

October 15, 2020

Confederation of Canadian Unions questionnaire – responses:

Labour

1. The COVID pandemic has put workers in numerous industries at enormous risk. For those lucky enough to have kept their jobs, many report wage cutbacks or reduced working hours. While those suffering from unemployment created by the pandemic are surviving on the bare minimum. What actions will your party take to protect working people and keep them safe from COVID, both on and off the job?

In the first six months of the pandemic, John Horgan and the BC NDP government worked with WorkSafeBC to establish workplace safety plans for all workplaces and launched our COVID-19 Action Plan, investing more than \$8 billion in services and supports. If re-elected a BC NDP government will expand its COVID-19 Action Plan to help create more security for everyone in British Columbia:

- Our Action Plan will stay in place, as we leverage the progress we've made in improving health services with new ideas to help keep people safe.
- Providing free COVID-19 vaccines when approved and available.
- Demanding action by the federal government on paid sick leave.
- Getting BC ready for fall and winter: To make sure BC is ready for further phases of COVID-19 while also battling a new flu season, our \$1.6 billion preparedness plan will deliver: 7,000 new front-line health care workers in long-term care and assisted living; 2 million doses of flu vaccines; and, a new Hospital at Home program so patients can get safe care while in the comfort of their homes, and taking pressure off hospitals.
- A long-term economic recovery plan: People have told us that to move forward, our province can't go back to the way things were under the BC Liberals – where tax cuts for those at the top left everyone else behind. Our economic recovery plan includes over \$1.5 billion in supports for jobs, skills training, and business recovery.
- Preparing British Columbia for the next one. As part of our Action Plan, we're going to continue developing a pandemic prevention plan that brings to BC state-of-the-art testing, contact tracing, and hospital management procedures and technology.
- Our platform also includes the BC Recovery Benefit, which provides a \$1,000 tax free benefit to every family in British Columbia making under \$125K per year.

2. Statistics Canada reports unionized workers receive higher wages than non-unionized workers in the same line of work, as well as stronger pensions, safer working conditions, longer paid vacation time, better health and drug benefits, and more rights in the workplace. Does your party believe that unions play a positive role in our economy? If so, what policies will your party implement to create a climate that is easier for unions to organize?

Yes, unions are essential. In an economy that works for everyone, we must do everything we can to make sure workers earn a good livelihood, feel a sense of security in the work they do, and – above all else – stay healthy and safe in the workplace. The changes we've made to increase the minimum wage, improve employment standards, and add new workplace safety protections are just the beginning. BC workers are front-and-centre in our government's new Economic Recovery Act, and we will continue to bring forward improved rights and benefits for all working people.

Undeniably unions play a positive role in our economy and lives. Moving forward, a BC NDP government will create greater security and stability for BC workers by making sure every worker has the right to join a union and bargain for fair working conditions. We will also develop a precarious work and gig economy strategy, focused on developing employment standards targeted to precarious and gig economy workers. The strategy will be developed in partnership with labour and business organizations and will reflect the diverse needs and unique situations of modern workplaces.

3. Over the past decade in British Columbia, an average of 150 workers die on the job each year, and 17 workers in the province are permanently disabled from workplace accidents every day. What will your party do to guarantee better health and safety conditions to reduce workplace injuries and fatalities?

We need to make sure BC workers come home safely at the end of the day and that employers take responsibility to ensure a safe workplace. If re-elected an BC NDP government will work to strengthen health and safety conditions for workers by:

- Increasing workplace safety inspections: We will increase safety inspections to help make sure employers are abiding by all worksite requirements for keeping their workers safe.
- Ramping up the province's capacity to enforce workers' rights: In 2018, our government began restoring employment standards for BC workers after the BC Liberals cut back on the protection of employees' rights. We will continue to strengthen those rights through increased employment standards inspections and by hiring more case workers to help resolve employment standards complaints.

The Economy

4. A recent Environics Research poll showed that 90% of British Columbians think there should be income tax increases for the wealthiest income earners, and 67% believe that major corporations pay less tax than they should. Does your party believe that those who benefit the most should pay their fair share of taxes?

