supported housing, transitional income and job programs, and support for navigating the legal system. The Ending Violence Association of BC indicated there were many intimate partner violence deaths between 2012 and 2022. The Association emphasized that implementing an intimate partner violence death review committee may offer a critical understanding of factors that contribute to intimate partner violence deaths, improve gender-based violence death response and prevent deaths. Additionally, Next Gen Men suggested embedding a "male lens" into the existing GBA+ framework across departments, particularly in ministries that deal with male-dominated sectors such as fisheries, natural resources, and public safety. The organization explained that this would support the expansion of GBA+ in areas where men show higher rates of mental and physical health concerns.

The Committee also heard from organizations concerned with the rights and protection of sex workers. The BC Bad Date and Aggressor Reporting Project highlighted that many frontline sex worker organizations operate on unstable and short-term funding, noting the need for long-term core funding. The BC Bad Date and Aggressor Reporting Project, Living in Community, and the Tamitik Status of Women also requested funding for a web-based bad date reporting system, which would offer sex workers across the province a secure and accessible platform to share real-time safety information with each other. The organizations stated that many sex workers do not report to police due to fear of criminalization, deportation, surveillance, stigma, or other further harms; therefore, sharing safety information peer to peer is essential.

Several organizations expressed a need to expand transition housing and provide other housing support to people experiencing violence. The BC Society of Transition Houses stated that its members' current operating budgets do not align with their needs, and 53 percent of programs operate with a single staff member, creating an unsafe and high-stress environment for staff and residents. YWCA Metro Vancouver noted that many women and children are on its waitlist for housing. The organization requested an increase in funding to provide up to 1,000 new units per year to provide housing aimed specifically at women and children.

Additionally, the Victoria Women's Transition House Society noted that its second-stage transitional housing program provides safety and opportunities for women to rebuild their lives and move towards living violence-free for themselves and their children. The Society requested increasing FTE hours in the funding formula for second stage housing, especially in rapidly growing rural areas. Furthermore, the Victoria Women's Transition House Society recommended funding for Harrison Place by placing it in BC Housing's second stage portfolio.

In addition, multiple organizations, including Maple Ridge Pitt Meadows Community Services and the Encompass Support Services Society, discussed the need to develop a policy to coordinate amongst government services when responding to cases of child abuse. The BC Network of Child and Youth Advocacy Centres indicated that a coordinated policy to address cases of child abuse would ensure that police, child protection, victim services, medical professionals, schools, and others all work together to address the safety of children. Chilliwack Community Services similarly indicated the need for better coordination among organizations to support investigations of cases of child abuse. Additionally, the Victoria Child Abuse Prevention and Counselling Centre advocated for increased funding for sexual abuse and child abuse counselling. The Centre stated that children exposed to trauma are at significantly higher risk for developing mental health disorders, including depression, anxiety, and PTSD, which often persist in adulthood, leading to challenges in education, employment, and relationships. The Centre highlighted that early intervention can significantly reduce the long-term costs associated with untreated trauma.

The Ending Violence Association of BC noted that community-based victim service workers coordinate with cross-sectoral partners to improve quality of service to victims and survivors, and requested increased funding to support these workers. The Association also recommended creating a hub that will provide community-based victim service workers with access to JUSTIN, an integrated justice case management system, which would offer faster access to information for survivors of violence. The Ending Violence Association of BC stated that it has been working with the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General to improve access to JUSTIN for community-based victim service workers.

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Addressing human trafficking was another key issue mentioned by several organizations. The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking noted the importance of having a dedicated anti-human trafficking framework in preventing and responding to human and labour trafficking. The organization recommended further investment towards anti-human trafficking to enhance education and awareness, ensure there are appropriate services for substance abuse and legal aid, deliver training for front-line service providers, compensate survivors, and hire more Crown prosecutors who specialize in human trafficking. Similarly, the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women emphasized the significance of funding anti-trafficking initiatives that are community-based, evidence-informed, and address the root causes of exploitation and uphold the safety and dignity of all individuals. The Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women also explained that sex work support organizations and programs address some causes of human trafficking, including sex work criminalization, isolation, and stigma, while enhancing safety and agency for individuals.

## LAW ENFORCEMENT

Multiple organizations and individuals advocated for increased funding and support towards policing, bail reform changes, and ensuring public safety. The Building Owners and Managers Association noted that in a 2024 survey of building owners and managers, many respondents indicated their intent to close or move due to safety and security issues and considered their properties to be less safe compared to the previous year. The National Police Federation highlighted that the current bail system places significant strain on police resources, contributes to court backlogs, and undermines public trust in the justice system. The Federation added that officers spend considerable time transporting repeat offenders, attending court proceedings and managing administrative tasks, which diverts police resources from proactive community policing. The Federation recommended increasing enforcement capacity of bail conditions and leveraging technology to enhance oversight on post-release monitoring. Similarly, the City of Prince George stated that costs associated with policing and responding to street disorder continue to rise at an unsustainable rate for local governments. The City recommended providing municipalities with greater flexibility to allocate funding toward addressing street disorder and related challenges based on local needs.

In relation to youth safety, two organizations recommended investing in youth gang prevention and providing targeted support to communities and schools to ensure student safety. Archway Community Services explained the importance of having services that youth can immediately and appropriately access when needed, such as having access to school, primary care services, and free counselling all in the same place. The organization recommended collective initiatives formed as a network of collaborating programs between organizations, schools, and law enforcement to support youth and their families. School District No. 28 (Quesnel) advocated for the need to address the increasing disturbances on and around schools that are impacting students' abilities to learn in a safe environment.

The Committee also heard recommendations regarding investment, review, and audit of the RCMP. The National Police Federation noted the national review of RCMP contract policing confirmed that contract policing continues to play a critical role in delivering effective policing services across Canada. The Federation recommended securing a long-term commitment to the RCMP in contract policing to ensure an adequately resourced police force is equipped to handle evolving public safety challenges. Further, the National Police Federation noted its concern about the RCMP's authorized strength, highlighting the need to increase investment to hire more RCMP officers. The City of Fort St. John stated that the rising cost of policing is an unsustainable burden on municipal budgets and called for the RCMP funding model to be reviewed so that the costs could be shared more equitably with other smaller municipalities within the same area.

Finally, some organizations and individuals expressed their concerns regarding other law enforcement matters, including addressing financial crimes and funding Automatic License Plate Reader (ALPR) systems. The Canadian Bankers Association noted that reported fraud incidents are continuing to grow and impacting physical and public spaces. The Association recommended governments, online platforms, and sectors – including telecommunications and finance – work closely with law enforcement and the justice system to combat and prosecute financial crimes. Additionally, Axon Canada requested funding for its ALPR systems, which leverage image detection and smart technology to address vehicle thefts. The organization highlighted its role in aiding vehicle theft investigations and recoveries.

## NATURAL DISASTERS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The Committee heard concerns about natural disasters and emergency preparedness.

The Insurance Bureau of Canada expressed concern about the level of funding for flood adaptation and resiliency, noting that as wildfires and floods increase, insurance claims and pressures on premiums also increase.

Some organizations advocated for increased investment in local emergency preparation and disaster response efforts. Archway Community Services stated that community organizations are becoming a significant part of mobilizing local, provincial, and national resources and delivering emergency support to affected individuals and families. The organization recommended a better local emergency preparedness strategy to enhance collaboration between community organizations, businesses, municipalities, the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness, and local First Nations. The Tourism Industry Association of BC advocated for funding permanent emergency management personnel in the five tourism regions, explaining that emergency personnel are needed in each tourism region to lead emergency management and liaise within the provincial emergency management system. In addition, the BC Lodging and Campgrounds Association emphasized that campgrounds have space and resources to function as emergency shelters and would benefit from a centralized booking and availability portal to connect them to BC's emergency shelter network.

In relation to ground disturbances, the BC Common Ground Alliance emphasized the importance of streamlining communication and coordination between ministries, municipalities, and non-profit organizations working with underground infrastructure. The Alliance indicated that the ground infrastructure sector requires better coordination between the various ministries and emphasized its role in supporting municipalities and other stakeholders.

Several organizations and individuals recommended increased investment in wildfire prevention, detection, and firefighting programs. SenseNet highlighted the need to increase wildfire prevention funding including prioritizing BC-based companies in the procurement of wildfire technology. D-Wave Quantum highlighted annual wildfire threats and extreme weather events and noted that advanced technologies could support

emergency management by forecasting wildfire spread and determining optimal evacuation timing.

Additionally, the Committee heard from organizations regarding flood-resilience planning and implementing the BC Flood Strategy in relation to recent changes resulting from Bill 44, the Housing Statues (Residential Development) Amendment Act, 2023. The Watershed Watch Salmon Society noted amendments mandate densification in communities and require local governments to identify hazardous locations that can be exempted from densification. However, the Society explained that local governments need more guidance from the province on how to regulate, manage, and defend their communities from flooding. The Society stated that properly aligning the amendments made by Bill 44 with the BC Flood Strategy could support economic resilience while keeping communities safe. The Lower Fraser Floodplains Coalition similarly stated that local governments need better tools or data to identify and manage flood-prone areas to successfully comply with the amendments made by Bill 44. The Coalition recommended aligning the amendments with the BC Flood Strategy and climate-risk planning.

Lastly, the Air Rescue One Heli Winch Society requested funding to secure long-term operational capacity, which includes purchasing its own rescue helicopter, eliminating reliance on short-term contracts, constructing a permanent hangar and operations base, improving safety and maintenance capacity, providing fair wages, and acquiring critical spare parts.

## COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

The Committee acknowledged the importance of continuing to improve the effectiveness of the justice system. Committee Members acknowledged the work of municipalities to address repeat offenders and enhance enforcement efforts. Along with these efforts, the Committee emphasized the importance of expanding Crown prosecutor capacity to support effective and timely prosecutions. The Committee also noted measures that could increase capacity within courts, such as diverting non-criminal matters out of regular court chambers and improving court digital resources. Additionally, the Committee recognized that many people struggle with navigating family-related court matters, including family arbitration and child support recalculation, and emphasized the need for enhanced support in these areas.

The Committee acknowledged concerns around contraband tobacco and the need to enhance enforcement capacity, particularly for seizures of contraband tobacco. The Committee deliberated on transferring the responsibility for contraband tobacco inspections and enforcement from municipal bylaw officers to provincial law enforcement. Members further noted the connection between contraband tobacco and organized crime, highlighting that tackling the issue of contraband tobacco can address broader criminal networks. In addition, the Committee acknowledged lost tobacco tax revenues resulting from the sale of contraband tobacco.

The Committee also discussed the need to increase support for 9-1-1 services. Committee Members discussed that many small municipalities do not have the financial means to sustain funding for 9-1-1 services. The Committee deliberated on strategies to address funding needs, including the potential to collect levies on cellphones. Furthermore, the Committee recognized the importance of including a fourth option on 9-1-1 calls to support mental health emergencies, including having qualified professionals such as psychiatric nurses available to respond. Members noted that this could properly guide callers to appropriate resources. Additionally, the Committee emphasized the importance of investing in the full continuum of mental health crisis response – from the initial 9-1-1 call, to ensuring individuals are connected to follow-up resources and stabilization supports.