Yes. Back in February of this year, our BC NDP government introduced a new tax bracket for the top 1% of income earners in British Columbia. Nearly half the revenue generated will come from individuals who make more than \$1 million annually. We believe that asking the people at the top, the highest 1% of individual income earners, to pay a little more and help B.C. provide families and communities with better services and stronger infrastructure is not unreasonable and necessary to create a more equitable province. There is still more to do to undo years of cuts and austerity measures from the previous BC Liberal government, but if re-elected our BC NDP government will continue to work for all British Columbians, not just those at the top. We will also not increase taxes on middle class families, or undermine public services through privatization, wage cuts, or contract rollbacks.

5. The resource extraction-only policies have left this province split. Urban areas are seeing growth and opportunities like no other jurisdiction in Canada, while rural British Columbia is seeing negative growth, increasing unemployment and limited job prospects. What plans does your party have to encourage secondary industries to invest in rural British Columbia?

As government, we developed an economic framework that puts raising the standard of living of British Columbians as the number one goal. The framework includes a plan for distributed growth and rural

development to ensure all parts of the province are sharing in economic growth equally. Our platform also includes, among other initiatives:

- An industrial and manufacturing strategy: this will be aimed at delivering smart, distributed industrial and manufacturing activity and growth to all parts of the province.
- Maximizing government support for workers and communities: We will establish a new Worker Training & Job Opportunity Office to maximize the impact of our Economic Recovery Plan for workers and communities during COVID-19 and beyond – with a focus on retraining workers, supporting resource communities facing job loss, developing higher value goods, and accessing new global markets and opportunities for BC products.
- More logs for job creators: Working with industry and labour, we will dedicate a specific portion of the annual allowable cut towards higher value producers who create new jobs for workers in BC .
- A stronger future for BC's mining industry and workers: We'll create a Mining Innovation Hub to identify and support innovation, offer training for workers in new technologies, regulatory excellence, environmental management, and low-carbon approaches.
- Protecting marine life and habitats while enhancing coastal economies: We will develop a new provincial coastal strategy – in partnership with First Nations and federal and local governments – to better protect coastal habitat while growing coastal economies.
- Creating jobs for workers, opportunities for farmers, and sustainability for BC agriculture: A new Regenerative Agricultural Network will bring together natural systems of production with agri-technologies that enhance production. At a time when the climate crisis is threatening the viability of farming lands, this kind of innovation can bring greater food security, agricultural sustainability, and job creation.

6. Most economies throughout the western world have been on a general five-day workweek for almost a century. Yet with the COVID pandemic, some governments are considering legislating a four-day workweek to protect workers, create jobs and free up time for the overworked. What is your party's view of moving the BC economy to a four-day workweek?

This pandemic has taught us that new ideas should not be taken off the table. While this policy is not contemplated as a part of our platform, if re-elected, a BC NDP government would listen to advocates and experts about the merits of a four day work week. We need new ideas, good ideas, and we should be unafraid to have that discussion.

Health Care

7. Our publicly administered, universal health care system is cherished throughout British Columbia. What policies will your party implement to ensure that health care in the province remains under public control and is accessible to everyone?

Under the BC Liberals, people were often shut out of the health care they needed. The problems were everywhere – long waits, hallway medicine, a shortage of health professionals and, worst of all, a move toward private clinics where the rich would be able to jump the queue. In three years, John Horgan and the NDP have begun to turn the corner. Among our accomplishments, we:

- Expanded access to primary care for those without a family doctor with 21 Urgent and Primary Care Clinics (UPCCs) opened or underway, and 20 Primary Care Networks;

- Launched our surgery and diagnostic strategy which has dramatically reduced the wait time for knee and hip surgeries, as well as critical diagnostic tests like MRIs; and
- Expanded Pharmacare coverage, eliminating or reducing deductibles and co-payments for nearly a quarter-million low-to-medium income people in BC;

If re-elected, the BC NDP will:

- Open 10 more UPCCs by the end of 2021, and expand Primary Care Networks to more communities;
- Building more hospitals and additions: In just three years, the John Horgan NDP government has moved forward with 14 hospital construction projects. We'll continue to build and modernize hospitals around BC;
- Build public long-term care homes and assisted living facilities, and put stricter regulations on private facilities to ensure quality care is being delivered;
- Expand publicly funded home care to provide better care and help with daily living;
- Fight for a national pharmacare program while enhancing Fair Pharmacare, with the goal of bringing the cost of prescription drugs down for you.