The Committee recognized the importance of providing supports to victims of gender-based violence and sexual assault. Members noted the need to expand inclusive gender-based violence and sexual assault prevention and education programs. The Committee further deliberated other measures to improve supports for victims of intimate partner violence. Members expressed concerns around intimate partner violence deaths and indicated the need for an intimate partner violence death review committee. The Committee also discussed the JUSTIN integrated justice case management system and highlighted how such a system could support the work of victim services workers, including by enabling them to provide notifications to victims regarding the outcomes of court proceedings. Lastly, Committee Members noted that a significant risk factor for those fleeing gender-based violence is the lack of transitional housing for women and children fleeing domestic violence and expressed support for more women's transitional housing.

Regarding human trafficking, the Committee identified the need to ensure there are adequate personnel to support the RCMP's provincial unit to combat human trafficking. Some Members noted the importance of working with communities and grassroot organizations to prevent human trafficking, including the need to work with vulnerable communities.

In addition, the Committee discussed the need to review the RCMP funding model for municipalities, particularly around rural communities' policing and the ratio of RCMP officers per capita. Members acknowledged that some smaller municipalities experience an escalation in costs when a community's population exceeds a certain threshold. Committee Members recognized inequalities in funding for RCMP policing across municipalities and supported finding an equitable solution that reflects the needs of communities. Some Members expressed concern about the limited growth in the number of officers in smaller municipalities and discussed the need to increase rural area police officers to support communities.

Regarding natural disasters and emergency preparedness, Committee Members recognized the importance of investing in risk reduction and community resiliency for floods, wildfires, and earthquakes. The Committee also discussed how a centralized reservation platform to connect evacuees with available shelters is critical during emergencies, noting that these shelters could also include campgrounds. Members

noted the work of the Common Ground Alliance in relation to ground disturbance prevention and highlighted how this work can reduce costs related to damage repairs and service outages by encouraging coordination between government and stakeholders and adoption of best practices. Finally, the Committee emphasized the importance of strengthening support in critical areas—such as wildfire preparedness and response—to better equip communities for future climate-related challenges. This includes funding preventative technology for emergency management, such as a quantum and AI wildfire detection, preparedness and emergency response pilot program.

The Committee also deliberated on other areas related to public safety, including anti-racism, correctional services, and bail reform changes. Committee Members discussed the importance of the Anti-Hate Community Support Fund and the need to ensure sustained support for communities affected by hate and discrimination. Regarding correctional services, Members recognized that many factors contribute to recidivism, such as addiction, mental health issues, and lack of housing and employment opportunities, and further acknowledged the need to strengthen post-release services to address underlying issues and reduce recidivism. Finally, the Committee noted the need to continue to advocate the federal government for criminal code and bail reform changes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

63. Provide funding to increase the capacity of courts, including:
  - a. diverting some non-criminal matters out of regular court chambers;
  - b. continuing to fund early resolution processes;
  - c. investing in court digital resources; and
  - d. hiring additional Crown prosecutors.
64. Increase support for family-related legal matters, including by providing additional funding to the Child Support Recalculation Service and legal aid, and expanding Legal Aid Limited Representation Contracts to cover counsel for attendance at mediation.
65. Increase the targeted enforcement capacity of provincial law enforcement to combat contraband tobacco, vapes, and cannabis with a specific focus on seizure operations.

66. Improve supports for 9-1-1 response, including:
  - a. reviewing the E-Comm 9-1-1 funding model to explore supplemental funding options for municipalities such as collecting a levy on cellphones; and
  - b. consider integrating mental health support into 9-1-1 responses (a "fourth option").
67. Expand inclusive gender-based violence and sexual assault prevention and education programs to reach vulnerable communities.
68. Improve supports for victims of intimate partner violence, including:
  - a. implementing an intimate partner violence death review committee;
  - b. providing community-based victim service workers access to a centralized information hub, such as an integrated justice case management system; and
  - c. increasing funding for women's transitional housing and prioritizing access to housing for women and children fleeing intimate partner violence.
69. Invest in efforts to combat human trafficking, exploitation, and sexual assaults by increasing the provincial authorized strength of the RCMP, enhancing interprovincial cooperation, and engaging with community-based organizations that support individuals with lived experience in sexual exploitation.
70. Fund a centralized reservation platform that connects evacuees with emergency accommodations, including hotels and campgrounds.
71. Invest in enhanced communication and coordination between ministries, municipalities, and non-profit organizations working with underground infrastructure to protect provincial and municipal assets.
72. Expand support for responding to natural disasters and emergencies, including wildfires and flooding, such as launching a quantum and AI wildfire detection, preparedness, and emergency response pilot program.

# SOCIAL SERVICES

The Committee heard from organizations and individuals about the urgent need for increased and stabilized funding across the social services sector. Key themes included calls for multi-year, inflation-adjusted funding agreements and raising administrative caps on government contracts to reflect the true cost of service delivery. The Committee also heard from organizations about the need to improve supports for children and youth in care and those with support needs. Organizations emphasized the need to adjust social assistance and disability rates to better reflect the cost of living. Other recommendations were related to accessibility, civic engagement, and poverty reduction.

## ACCESSIBILITY

Organizations advocated for increased funding for accessibility supports and programs. CUPE Metro Vancouver District Council emphasized that financial and legislative commitment from the province is required to ensure that every British Columbian, regardless of ability, has equal access to opportunities, services and supports. The Council requested funding and support to fully implement the Accessible British Columbia Act. Similarly, BC People First Society highlighted the need for more funding for automatic doors, ramps, and accessible washrooms in public buildings throughout the province. BC and Alberta Guide Dogs also shared the need for funding to construct a guide dog breeding and training centre in Delta. The organization noted there is an overwhelming need for its services and that demand continues to grow.

## CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The Former Youth in Care Community of Practice highlighted that children in foster care often face systemic gaps that violate the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and that youth with disabilities and Indigenous youth represent a disproportionate percentage of youth in care. The organization advocated for investment in early intervention for children and youth in care and a targeted equity lens in all budget decisions affecting youth in care. TRRUST Collective Impact stated that

mental health challenges among youth in care are exacerbated by poverty and unmet basic needs. The organization recommended that current and former youth in care be provided free access to publicly funded community resources such as recreation centres, pools, and arenas to promote mental health and well-being. An individual also advocated for an increased budget for youth in care to purchase high school graduation outfits.

Fairness for Children Raised by Relatives raised concerns that the Ministry of Children and Family Development receives the Canada Child Benefit—and in some cases, the Disability Child Benefit—instead of the caregivers and children in the Permanent Guardianship Program. The organization noted that as a result, these families are ineligible for other critical federal and provincial supports. The organization recommended that the Ministry stop claiming these benefits on behalf of children in permanent guardianship and ensure the funds are directed to the families who are raising them.

The Former Youth in Care Community of Practice also discussed the importance of Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment (SAJE) funding. The organization noted that funding is required for programs like SAJE to drive improved education, employment and health outcomes. The organization shared the need to fully fund existing commitments for former youth in care, including SAJE, rental supplements, mental health support, education, and employment pathways.

The Committee heard about the important role of child and youth advocacy centres in response to child abuse. The BC Network of Child and Youth Advocacy Centres highlighted that child and youth advocacy centres provide a safe space where children and their caregivers receive trauma-informed support in a timely manner. The Network added that these centres create efficiencies and cost savings for the government and require a foundation of reliable funding to continue this work. Maple Ridge Pitt Meadows Community Services shared that when children are connected with a child and youth advocacy

centre, they are provided services faster and experience far better long-term outcomes. Both organizations, along with Encompass Support Services Society, recommended support for child and youth advocacy centres including stable, ongoing funding to support their ability to intervene in cases of child abuse.

## DEMOCRACY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

CityHive Youth Engagement Society discussed the importance of supporting the development and scaling of civic education that incorporates equity-based funding models for public engagement and develops province-wide guidelines for inclusive civic processes. The Society also stated that establishing a democratic participation fund would provide stable, accessible funding to design and implement meaningful engagement processes. North Shore Community Resources noted it runs democracy café programs that encourage democratic participation and shared there is no funding for this kind of work. Both organizations advocated for funding for organizations and programs that encourage democratic participation.

## FOOD SECURITY

The Committee received several submissions seeking additional funding for food security programs and the agricultural sector. CityReach Care Society noted that existing food programs are oversubscribed as service organizations are unable to keep up with rising operational costs. Kermode Friendship Society described an overwhelming increase in demand for its food hampers and community meals, and highlighted the need for ongoing, dedicated funding. United Way British Columbia shared that charitable donations to hunger relief organizations are declining as the cost of living and economic insecurity affect British Columbians. CUPE Local 1936 advocated for prioritizing food insecurity in racialized communities with food programs that are culturally appropriate and developed in consultation with communities. Food Stash Foundation, Vancouver Food Runners, and CityReach Care Society all noted that provincial food security lacks strategic oversight and leadership and recommended establishing a provincial body to coordinate food security efforts and appoint a parliamentary secretary for food security.

The Committee heard a need to support organizations that deliver food security programs. Cowichan Green Community noted that it is observing new clients and demographics

seeking emergency food services, including youth, families, and seniors. Food Banks BC noted that since 2019, the number of visits to food banks has doubled and advocated for hunger relief charities to be supported with sustained funding and resources. LUSH Valley Food Action Society advocated for additional funding for food security organizations and suggested entering into service contract agreements to support these organizations. Archway Community Services recommended resources for partnerships and shared approaches to promote food security that include the creation of local food charters, regional food hubs, and bulk-buy collectives.

Several organizations recommended providing multi-year core operating funding for food recovery organizations, particularly those outside the traditional food bank model. CityReach Care Society explained that if the Vancouver food recovery network ceased operations it would create a substantive shortfall in essential food support for the area. Food Stash Foundation indicated that most provincial funding goes to a select few organizations, while Vancouver Food Runners explained that it is ineligible for provincial funding because it delivers food to other non-profits, instead of directly to individuals.

## INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND RECONCILIATION

The Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs shared that BC's Indigenous Child Welfare Directorate lacks dedicated resources to support First Nations transitioning to have jurisdiction over child and family services and requested up to \$500 million to support the transfer of jurisdiction and culturally appropriate family support programs. The Union stated that funding would also support First Nations-led data systems for outcome tracking and assistance for children and youth with support needs, ensuring equitable access to care and culturally safe supports. Similarly, the Federation of Community Social Services of BC shared that administrative funding formulas and contracts need to be updated to reflect current realities of supporting children and families in their own communities. The Committee also heard the need to provide dedicated and flexible funding for Indigenous youth programming.

The Committee heard about the need to support friendship centres. Kermode Friendship Society highlighted that friendship centres are vital frontline service providers for off-reserve Indigenous people and often act as the first point of contact for Indigenous people and families facing systemic barriers to housing, food security, health care, employment, and cultural

connections. Tillicum Lelum stated that it is running out of physical space and does not have the resources to acquire a new location due to stagnant core funding. Likewise, the Tansi Friendship Centre Society shared that its core funding does not reflect service demand while costs are increasing. The organizations recommended increased investment in friendship centres infrastructure, including Indigenous-led capital funding for friendship centres that reflects the breadth and scope of services they deliver. Similarly, Conayt Friendship Society noted that it currently operates out of limited and aging facilities and recently had to sell four housing units to make up gaps in its core funding. The organization requested that the province work with municipalities to prioritize land use for Indigenous community infrastructure and create a capital and land acquisition fund specifically for friendship centres and Indigenous non-profits. Additionally, Kermode Friendship Society indicated that one of the most pressing challenges it faces is the inability to offer fair, competitive wages to staff as different funding streams often come with different pay scales for similar work. The Society recommended that wage disparities be corrected to address inequities for Indigenous non-profit organizations. The Committee also heard from the Métis Nation British Columbia about the need for investments to develop child welfare laws and provide services to Métis children, youth, and families.

## NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Several organizations and individuals emphasized the urgent need to strengthen the non-profit sector, which is facing rising service demands, financial instability, and workforce challenges. The Committee heard that many community organizations are being forced to reduce services or shut down, and there were numerous recommendations related to modernizing funding practices such as multi-year agreements with inflationary increases, raising the administrative funding cap, and investing in staff and core capacity. Vantage Point and the CUPE Metro Vancouver District Council echoed concerns about underfunding, layoffs, and deteriorating working conditions. YMCAs of BC added that social infrastructure, often owned by non-profits, lacks sufficient government funding. Other recommendations included adopting proposals from the BC Non-Profit Network and Vantage Point to ensure predictable, flexible funding and workforce stability across the sector.

Organizations highlighted workforce instability in the non-profit and community services sectors. Vantage Point reported that many non-profits are losing skilled workers to higher-paying, more secure roles—including within government—creating a situation where organizations must compete with their own funders for talent. To address this, the organization recommended developing a dedicated non-profit labour force strategy. Similarly, the BC Association for Child Development and Intervention emphasized the need for a robust HR strategy to address recruitment challenges, particularly for allied health professionals in northern and remote areas, where wage disparities with the hospital sector hinder retention. CUPE Local 1936 highlighted that chronic underfunding in community social services has led to worsening recruitment and retention issues, staff burnout, and unsafe working conditions. The Committee also heard calls to provide targeted funding for rural and remote non-profits to attract and retain staff. The Federation of Community Social Services of BC also highlighted that wage benchmarks need to be increased to address competitive gaps, wage inequity among union and non-union workers, and wage inequity across Indigenous service programs. Additionally, the Association of Service Providers for Employability and Career Training recommended allocating \$50 million over two years to offset the loss of federal workforce development funds and to formally include community-based employment service providers in workforce and economic planning. The Federation of Community Social Services of BC advocated for mental health supports for high stress, front-line staff.

The Committee heard calls to improve grant structures and administrative support for BC's non-profit sector. The Vancouver Foundation emphasized that demand is outpacing non-profits' capacity, and that stable, multi-year funding with a higher administrative cost cap is essential for planning, staff retention, and investments in areas like IT, training, and culturally safe service delivery. The Federation of Community Social Services of BC noted that current administrative funding formulas are outdated and exclude critical costs such as cybersecurity and rising insurance premiums, forcing organizations to fundraise for basic operations. Family Services of Greater Vancouver added that the sector's lag in technology has made it a target for cyberattacks, calling for investments in cybersecurity and data systems. Communitas Supportive Care Society advocated for modernizing contract administration to reduce inefficiencies, while Phoenix Foundation highlighted the positive impact of the 2024 Community Prosperity/Social

Inclusion Fund in reaching rural communities. Finally, the Canadian International Dragon Boat Festival Society urged the province to stabilize the sector through tools like community gaming grants and more flexible funding criteria.

The Committee heard calls to maintain and expand support for newcomer and refugee-serving organizations. The Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of British Columbia emphasized the importance of sustaining current levels of settlement and integration services. They highlighted that newcomers are essential to BC's labour market, particularly in construction and health care, but face barriers in employment, language acquisition, and housing. Rainbow Refugee reported a 900 percent increase in local membership since 2020, straining its capacity to support 2SLGBTQIA+ refugees who face compounded systemic barriers.

The Committee heard several recommendations to improve services and supports for individuals eligible for Community Living BC (CLBC). The BC CEO Network noted that while the population served by CLBC has grown, health services provided through the Ministry of Health have not kept pace, making it increasingly difficult to access mental health care, behavioural supports, and family physicians. They called for increased funding to expand services and ensure timely access to care. The Family Support Institute of BC emphasized the urgent need to eliminate CLBC waitlists, fund early CLBC transition planning, and support inclusive post-secondary education and housing. They highlighted the risks youth with disabilities face when aging out of Child and Youth with Support Needs services without coordinated transitions, and requested \$130 million annually to address service gaps, along with \$30 million per year for universally designed housing. Inclusion BC also reported that over 700 individuals eligible for CLBC supports are currently homeless and recommended investing \$4.2 million annually for at least five years to expand complex care and housing options. The organization noted that inclusive housing with experienced non-profit partners is essential for dignity, stability, and reducing crisis costs.

The Committee received a range of specific funding requests from non-profit organizations. The United Way British Columbia requested funding for its emergency response work, noting that 2-1-1 is a national United Way service that complements 9-1-1 by connecting individuals to non-emergency community programs and social services in their areas. The organization indicated that provincial funding for 2-1-1 had not increased in five years, adding that it can

no longer rely on donors alone. The Archway Society for Domestic Peace requested multi-year operating funding for its programs, support for community-coordinated initiatives, and additional resources for school-based presentations and parent education on sexting. The Royal Canadian Legion sought funding for its centenary celebrations in 2026. Dress for Success requested funding to support clients referred by publicly funded programs or to allow flow-through funding from existing service contracts. The Whole Way House Society advocated for funding to expand its support programs province-wide, particularly in rural communities. Additional requests included funding for CNIB Deafblind Community Services to expand services and reduce waitlists, and increased funding for the Community Adult Learning Program. The YMCA sought funding for its Y Mind mental wellness program. Lastly, QMUNITY sought funding to sustain and grow its employment program for 2SLGBTQIA+ job seekers.

## PEOPLE WITH SUPPORT NEEDS

With respect to children and youth with support needs, Health Sciences Association of BC recommended increased funding to the non-profit child development sector by 50 percent. The Association noted that the Representative for Children and Youth estimates that fewer than one-third of children and youth who have support needs are being served by the current system. Additionally, the Association highlighted that many child development centres have had to change their service delivery models, limiting access only to children with the most complex needs. Similarly, BC Association for Child Development and Intervention shared that under-investment in services has led to unacceptable wait times, fragmented service delivery, and children being unable to access services in a timely manner. Both associations recommended increased investment including to hire more child inclusion specialists and realign some of the current budget to focus specialists on training, coaching and capacity building, and to increase staffing levels, expand programs and services, as well as stabilize the workforce. Further, the British Columbia Association for Behaviour Analysis noted the need to fast-track broadband infrastructure funding in high need areas to ensure access to behaviour analytic virtual services and provide funding to attract and retain service providers in underserved regions such as remote, rural, northern and Indigenous communities.

Further, the British Columbia Association for Behaviour Analysis indicated that many neurodiverse children and youth

in BC remain unsupported as currently only children with a formal autism diagnosis receive individualized funding. The Association stated that this exclusion creates a two-tiered system that results in inequitable access, worsened outcomes and increased pressures on families already in need. The Association suggested that funding should be flexible, diagnosis-neutral and aligned with functional support needs, which would promote equity, support early intervention, and improve long-term quality of life for thousands of children and families. The Down Syndrome Resource Foundation noted it received a grant to conduct an engagement project in order to test a new model for supporting children and youth with Down syndrome. The Foundation's recommendations were based on this testing, and included funding for speech and occupational therapies starting at birth for all individuals with Down syndrome, including all children and youth with Down syndrome on the basis of diagnosis alone for any new service delivery system, as well as funding for positive behaviour support to families with children with Down syndrome as needed.

The Inclusion Chilliwack Society and Broad Voice noted that youth and adults with complex needs continue to fall through the cracks of fragmented and siloed service systems which results in worsening health outcomes, higher rates of institutionalization, and increased long-term public costs. Both organizations recommended implementing a province-wide Complex Needs Strategy to address systemic gaps. Similarly, Inclusion BC recommended the creation of a complex needs strategy which would connect systems and provide wraparound care by adopting a person-centred planning approach, shared accountability across systems and dedicated care coordination to help navigate complex needs. Also with respect to people with support needs, the Clements Centre Society shared the need to fund a targeted training initiative to equip mental health professionals to work effectively with children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Society shared that due to a lack of trained clinicians, system fragmentation, and narrow diagnostic eligibility criteria, the mental health crisis can be far more severe and acute for children with developmental disabilities.

The Committee also received several recommendations related to specific programs and organizations. This included funding to implement the Dino Island program at the Children's and Women's Hospital in Vancouver, to build a new purpose-built child development centre in Cowichan, and to hire social workers and social work assistants to support families

with multiple barriers raising a child with support needs at the Centre for Child Development of the Lower Mainland. Additionally, Kids Brain Health Network requested the province match the funding received by the Network through the federal government's Strategic Science Fund.

## POVERTY REDUCTION

The Together Against Poverty Society criticized the current Persons with Disabilities (PWD) application process for being costly and redundant, requiring both a medical and assessor's report. The Society proposed allowing other qualified health professionals to conduct assessments. The Society also raised concerns about the claw back of social assistance benefits due to Employment Insurance (EI) earnings and emphasized that the current annual earnings exemption is insufficient to meet basic living needs. Disability Alliance BC echoed these concerns, recommending that disability assistance rates be indexed to inflation and that claw backs due to EI be stopped.

The BC People First Society and others emphasized that current disability rates are inadequate, leaving many in poverty, and urged the government to raise rates significantly to improve quality of life and reduce poverty-related health care costs. One individual called for aligning PWD residency requirements with those of the Medical Services Plan, increasing the shelter portion of assistance from \$500 to \$600 per month, and allowing recipients to retain Canada Pension Plan disability benefits. The Committee also heard that the spousal cap needs to be removed from PWD.

Organizations emphasized the need to raise income and disability assistance rates to better support vulnerable populations. YWCA Metro Vancouver emphasized that women—particularly Indigenous, racialized, single mothers, and newcomers—are overrepresented in low-wage, precarious work and rely heavily on assistance programs. They recommended raising assistance rates to the poverty line, indexing them to inflation, and increasing the shelter portion by at least 25 percent across all family types. Board Voice and the Centre for Family Equity Welfare echoed these calls, highlighting the urgent need to align support levels with the actual cost of living to reduce stress and improve well-being for families living below the poverty line. The Committee also heard from the Federation of Retired Union Members of BC about the need to increase assistance rates for seniors.

Other groups focused on the impact of poverty on children and people with disabilities. The First Call Child and Youth

Advocacy Society referred to a rise in BC's child poverty rate and advocated for inflation-indexed income supports and expanded rent supplements. The BC Poverty Reduction Coalition and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs both called for raising assistance rates and annual earnings exemptions, while removing spousal income caps and disincentives to work. These measures, they noted, would reduce reliance on community services and help individuals meet their needs with dignity.

Living Wage BC and Vancity both advocated for stronger provincial action on implementing a living wage. Living Wage BC noted that one in three workers in BC earn below a living wage, and recommended that living wage clauses be included in all government contracts to reduce poverty and strengthen communities. Vancity emphasized that paying a living wage supports families, builds stronger local economies, and aligns with social responsibility. The organization encouraged the province to lead by example and consider incentives such as tax credits or preferred contract status for employers who adopt living wage practices.

The Committee heard several recommendations aimed at reducing poverty and improving affordability for vulnerable populations. The BC Society for Policy Solutions emphasized the importance of increasing social investments that generate economic multiplier effects and lower the cost of living. The Realistic Success Recovery Society advocated for providing free bus passes to income assistance recipients, arguing this would directly improve their standard of living. Ecotrust Canada recommended a sustained BC Hydro bill relief initiative and proposed moving the Customer Crisis Fund under the province's purview with clearer eligibility criteria. Additionally, BC Complex Kids highlighted the financial instability faced by families raising children with medical complexity and called for a targeted poverty reduction strategy, noting that a lack of reliable care forces parents to choose between employment and caregiving.

The BC Funeral Association urged the Committee to recommend enhancing the Provincial Burial Program, which currently provides \$815 toward funeral services. They recommended increasing this amount to \$2,001 to align with the Public Guardian and Trustee's program, and ultimately to \$2,500, while removing restrictions on how funds can be used. The Association also highlighted challenges faced by families—especially in the North and the Kootenays—who are unable to supplement the benefit and must seek alternative

providers. They proposed revising the program's means test to include non-cash assets and investing in the program to expand flexibility and coverage.

## SENIORS

The Committee received recommendations surrounding senior supports. The Skeena Valley Seniors Society shared the need to invest in age-friendly policies across all sectors supporting aging seniors. The 411 Seniors Centre Society added that senior service centres provide essential data and insights to help shape government policies affecting seniors and requested investment to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of seniors' centres. North Shore Community Resources noted that it provides a suite of services to seniors and their families to help them remain in their own homes with support through the United Way. The organization noted that it is difficult to receive funding for this program and asked that the province continue funding seniors support programs through the United Way. The Seniors Services Society of BC shared that seniors are facing significant barriers to housing such as digital exclusion, mobility limitations and the complex system that is difficult for them to navigate alone. They noted that the Seniors Housing Information and Navigation Ease (SHINE) program currently operates with 8.4 FTEs across BC funded annually, which limits continuity in staffing and service delivery and needs to be supported with more funding.

## COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

The Committee discussed the importance of supporting vulnerable children and youth. In particular, the Committee emphasized the importance of providing consistent mental health support to children and youth in care, enabling them to build strong, trusting relationships with adults. Committee Members also highlighted the SAJE program for its assistance for youth when they are transitioning out of care. The Committee reflected on the concerns it heard about youth in kinship care potentially being excluded from federal and provincial support programs because the Ministry of Children and Family Development receives the Canada Child Benefit on the behalf of families in the Permanent Guardianship program.

Committee Members further noted that families of children with neurodiverse conditions, including Down syndrome, often face funding challenges that limit their access to intervention services. The Committee emphasized the importance of timely and early assessments for these children and of providing

adequate funding for them to receive the support they need. The Committee also acknowledged the critical role of Child and Youth Advocacy Centres in supporting children who have experienced abuse.

Committee Members discussed the important services that non-profit organizations provide. The Committee noted it had heard from numerous organizations about the need for capital funding support and discussed strategies to address this need, including supporting access to mortgages through multi-year grants and adjusting requirements to allow funding to be allocated toward infrastructure development. The Committee further noted it heard from many organizations that administrative expenses allowed under current contracts and grants are insufficient to meet rising operational costs. Similarly, Committee Members noted the input they received about limited grant application windows and the ongoing burden of continuous grant writing. The Committee emphasized the need for more stable, multi-year funding for non-profits and community service organizations to help with planning and staff retention (see Recommendation 9 in Economic Development), while reiterating the importance of annual reporting requirements to ensure accountability. Also with respect to staff retention, the Committee expressed concern that wage benchmarks for community service workers have not kept up with inflation or comparable sectors. Additionally, the Committee encouraged greater collaboration among non-profits to enhance coordination and improve outcomes.

Committee Members also acknowledged the important work of the Whole Way House Society in supporting seniors and veterans facing marginalization, disabilities, addiction, and mental health challenges and expressed support for programs that serve vulnerable seniors and veterans. The Committee also acknowledged the important work of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind. Regarding the request for support for the Royal Canadian Legion's Centenary celebrations in 2026, the Committee noted that regulation changes to allow the Legion to retain a higher share of their gambling revenues could help cover the costs of the celebration. Additionally, some Members highlighted the vital role of service animals and the importance of investing in guide dog organizations. Lastly, the Committee noted the importance of investing in public engagement resources, especially those tailored for youth, to strengthen democratic participation.

Regarding income and disability assistance, the Committee noted concerns raised about benefit rates, eligibility criteria, and claw back provisions. Members highlighted that addressing claw backs on income and disability assistance could improve mental health, quality of life, and economic participation for those receiving assistance. Further, the Committee noted its concern that the inclusion of partner income in eligibility assessments for assistance programs may lead individuals to stay in abusive relationships. The Committee also noted that the current application processes for many government support programs are complex and supported efforts to clarify and streamline where possible. Committee Members raised concerns that the current eligibility criteria for disability assistance may not work well for individuals who experience regular seizures, as many are unable to access benefits to help cover related costs. Finally, the Committee highlighted that the Provincial Burial Assistance Program lacks flexibility in how funds are used, does not reflect current funeral costs, and excludes non-cash assets like investments and property when assessing a decedent's estate. Members emphasized the need to review the program to ensure it is effectively supporting those most in need.

Regarding people with disabilities, the Committee highlighted the importance of ensuring accessible services for people with disabilities, including addressing staffing shortages. Members discussed the difficulties rural and remote communities face in recruiting and retaining high-demand professionals—including support workers for children and adults with disabilities—and emphasized the importance of considering strategies to assist these communities in attracting and keeping the workers they need (see Recommendation 9 in Economic Development).

Finally, the Committee emphasized the importance of ensuring food security for all British Columbians and recognized the critical role of hunger relief and food security organizations. Members highlighted the need to expand funding eligibility to include food recovery organizations and non-profits that operate outside the traditional food bank model, particularly those that deliver food to other non-profits that provide other services to individuals that are facing food insecurity.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

73. Review eligibility for federal and provincial benefits and support programs for youth in kinship care.
74. Consider increasing support services for children and youth in care and transitioning out of care, including:
  - a. consistent and accessible mental health supports; and
  - b. transition planning programs such as SAJE.
75. Provide individualized funding to all children and youth with developmental disabilities who require therapeutic interventions.
76. Provide stable, ongoing funding to Child and Youth Advocacy Centres to support their critical role in coordinating child abuse response services.
77. Stabilize the social services and non-profit sectors by:
  - a. providing stable, multi-year core funding to trusted community-based organizations;
  - b. updating contract and funding formulas to reflect current operational realities;
  - c. reducing administrative processes while maintaining client safety; and
  - d. supporting the implementation of innovative and flexible capital funding models.
78. Increase wage benchmarks for community service workers and index contracts for community service programs to the consumer price index.
79. Support programs that serve vulnerable seniors and veterans facing marginalization, disabilities, addiction, and mental health challenges.
80. Provide support to the Canadian National Institute for the Blind's Deafblind Community Services to expand its services and reduce its waitlist.
81. Provide support to the Royal Canadian Legion by allowing them to keep a greater share of gambling revenues.
82. Provide funding for the construction of a guide dog breeding and training centre.
83. Reform disability assistance by:
  - a. streamlining the application process;
  - b. increasing earnings exemptions;
  - c. ending claw backs on various income sources;
  - d. excluding partner income from eligibility calculation; and
  - e. reviewing the criteria used to determine access for individuals who suffer from regular seizures.
84. Revise the Provincial Burial Program by including non-cash assets in the means test, increasing basic service fees, and increasing funeral service funding while removing prescriptive limitations on service delivery.

# TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT

The Committee heard from British Columbians that the province should expand its active transportation infrastructure and provide additional rebates or incentives to promote active or alternative modes of transportation. Participants identified the lack of charging infrastructure as a barrier to zero-emission and electric vehicle adoption and additionally advocated for increasing the adoption of medium and heavy-duty electric vehicles. Additional funding for public transportation was recommended to increase service and routes, including funding for specific transportation projects across the province. The Committee also heard a need to increase trade enabling infrastructure that connects regions of the province to trade and commercial corridors.

## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

HUB Cycling noted that electric assisted bicycles increase cycling rates and reduce motor vehicle kilometres, but the high upfront costs of electric, adaptive, or cargo bicycles limit access for lower-income and disabled British Columbians. The organization also discussed the need for specialized, culturally relevant and age-appropriate cycling and walking education programs to improve equitable active transportation access, safety, and uptake. The organization recommended expanding means-tested rebates and financing options for electric assistance and adaptive bicycles and allocating funding for cycling and walking education programs. One individual discussed requiring license plates and fees for bicycles to contribute to the maintenance of roads and trails.

Regarding active transportation infrastructure, HUB Cycling highlighted that without additional provincial support, municipalities will be unable to deliver active transportation projects such as sidewalks and bike lanes. The Friends of Rails to Trails Vancouver Island discussed providing secure bicycle parking around transit services to support first and last mile connectivity. The organization also recommended creating an active transportation route on the rail bed of the Vancouver Island Corridor. The Trails Society of British Columbia recommended reconnecting sections of the Trans Canada Trail

between Hope and Princeton and noted that investments in connecting the trail would enable users to avoid busy and dangerous highways. Trelawny Consulting Group Ltd. recommended increasing budget oversight of transportation efficiency programs, along with additional funding to develop affordable routes to school programs.

## PORTS AND MARINE SHIPPING

The BC Ferry and Marine Workers' Union highlighted that ferries are critical for public transportation as they connect coastal communities to health care, education, and employment. The organization noted that BC Ferries faces aging vessels, deferred maintenance, and a loss of marine workers due to burnout. The BC Ferry and Marine Workers' Union recommended increasing operational funding for BC Ferries and further investments in training and wages for maritime workers. The organization also recommended developing a domestic shipbuilding strategy to build new ferries and to work with the federal government to secure ferry funding.

Regarding port terminals, the BC Marine Terminal Operators Association highlighted a need to streamline permitting for port projects by preventing overlapping or redundant provincial and federal permit review processes. Global Container Terminals Canada explained that bottlenecks in port-adjacent transportation networks, such as road-rail separations and highway infrastructure, can limit port efficiency as the province seeks to expand trade. The organization recommended investing in port-adjacent trade corridor infrastructure and prioritizing Canadian-led, private sector-partnered port infrastructure projects. The Huu-ay-aht First Nations recommended exploring the feasibility of a proposed Trans-Pacific shipment terminal on the west coast of Vancouver Island to enhance BC's trade capacity and stimulate Indigenous-led development. The Chamber of Shipping of British Columbia explained that vessel traffic in BC is expected to significantly increase by 2040 and recommended expediting vessel-strike protections at the Lions Gate Bridge

and the Ironworkers Memorial Bridge to ensure that critical infrastructure is protected.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The Committee received several submissions regarding eliminating public transportation fares. The Victoria Transit Riders Union highlighted that eliminating fares would support affordability and climate action while increasing access to health care and services. The organization alternatively suggested eliminating transit fares for anyone under 19 and for seniors, while the Federation of Retired Union Members of BC recommended eliminating fares for these groups during non-peak travel times. One individual discussed making public transportation free or significantly subsidized to increase ridership and reduce the costs of road upgrades and maintenance. Disability Alliance BC recommended streamlining the provincial bus pass program for people with disabilities to include HandyDART rides. Ecopath Planning noted that paratransit services are a crucial support that allow people to live independently and recommended increasing funding for HandyDART. ATU 1724 recommended bringing HandyDART under the public transit service model and increasing its funding to better support people with disabilities.

Regarding funding for public transportation, several participants recommended increasing funding for public transportation service providers. One individual explained that ensuring public transit is adequately funded would promote accessible, walkable, and cleaner cities. ATU 1724 recommended matching public transit funding with other provinces on a per capita basis while Living Wage BC noted that by investing in transit the province can expand public transportation to improve affordability, reduce inequalities, and increase public safety. One individual recommended that the province commit funding to BC Transit's multi-year plans to add additional routes and transit stations.

The Alma Mater Society of the University of British Columbia recommended developing an alternate funding model for TransLink to address funding deficits and expand service to student transit corridors. Ritmos Climaticos highlighted that TransLink's funding model is reliant on increasing fares, which places additional costs on riders. One individual noted that TransLink's budget shortfall threatens not just people's mobility, but also economic activity and added that Translink's funding model relies on increasing fares which creates an operational vulnerability as ridership could decrease. Another

individual recommended funding TransLink services with a car levy and reallocating insurance rebate funding into public transportation infrastructure. Ecopath Planning noted that reallocating inefficient road space used by private vehicles to rapid transit and bike routes would reduce traffic and provide healthy and affordable transportation. The organization also recommended realigning transportation funding to meet BC's climate targets and improve affordability and economic efficiency.

The City of Mission noted that additional transit funding is needed for many communities to add more buses, extend service hours, and upgrade transit stops. The city highlighted that dedicated investments into infrastructure that support transit-oriented development is also essential to align with housing densification goals and create more sustainable, connected communities. The BC Climate Emergency Campaign explained that making public transit more accessible will increase access to education, health care and employment and recommended reallocating highway infrastructure funding towards public transit service.

The Committee also received recommendations for specific public transportation projects. The Simon Fraser Student Society highlighted that the Burnaby Mountain gondola project would reduce reliance on overcrowded bus routes, shorten commute times, and offer a more reliable transportation option. Movement: Metro Vancouver Transit Riders also recommended completing the gondola project and SkyTrain extensions to the University of British Columbia (UBC). The Association of Administrative and Professional Staff at UBC recommended expanding the Broadway extension of the Millennium Line to UBC and ensuring improved public transportation in Kelowna. The University of Victoria Student Society noted that a rapid transit line along Victoria's Quadra-Mackenzie corridor would improve connectivity and reduce congestion.

## RURAL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES

The West Kootenay Climate Hub highlighted a need to fund rural public transportation and intercity buses. The Okanagan Climate Hub noted that the lack of intercity bus services affects the ability to seek health care or education and recommended providing additional funding for public transit and active transportation corridors. The North Pine Farmers Institute noted that the province's northeast roads deal with cold climates, heavy industrial uses, and unstable sub-soils and

recommended significantly increasing transportation funding in the region. One individual recommended introducing transportation connections between rural areas and airports through a regional airport transport services pilot program.

## TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

The Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce discussed the need to ensure that infrastructure funding supports export-driven growth, particularly for sectors that are vulnerable to trade disruptions like agriculture and manufacturing. The BC Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association noted that bridge infrastructure is critical due to the province's unique geography and many communities rely on bridges to connect them to main road networks. The organization recommended investing in replacing the province's aging bridges and expanding and replacing aging road networks. The City of Maple Ridge highlighted that there is currently a provincial and federal funding gap for emergency infrastructure, particularly roads, and that future transit expansions will require additional road and bridge construction.

Regarding specific transportation projects, the BC Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association recommended finishing road corridor construction from Kamloops to Alberta. The Regional District of East Kootenay noted that Highway 3 is vital for commercial trucking and recommended providing funding for additional passing lanes in Morrissey on Highway 3. The City of Quesnel recommended ensuring that the Quesnel Highway 97 interconnector project is completed, which would reroute heavy industrial traffic away from downtown Quesnel while enhancing trade by better connecting BC's north-central interior. The Huu-ay-aht First Nations recommended providing funding to enhance Bamfield Road to improve safety, emergency response, and strengthen regional connectivity.

## ZERO-EMISSION AND ELECTRIC VEHICLES

The New Car Dealers of British Columbia recommended pausing zero-emission vehicle mandate enforcement policies, which it noted will increase the purchasing cost of vehicles. For Our Kids recommended continuing to fund electric school buses and requiring that any new school buses be electric, which it noted feature lower operating and maintenance costs compared to diesel models and would reduce children's exposure to exhaust fumes. The BC Sustainable Energy Association highlighted that the province should implement policies and incentives to increase the adoption of zero-

emission heavy duty vehicles. The Pembina Institute noted that medium and heavy-duty vehicles are essential to the economy but disproportionately contribute to vehicle emissions and recommended investing in electric vehicle charging infrastructure to support personal vehicle, medium and heavy-duty vehicle, and fleet transitions. Key West Ford noted that a significant barrier to mainstream electric vehicle adoption is reliable access to charging infrastructure at home and recommended implementing policy, education, and incentive frameworks to address this. The organization also recommended amending the Strata Property Act to allow residents to install electric vehicle chargers at their own expense.

## COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

The Committee noted the outcomes of transitioning to electric vehicles and discussed reducing barriers to charger infrastructure and access, including installing charging stations within residential buildings. Members discussed the feasibility of meeting the province's zero-emission and electric vehicle mandates and deliberated on reassessing electric vehicle mandates and policies.

Regarding ports and marine shipping, the Committee emphasized the need to prioritize investment in trade-enabling transportation infrastructure near ports and along high-traffic trade or commercial corridors to support economic development. The Committee also supported infrastructure investments that strengthen regional connectivity to promote commercial and industrial growth. The Committee discussed opportunities to streamline permitting for port projects by reducing duplicative project assessment processes. Members also discussed the benefits of a domestic shipbuilding strategy to support vessel construction and the importance of implementing vessel-strike protections around critical infrastructure that experience high-levels of vessel traffic.

Regarding public transportation, the Committee acknowledged the importance of providing affordable and accessible public transportation to support population growth and balance climate goals. Members highlighted that public transportation is vital for many people's access to employment and education, while noting that rural and remote communities lack regular public transportation service. Members discussed providing free or subsidized transit fares but recognized the significant financial pressures currently faced by transit service providers. To address these issues, the Committee discussed

alternative funding models and the potential consolidation of transit service providers to improve transit service equity across the province.

The Committee emphasized the importance of paratransit services like HandyDART and discussed how to improve transportation for people with disabilities. Members highlighted that rural and remote communities are often served by a single HandyDART bus which severely limits

the mobility of people with disabilities in these regions that additionally lack public transit service. The Committee considered the feasibility of integrating HandyDART under public transit with a focus on enhancing service delivery. Ultimately, the Committee supported a review of the provincial public transit service model to examine alternative funding and management models and how to deliver more equitable transportation across the province.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that the provincial government:

85. Prioritize trade-enabling transportation infrastructure near ports and along trade corridors to strengthen trade efficiency and regional connectivity.
86. Conduct a review of the public transit service model, including:
  - a. exploring alternative, long-term funding models for public transit service providers;
  - b. examining alternative governance and management models; and
  - c. reviewing HandyDART operations for opportunities to enhance service delivery.

# SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

## ADVANCED EDUCATION

1. Conduct a comprehensive review of post-secondary funding, including the exploration of innovative and flexible funding models, an assessment of the Tuition Limit Policy, and a review of practices that circumvent tuition limits, to promote institutional sustainability and ensure accessible, affordable education.
2. Prioritize funding to support post-secondary institutions that are advancing innovative solutions to meet local and regional workforce development priorities.

## ARTS, LIBRARIES AND SPORT

3. Provide sustained grant funding for fairs, festivals, and sporting events, including e-sporting events, while expanding support for the Destination Events Program.
4. Review tax measures and other incentives to support and promote film production, including amending the requirement for 51 percent Canadian ownership of intellectual property.
5. Establish permanent funding to support cultural institutions and First Nations to engage in the work of repatriating cultural belongings.
6. Provide increased stable annual funding for libraries to address capital and operational issues, including infrastructure, technology, and staffing.
7. Increase access to lifeguard training and swim-for-survival programs to support safe swimming and prevent drowning.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

8. Seek out and invest in opportunities that promote value-addition and unlock unrealized economic activity, including:
  - a. investments toward strengthening provincial food production, processing, and distribution capacity and supportive agricultural water infrastructure;
  - b. expanding the BC Farmers' Market Nutrition Coupon Program to address food insecurity and support local farmers; and
  - c. exploring a refundable biomass investment tax credit and streamlining processes to access wildfire-burned areas to harvest forestry resources.

9. Expand program initiatives and incentives to keep high-demand professions in rural and remote areas, including:
  - a. medical professionals;
  - b. teachers;
  - c. early childhood educators; and
  - d. support workers for children and adults with disabilities.
10. Increase core funding to the BC Labour Relations Board to reduce case backlogs and hire additional industrial relations officers to ensure prompt access to collective bargaining and effective dispute resolution processes.
11. Finalize interprovincial trade agreements that include mutual recognition of goods and services to enhance domestic trade integration, economic efficiency, and competitiveness.

## ENVIRONMENT

12. Review and enhance heat-pump rebates and energy efficiency programs to ensure alignment with current installation costs and include specific considerations for rural and remote area energy needs to reduce reliance on gas or propane heating systems.
13. Consider providing builders with a one-time rebate to cover transition costs to implement the Zero Carbon Step Code.
14. Dedicate additional funding to prevent the introduction of invasive mussels into the province.

15. Ensure equity between BC Parks' operating dates for parks in rural and remote areas, and those in urban areas.
16. Review the following provincial charges to ensure alignment with other provinces:
  - a. hunting and fishing license surcharges and the portion of these fees being dedicated fish and wildlife conservation initiatives;
  - b. BC Parks campsite fees and the dedication of fees to supporting campsite maintenance and improvements; and
  - c. water rental rates and the portion of these rates being dedicated to strengthening water management, including drinking water protection and watershed monitoring.

## FISCAL AND REGULATORY POLICY

17. Consider increasing access to Health Canada-approved nicotine pouches by allowing their sale alongside tobacco products as a smoking cessation aid.
18. Exempt the collection of the PST on emergency vehicles and small-scale farm equipment used for food production.
19. Consider indexing the exemption threshold for the employer health tax to inflation.
20. Review the fuel tax system to consider exempting auto and wholesale propane, and reinstating exemptions for seafood harvesters and commercial fishers.
21. Raise the threshold of the luxury vehicle tax to better reflect the average price of vehicles in BC.
22. Review the thresholds for provincial markup rates on beer, to create a more equitable taxation model for craft breweries.
23. Regulate a secure online gaming sector that prioritizes responsible play, consumer protection, and strong anti-money laundering safeguards.
24. Review the five-day mandatory sick leave policy and structure.
25. Accelerate the implementation of prompt payment legislation.

26. Provide access to local BC Liquor Stores for small regional liquor producers and allow independent theatres to sell alcohol to customers.

## HEALTH

27. Increase targeted investments in the prevention, early diagnosis, and effective treatment of chronic diseases and complex conditions.
28. Develop a provincial strategy for the identification, treatment, and long-term support of people with acquired brain injuries, including the development of a centre of excellence to advance research and implement best practices throughout the province.
29. Provide funding for home and community care services and prioritize the management and coordination of transitions from hospital care to other forms of care, including home care, long-term care or other community-oriented care options, recognizing the unique challenges of rural, remote, and northern communities.
30. Invest in end-of-life care, including providing core funding for hospice societies and increased funding for palliative care, and increasing access to bereavement, grief, and counselling programs.
31. Support the establishment of community health centres in rural and remote communities.
32. Expand access to health care by further investing in digital health care solutions, including:
  - a. virtual health care, including to virtual opioid dependency programs; and,
  - b. access to patient information for both health care professionals and patients.
33. Improve transportation options, including public transit, intercity transit services, and air options, for patients in rural and remote communities to access health care.
34. Review funding across government ministries and health authorities to ensure equitable funding assistance for mobility and accessibility equipment including prosthetics.
35. Invest in enhanced safety measures to protect health care professionals in hospitals and other health care settings.

- 36. Continue to identify and implement innovative ways to reduce administrative burdens for family physicians, including team-based care, through consultation with the BC College of Family Physicians.
- 37. Increase the involvement and scope of practice of allied health workforce professionals, in line with other Canadian jurisdictions and in consultation with their professional associations.
- 38. Expedite approval and prioritize a predictable timeline of coverage under BC PharmaCare for new medicines approved by Health Canada.
- 39. Expand BC PharmaCare coverage to provide equitable access to medications and devices including automated insulin delivery systems for people with diabetes and ofatumumab (Kesimpta) and ocrelizumab (Ocrevus) for the treatment of relapsing multiple sclerosis.
- 40. Amend Fair PharmaCare coverage to include a prosthetic and orthotic plan and include prosthodontics in the list of approved prostheses for people who have cancer.
- 41. Expand MSP coverage to include essential health services that currently fall outside the plan, including:
  - a. restorative facial, oral, and dental surgery for individuals with congenital medical conditions; and
  - b. pain management related to IUD insertion.
- 42. Increase the funding limit to reflect rising costs for the Severe Oligodontia Funding Initiative.
- 43. Expand MSP supplementary benefits to increase the number of paramedical and mental health visits a year, increase the dollar amount of coverage per visit, and increase the income eligibility threshold.
- 44. Expand access to hearing aids and to audiology and speech-language pathology services for seniors.
- 45. Renew education and testing efforts for HIV and Hepatitis C.
- 46. Increase funding for at risk age groups to receive the shingles vaccine.

## HOUSING

- 47. Maintain programs supporting municipal infrastructure and regional planning and review development cost structures to allow for reduced or flexible fees, including exempting undeveloped residential land with active rezoning, development, or building permit applications from the additional school tax.
- 48. Expand the Home Renovation Tax Credit to support accessibility renovations and retrofits for seniors and people with disabilities.
- 49. Increase the supply and affordability of post-secondary student housing on or near campuses across the province.
- 50. Invest in integrated, recovery-oriented models of supportive housing that include post-treatment options for sober or dry occupancy.
- 51. Ensure severe weather shelter services are available on a year-round basis.

## K-12 EDUCATION AND CHILD CARE

- 52. Prioritize capital funding to address K-12 school infrastructure issues such as seismic upgrades and accessibility, and explore innovative solutions for capital infrastructure, including the use of mixed-use spaces.
- 53. Prioritize the mental health and physical safety of school staff.
- 54. Strengthen inclusive education by ensuring timely student assessments and providing sufficient staffing for safe and effective student support.
- 55. Continue to work towards providing primary classrooms with an education assistant and schools with a dedicated counsellor to support student well-being and learning.
- 56. Provide targeted funding to enhance K-12 programs that focus on introducing and expanding pathways into the skilled trades and health care.
- 57. Prioritize the expansion of child care facilities and the diversification of child care options to meet the different needs of the workforce, including by improving the recruitment and retention of early childhood educators.

## MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

58. Establish an integrated database to register and monitor addiction treatment and recovery services, enabling evidence-based evaluation of the effectiveness and accessibility of these services.
59. Ensure equitable funding for addiction treatment facilities across health authorities and contracts and revise income eligibility thresholds to improve access to publicly funded treatment centres.
60. Improve access to mental health services in underserved areas.
61. Increase funding for counselling services for children and youth who have experienced domestic, gender-based, and inter-familial violence.
62. Increase funding for involuntary and institutional care, including the expansion of long-term care beds, psychiatric care facilities, and comprehensive wrap-around health and substance use recovery services, supported by adequate staffing.

## PUBLIC SAFETY AND JUSTICE

63. Provide funding to increase the capacity of courts, including:
  - a. diverting some non-criminal matters out of regular court chambers;
  - b. continuing to fund early resolution processes;
  - c. investing in court digital resources; and
  - d. hiring additional Crown prosecutors.
64. Increase support for family-related legal matters, including by providing additional funding to the Child Support Recalculation Service and legal aid, and expanding Legal Aid Limited Representation Contracts to cover counsel for attendance at mediation.
65. Increase the targeted enforcement capacity of provincial law enforcement to combat contraband tobacco, vapes, and cannabis with a specific focus on seizure operations.
66. Improve supports for 9-1-1 response, including:
  - a. reviewing the E-Comm 9-1-1 funding model to explore supplemental funding options for municipalities such as collecting a levy on cellphones; and
67. Expand inclusive gender-based violence and sexual assault prevention and education programs to reach vulnerable communities.
68. Improve supports for victims of intimate partner violence, including:
  - a. implementing an intimate partner violence death review committee;
  - b. providing community-based victim service workers access to a centralized information hub, such as an integrated justice case management system; and
  - c. increasing funding for women's transitional housing and prioritizing access to housing for women and children fleeing intimate partner violence.
69. Invest in efforts to combat human trafficking, exploitation, and sexual assaults by increasing the provincial authorized strength of the RCMP, enhancing interprovincial cooperation, and engaging with community-based organizations that support individuals with lived experience in sexual exploitation.
70. Fund a centralized reservation platform that connects evacuees with emergency accommodations, including hotels and campgrounds.
71. Invest in enhanced communication and coordination between ministries, municipalities, and non-profit organizations working with underground infrastructure to protect provincial and municipal assets.
72. Expand support for responding to natural disasters and emergencies, including wildfires and flooding, such as launching a quantum and AI wildfire detection, preparedness, and emergency response pilot program.

## SOCIAL SERVICES

73. Review eligibility for federal and provincial benefits and support programs for youth in kinship care.
74. Consider increasing support services for children and youth in care and transitioning out of care, including:
  - a. consistent and accessible mental health supports; and
  - b. transition planning programs such as SAJE.

75. Provide individualized funding to all children and youth with developmental disabilities who require therapeutic interventions.
76. Provide stable, ongoing funding to Child and Youth Advocacy Centres to support their critical role in coordinating child abuse response services.
77. Stabilize the social services and non-profit sectors by:
  - a. providing stable, multi-year core funding to trusted community-based organizations;
  - b. updating contract and funding formulas to reflect current operational realities;
  - c. reducing administrative processes while maintaining client safety; and
  - d. supporting the implementation of innovative and flexible capital funding models.
78. Increase wage benchmarks for community service workers and index contracts for community service programs to the consumer price index.
79. Support programs that serve vulnerable seniors and veterans facing marginalization, disabilities, addiction, and mental health challenges.
80. Provide support to the Canadian National Institute for the Blind's Deafblind Community Services to expand its services and reduce its waitlist.
81. Provide support to the Royal Canadian Legion by allowing them to keep a greater share of gambling revenues.
82. Provide funding for the construction of a guide dog breeding and training centre.
83. Reform disability assistance by:
  - a. streamlining the application process;
  - b. increasing earnings exemptions;
  - c. ending claw backs on various income sources;
  - d. excluding partner income from eligibility calculation; and
  - e. reviewing the criteria used to determine access for individuals who suffer from regular seizures.
84. Revise the Provincial Burial Program by including non-cash assets in the means test, increasing basic service fees, and increasing funeral service funding while removing prescriptive limitations on service delivery.

## TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT

85. Prioritize trade-enabling transportation infrastructure near ports and along trade corridors to strengthen trade efficiency and regional connectivity.
86. Conduct a review of the public transit service model, including:
  - a. exploring alternative, long-term funding models for public transit service providers;
  - b. examining alternative governance and management models; and
  - c. reviewing HandyDART operations for opportunities to enhance service delivery.

# APPENDIX A: CONSULTATION PARTICIPANTS

411 Seniors Centre Society	ATU 1724	BC Dairy
Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce	Tunya Audain	BC Dental Association
Abbotsford Community Foundation	Shaun August	BC Disability Collaborative
Abbott Rapid Diagnostics	Autism Support Network of BC	BC DPAC Coalition
AbbVie	Axon Canada	BC Employment Standards Coalition
Aboriginal Front Door Society	Tyler Bacon	BC Epilepsy Society
Aboriginal Housing Management Association	Heide-Anna Baer	BC Federation of Labour
Access BC	Sally Bardossy	BC Federation of Students
Adrienne Acton	Battered Women's Support Services	BC Ferry & Marine Workers' Union
Advanced Biofuels Canada	BC Agriculture Council	BC Gaming Industry Association
Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of British Columbia	BC Alliance for Arts + Culture	BC General Employees' Union
Samantha Agtarap	BC Alliance for Healthy Living	BC Hepatitis Network
Air Rescue One Heli Winch Society	BC and Alberta Guide Dogs	BC Hockey League
AIRS Program	BC Apparel & Gear Association	BC Hospice Palliative Care Association
Alberni Valley Outdoor Club	BC Association for Child Development and Intervention	BC Humanist Association
Alma Mater Society of the University of British Columbia	BC Association of Community Health Centres	BC Insulators 118
Alzheimer Society of BC	BC Association of Farmers' Markets	BC Landscape & Nursery Association
Ancient Forest Alliance	BC Bad Date & Aggressor Reporting Project	BC Libraries Cooperative
Lynell Anderson	BC Building Trades	BC Library Association
Appraisal Institute of Canada - British Columbia	BC Care Providers Association	BC Library Trustees Association
Archway Community Services	BC Cattlemen's Association	BC Lodging and Campgrounds Association
Archway Society for Domestic Peace	BC Centre for Women in the Trades	BC Lung Foundation
Stephen Armitage	BC CEO Network	BC Lymphedema Association
Abigail Armstrong	BC Chamber of Commerce	BC Marine Terminal Operators Association
ARPA Canada	BC Chiropractic Association	BC Marine Trails Network Association
Arthritis Research Canada	BC Climate Emergency Campaign	BC Museums Association
Arthritis Society Canada	BC Coalition of Arts, Culture, and Heritage	BC Music Festival Collective
Association for Mineral Exploration	BC College of Family Physicians	BC Nature
Association of Administrative and Professional Staff at UBC	BC Colleges	BC Naturopathic Doctors
Association of BC Public Library Directors	BC Common Ground Alliance	BC Network of Child and Youth Advocacy Centres
Association of Book Publishers of BC	BC Community Schools Alliance Society	BC Non-Profit Housing Association
Association of Fundraising Professionals (Greater Vancouver Chapter)	BC Complex Kids	BC People First Society
Association of Interior Realtors	BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils	BC Pharmacy Association
Association of Service Providers for Employability and Career Training	BC Construction Association	BC Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association
	BC Council of Forest Industries	BC Pulp & Paper Coalition
	BC Cowboy Hall of Fame	BC Real Estate Association
	BC Craft Brewers Guild	BC Recreation and Parks Association

BC Rehabilitation and Recovery Strategy	Building Owners and Managers Association of British Columbia	Cement Association of Canada
BC Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association	Bulkley Valley Community Foundation	Centre for Family Equity
BC Rural Health Network	Sacia Burton	Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs
BC Salmon Farmers Association	Business Council of British Columbia	Century House: Time for Change
BC Schizophrenia Society	Business Improvement Areas of BC	Cerebral Palsy Sports Association of BC
BC School Trustees Association	Butterfly Run BC	Chamber of Shipping of British Columbia
BC Shellfish Growers Association	Sue Cairns	Chandrawansa Lahiru
BC Snowmobile Federation	Camosun College Faculty Association	Chartered Professional Accountants of British Columbia
BC Soccer Association	Canadian Addiction Treatment Centres	Chemistry Industry Association of Canada
BC Society for Policy Solutions	Canadian Association of Medical Radiation Technologists (BC Division)	Chilliwack Community Services
BC Society of Transition Houses	Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers	Jesse Chilton
BC SPCA	Canadian Association of Physician Assistants	Rita Chudnovsky
BC Sustainable Energy Association	Canadian Bankers Association	City of Castlegar
BC Teachers' Federation	Canadian Bar Association (BC Branch)	City of Fort St. John
BC Tech	Canadian Cancer Society	City of Kelowna
BC Water Legacy	Canadian Federation of Independent Business	City of Maple Ridge
BC Watershed Security Coalition	Canadian Groundfish Research and Conservation Society	City of Mission
BC Wildlife Federation	Canadian Home Builders' Association of BC	City of Penticton
BC/Yukon Command of the Royal Canadian Legion	Canadian Institute of Steel Construction - BC Region	City of Prince George
BCED Access Society	Canadian International Dragon Boat Festival Society	City of Prince Rupert
BCRTA	Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association	City of Quesnel
Giulia Belotti	Canadian Media Producers Association	City of Terrace
Angela Birnie	Canadian Men's Health Foundation	City of Vancouver
Rocky Blondin	Canadian Mental Health Association (Kootenays Branch)	CityHive Youth Engagement Society
Board of Vancouver Public Library	Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division	CityReach Care Society
Board Voice	Canadian Mortgage Brokers Association - BC	Clayoquot Biosphere Trust
Nicole Boon	Canadian Online Gaming Association	Clean Energy BC
Aphrodite Bouikidis	Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (BC Chapter)	Clements Centre Society
Boundary Forest Watershed Stewardship Society	Canadian Propane Association	CNIB Deafblind Community Services
Brain Injury Alliance	Canadian Society for Disability and Oral Health	Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC
Breakfast Club of Canada	Canuck Place Children's Hospice Society	Coast Forest Policy Coalition
Breakthrough T1D	Capilano Students' Union	Coast Funds
Kate Breckon	Capilano University	Coast Mental Health
Brentwood Park Elementary Parent Advisory Committee	CareRx Pharmacy	Coastal Jazz and Blues Society
Isabella Brenzinger	Joanne Carman	Saverio Colasanto
British Columbia Association for Behaviour Analysis	Castlegar Parks and Trails Society	College of New Caledonia Students' Union
British Columbia Association of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture Practitioners		College of the Rockies
British Columbia Funeral Association		College of the Rockies Faculty Association
Hugh Brown		Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy
Jocelyn Brown		Columbia Valley Community Foundation
Katijane Brunet		Communitas Supportive Care Society
Lee Bryant		Community Foundation South Okanagan Similkameen
		Community Futures North Okanagan
		Conayt Friendship Centre Society

Concrete BC	Geoffrey Dean	Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC
Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC	Richard Deane	Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC, Climate Action Standing Committee
Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique	Deep Sea Trawlers Association of BC	Federation of Retired Union Members of BC
Consultant Specialists of British Columbia	Mike Dewing	Fernie Trails Alliance
Contract Worker Justice @SFU	Diabetes Canada	First Call Child and Youth Advocacy Society
Convenience Industry Council of Canada	Digital Global Innovation Cluster	First Things First Okanagan
Coquitlam Foundation	Directors Guild of Canada	First West Credit Union
Core Education and Fine Arts Early Learning	Disability Alliance BC	Food Banks BC
Cornerstone Youth Society	District of Kitimat	Food Stash Foundation
Corpus Christi College	District of Port Hardy	For Our Kids
Cortes Island Community Foundation	Marcia Doherty	For Our Kids (Burnaby Chapter)
Darcelle Cottons	Domtar	Foresight Canada
Council of Canadian Innovators	Sarah Doty	Former Youth in Care Community of Practice
Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC	Douglas Students' Union	Fort St. John Public Library
Cowichan Green Community	Down Syndrome Resource Foundation	FortisBC
Cowichan Tribes	Down Syndrome Society of BC	Tim Franko
Cowichan Valley Regional District	Dr. REM Lee Hospital Foundation	Fraser Basin Council
Cowichan Watershed Board	Dress for Success Vancouver	Chloe Fraser
CPAWS-BC	Kristen Drozda	Taylor Fraser
Margaret Crawford	Alanah Duffy	Fraser Valley Brain Injury Association
Penny Crawford	Beth Campbell Duke	Fraser Valley Mountain Bikers Association
Dianne Crisp	D-Wave Quantum	Harper Friedman
Barb Culbard	Dynacare	Friends of Cypress Provincial Park Society
CUPE BC	Early Childhood Educators of BC	Friends of Rails too Trails Vancouver Island
CUPE Local 1260	East Kootenay Climate Hub	Futurpreneur Canada
CUPE Local 1936	Ecole Peter Greer Elementary	Denise Gagnon
CUPE Local 2278	E-Comm 9-1-1	Galint Gaming Inc.
CUPE Local 374	Ecopath Planning	Ian Gartshore
CUPE Local 3742	Ecotrust Canada	Danielle Gauld
CUPE Local 402	Edwards Lifesciences (Canada) Inc.	John Geddes
CUPE Local 4653	Electrical Contractors Association of BC	Rick Gee
CUPE Local 4879	Roger Elmes	Genome BC
CUPE Local 5536	Emergency Communications Professionals of BC	Georgia Strait Alliance
CUPE Local 723	Emily Carr Students' Union	Geoscience BC
CUPE Local 728	Encompass Support Services Society	Geothermal Rising Canada
CUPE Metro Vancouver District Council	Ending Violence Association of BC	Gilead Sciences Canada
Curl BC	Energy Storage Canada	Nicole Gladish
CWB Group	Engaged Communities Canada Society	Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women Canada
Shelley Dagorne	English Language Learners Consortium	Global Container Terminals Canada
Dan's Legacy	Exposed Wildlife Conservancy	Lori Goldman
Shannon Dass	Faculty Association of the College of New Caledonia	
David Pel & Company Inc.	Fairness for Children Raised by Relatives	
David Suzuki Foundation	Family Services of Greater Vancouver	
Nathan Davidowicz	Family Support Institute of BC	
Nikita Dawe	FarmWatch Richmond	
	Kelly Favro	
	Federated Co-operations Limited	
	Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC	

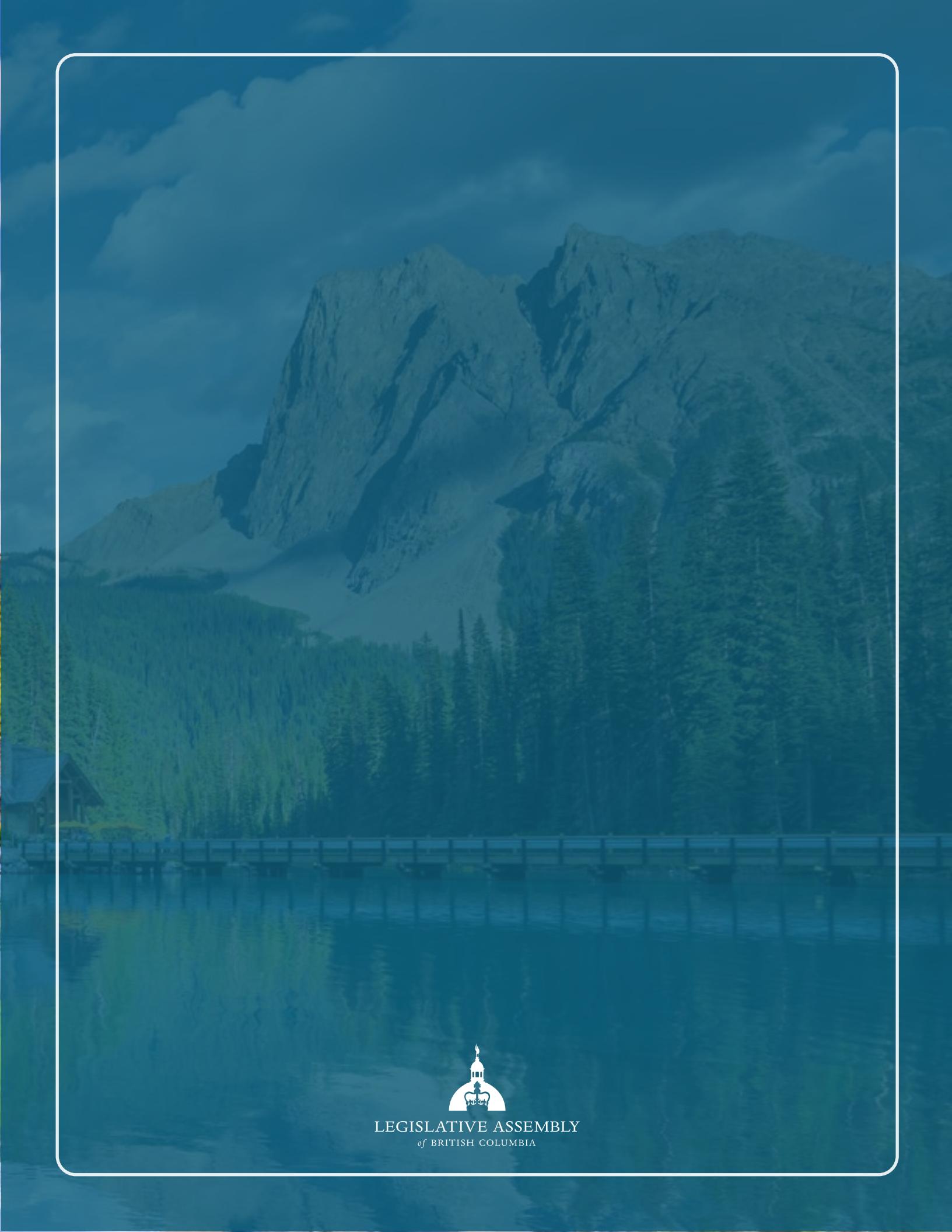
Jessica Gordon  
Graduate Student Society (SFU)  
Robert Grant  
Great Blue Heron Society  
Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Vancouver Board of Trade  
Greater Vancouver Professional Theatre Alliance  
Aaron GreyCloud II  
GSK Canada  
H.R. MacMillan Space Centre  
Karen FisherHagel  
Wendy Harmer  
Susan Harney  
Health Sciences Association of BC  
Heart and Stroke Foundation  
HeartLife Foundation  
Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Institution of Canada  
Julia Hein  
David Heinemann  
Heritage BC  
Dana Hibbard  
Renata Hindle  
Hispanic Canadian Chamber of Commerce  
HME Home Health  
David Hodgins  
Homes for Living  
Hope Air  
Hope for Freedom Society  
Hornby Water Stewardship  
Hospital Employees' Union  
Laura House  
HUB Cycling  
Huu-ay-aht First Nations  
ILTCCABC  
immunize.io  
Imperial Tobacco Canada  
Inclusion BC  
Inclusion Chilliwack Society  
Innergex Renewable Energy  
Innovative Medicines Canada  
Institute for Public Education BC  
Insurance Bureau of Canada  
International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Local 168  
Invasive Species Council of BC  
Invasive Species Council of Metro Vancouver

Bill Irving  
Island Coastal Economic Trust  
JTI Macdonald Corp.  
Justice Institute Students' Union Society  
Kaslo Community Acupuncture Society  
Allison Kermode  
Kermode Friendship Society  
Key West Ford  
Kids Brain Health Network  
KidSport BC  
Kilby Historic Site  
David King  
Kitimat Airshed Group  
Kitselas First Nation Treaty Information Source  
Tyler Klinkhammer  
Rob Knight  
Claudia Knos  
Sandra Ko  
Stephanie Ko  
Mari Komatsu  
Kootenay Boundary Patient Advisory Committee and Community  
Kootenay Outdoor Recreation Enterprise  
Grace Kramer  
Daniel Kreines  
Amanda Kurowski  
Matt Kurowski  
Paul Kwon  
Peter Labanic  
Meika Lalonde  
Langara Faculty Association  
Otto Langer  
Langley Community Health & Hospital Foundation  
Langley Foundation  
Sara Langlois  
Anne Lavack  
Orenda LeBlanc  
Genevieve Lefebvre  
Emily Lehnen  
Denysa Leung  
Life Sciences BC  
Living in Community  
Living Wage BC  
Billie Loewen  
Matthew Loh  
Chad Lund  
LUSH Valley Food Action Society  
Annie Macanulty

Brenden MacDonald  
Duncan MacIntyre  
Carolyn Mackie  
Kate MacMillan  
Christine Malaka  
Tosha Mallette  
Gagan Manchanda  
Manufacturing Safety Alliance of BC  
Maple Ridge Pitt Meadows Community Services  
March of Dimes Canada  
Renay Maurice  
Cheryl McCarthy  
Bailey McGuire  
Margaret McKenzie  
ME FM Society of BC  
Mechanical Contractors Association of BC  
Medicines Access Coalition BC  
Diane Meek  
Mental Health Recovery Partners - South Island  
Merck Canada  
Metis Nation BC  
Metro Vancouver  
Michael Smith Health Research BC  
Mid Island Farmers Institute  
Gary Mills  
Onni Milne  
Mining Association of BC  
Moderna Biopharma Canada Corporation  
Joey Mok  
Monashee Trail Society  
Mitchell Morales  
Mortgage Professionals Canada  
Mosaic BC  
MOSAIC Surrey Early Learning Center Motion  
Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region  
Movement of United Professionals  
Movement: Metro Vancouver Transit Riders  
Municipality of North Cowichan  
Bruce Murdoch  
Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin  
Museum of Vancouver  
Nanaimo Regional Hospital District  
National Coalition Against Contraband Tobacco

National Police Federation	Praxis Spinal Cord Institute	School District No. 41 (Burnaby)
Nature United	Judith Price	School District No. 42 (Maple Ridge - Pitt Meadows)
Nechako Watershed Roundtable	Prisoners' Legal Services	School District No. 46 Board of Education (Sunshine Coast)
Nelson and District Arts Council	ProArt Alliance of Greater Victoria	School District No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay)
Nelson Public Library	Prosthetics and Orthotics Association of BC	School District No. 59 (Peace River South)
New Car Dealers of British Columbia	Public Health Association of BC	School District No. 60 (Peace River North)
New Westminster Climate Action Hub	Pulmonary Hypertension Association of Canada	School District No. 62 (Sooke)
Next Gen Men	QMUNITY	School District No. 71 (Comox Valley)
North Island College Faculty Association	Quad Riders ATV Association of BC	James Schultz
North Okanagan Cycling Society	Quadra Island Foundation	Tamara Schwartzentruber
North Shore Community Resources	Quesnel Cattlemen's Association	Science World
John Michael Northcote	Quesnel Rodeo Club	Screen BC (MPPIA)
Northern Confluence Initiative	R J Anderson & Associates Ltd.	SelfDesign Learning Foundation
Nuqo Modular	Thomas Radcliffe	Selkirk College Student Union
Tara-Joan Nyhan	Rainbow Refugee	Seniors Services Society of BC
Office of the Seniors Advocate	Raincoast Conservation Foundation	SenseNet
Morgane Oger MSM BASc	Raven Creations	Shopland Ian
Okanagan Basin Water Board	Tarla Razzaghi	Sikh Heritage BC
Okanagan Climate Hub	Regional District of East Kootenay	Sikman Darko
Okanagan College Students' Union	Aeron Renstad	Simon Fraser Student Society
Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society	Research Universities Council of BC	Simon Fraser University
Okanagan Transit Alliance	Resource Works Society	Skeena Valley Seniors Society
Roberta Olenick	reThink Community Education	Skilled Trades Training Council
Karla Olson	Revelstoke Snowmobile Club	Gillian Smart
Laura Lee Onslow	Graham Rhodes	Taylor So
Options for Sexual Health	Christopher Richardson	Ae Jung Kang Song
Melissa Orobko	Richmond Community Foundation	Speech and Hearing BC
Osprey Community Foundation	Heather Ritchie	Kathy Sperling
Outdoor Recreation Council of BC	Ritmos Climaticos	Spinal Cord Injury BC
Ovarian Cancer Canada	Rivershed Society of British Columbia	Sport BC
Pacific Association of Institutes and Universities	Karin Roberts	Spruce City Wildlife Association
Pacific Immigrant Resources Society	Dave Robinson	Joanna Spurling
Pacific National Exhibition	Ronald McDonald House BC & Yukon	Stand.earth
Pacific Salmon Foundation	Kaera Ross	Sarah Stewart
Pacifica Housing Advisory Association	Rothmans, Benson & Hedges Inc	Strand
PAN	Royal Roads University	Students' Union of University of British Columbia Okanagan
Parents 4 Climate Victoria	RTOERO	Students' Union of Vancouver Community College
Parkinson Society BC	Saanich Neighbourhood Place	Sunshine Coast Foundation
Ankur Patel	Grae Salisbury	Surfrider Foundation Canada
Peachland Watershed Protection Alliance	Salt Spring Island Foundation	SurreyCares Community Foundation
Pearson Canada	Save Our Forest Team Comox Valley	Take a Hike Foundation
Robert Peart	Save Our Northern Seniors	Tamitik Status of Women
Pembina Institute	School District No. 20 (Kootenay Columbia)	Tansi Friendship Centre Society
Bob Perkins	School District No. 23 (Central Okanagan)	
Phoenix Foundation	School District No. 28 (Quesnel)	
Physiotherapy Association of BC	School District No. 38 (Richmond)	
Andrea Piccinin		
Willam Piggott		
POLIS Project on Ecological Governance		

Kevin Tate  
Tax Executives Institute  
Technology Professionals BC  
TELUS  
Tennis BC  
The Canadian Association of Retired Persons  
The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking  
The Centre for Child Development of the Lower Mainland  
The Centre for Epilepsy and Seizure Education in British Columbia  
The Federation of Community Social Services of BC  
The Guide Outfitters Association of BC  
The Lower Fraser Floodplains Coalition  
The North Pine Farmers Institute  
The Realistic Success Recovery Society  
The Starfish Canada  
The Treehouse Vancouver Child and Youth Advocacy Centre  
The Visual Thinking Company  
Vicky Thomas  
Thompson Rivers University  
Thompson Rivers University Adventure Studies Department  
Thompson Rivers University Students' Union  
Thompson-Nicola Regional District  
Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre  
TNRD  
Together Against Poverty Society  
Brie Toporowski  
Tourism Industry Association of BC  
Trails Society of British Columbia  
Trans Canada Trail  
Trelawny Consulting Group Ltd.  
Trial Lawyers Association of BC  
Triathlon BC  
TRRUST Collective Impact  
Turo  
UBC Okanagan  
Union Gospel Mission  
Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs  
Union of British Columbia Performers  
United Way British Columbia  
University of British Columbia  
University of Northern British Columbia  
University of Victoria  
University of Victoria Faculty Association  
Usher Ron  
UVic Student Society  
Vancity  
Vancity Credit Union  
Vancouver Food Runners  
Vancouver Foundation  
Vancouver Island Counselling Centre for Immigrants and Refugees  
Vancouver Island North Film Commission  
Vancouver Island Region Restorative Justice Association  
Vancouver Island Regional Library  
Vancouver Island Strata Owners Association  
Vancouver Island University Students' Union  
Vancouver Island Water Watch Coalition  
Vancouver Maritime Centre for Climate  
Vancouver Maritime Museum  
Vancouver Prostate Centre  
Vancouver School Board  
Vancouver Today  
Vantage Point  
Victoria Brain Injury Society  
Victoria Child Abuse Prevention & Counselling Centre  
Victoria Chinatown Museum Society  
Victoria Golden Rods and Reels Fishing Club  
Victoria Residential Builders Association  
Victoria Sexual Assault Centre  
Victoria Transit Riders Union  
Victoria Women's Transition House Society  
Village of Fruitvale  
VisionQuest Recovery Society  
Liz Walker  
Watershed Watch Salmon Society  
Webb Linda  
Wesgroup Properties  
West Coast Environmental Law  
West Kootenay Climate Hub  
West Vancouver Community Foundation  
Western Canada Mountain Bike Tourism Association  
Western Front  
Whistler Community Foundation  
Whitevalley Community Resource Centre  
Whole Way House Society  
Dalyce Wickett  
Tessa Wiehr  
Taylor Wilcox  
Wildsight  
Robert Winston  
Wondrous Tree Fellowship  
Kathleen Woodley  
World Wildlife Fund Canada  
Cathy Yan  
Liu Qing Ye  
YMCA's of BC  
Young BC Greens  
Fraser Young  
Mike Younie  
Youth Climate Corps BC  
Becca (Yu) Lewis  
YWCA Metro Vancouver  
Naghme Zebardast  
ZED Kyshan Homes Ltd  
Zero Waste BC



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
*of* BRITISH COLUMBIA