We've done a lot in three years, coming on the heels of 16 years of neglect, but there's more to do to fix health care in our province. Make no mistake, we are committed to making sure that health care stays public and is more accessible to everyone.

8. There are thousands of people in the province on waiting lists for surgery, home care, and finding a family doctor. What will your party do to fund more doctors, nursing positions and hospital beds throughout the province, and ensure that our health care system is there for us when we need it?

We're acting now to get the doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals BC needs to cut wait times and deliver more personalized care. We know that BC needs more staff in all areas of health care: doctors, nurses, technologists, technicians and aides. We've begun the work of fixing this problem through better training, recruitment and retention – and in our first three years in office, we've seen significant gains in BC's health care workforce. As mentioned earlier, we are also funding new hospitals, Urgent Primary Care Centres, Primary Care Networks and maximizing the capacity of our diagnostic and surgical spaces. To make sure people have better access to the health care and health teams they need we are committed to:

- Launching BC's second medical school to expand our health care workforce: This means more doctors, nurse practitioners, nurses and other health professionals trained, graduating and working right here in BC.
- A comprehensive health care human resources strategy including credential recognition: From doctors and nurses to long-term care aides, we will make sure BC is well-prepared to deal with future demand and pressures. In addition to expanding training in all fields of health care, we'll be improving the province's credential recognition process and licensing so that people trained in other countries can provide their skills and knowledge here in BC.

Education

9. One of the most important policies for creating a better education system is reducing class sizes. What specific policies will your party implement to hire more teachers and reduce class sizes in primary and secondary schools in British Columbia?

By fighting publicly with teachers, ripping up contracts and repeated cuts to funding, the BC Liberals waged a war against public education in this province for more than a decade. It made young people think twice about entering the profession and those already delivering a world class education in BC were pushed to the brink. But the BC NDP made different choices when forming government. We made our province's public education system a priority and made historic investments into capital and operating budgets which has led to the smallest class sizes in a generation. We've invested \$2 billion into more than 100 new school capital projects across the province. We've increased operational funding to record levels. While we have more work to do to reverse the course of the previous government, we are committed to making this province an attractive place for those who seek education as a profession.

10. As a result of cutbacks to post-secondary education over the past two decades, average tuition fees in the province are far higher than they were 20 years ago, adding to the already-record levels of student debt. What will your party do to lower tuition fees and reduce student debt in the province?

The BC Liberals cut taxes for the richest British Columbians while making it harder and more expensive to get an education. They tripled tuition fees and dramatically increased student debt. They cancelled needs-based grants for students who really needed them, while at the same time cutting taxes for the richest British Columbians. Andrew Wilkinson even said that students would "get carried away" when we eliminated interest on BC student loans.

We've focused on creating opportunities for all British Columbians by making post secondary more affordable. The BC NDP re-established needs-based student grants after the BC Liberals cancelled them (first new investment in post-secondary student grants in 15 years). We eliminated interest on BC Student Loans, helping to ensure students who have to borrow for their education don't have to pay more than students who don't. We also restored tuition-free Adult Basic Education and English Language Learning, helping people who want to upgrade and pursue their dreams while eliminating tuition for former youth in care.

Going forward, if re-elected, a BC NDP government will continue to make post-secondary education more affordable and accessible by:

- Expanding the needs-based BC Access Grant by increasing eligibility to reduce barriers and make sure more British Columbians have the skills they need for the jobs ahead
- Keeping student fee increases low: We will strengthen the existing Tuition Fee Limit Policy to make sure institutions are not increasing fees beyond the prescribed limits. At the same time, we'll conduct a funding review of post-secondary education operating grants to make sure public post-secondary institutions are aligned for economic recovery and student success.

The Environment and Resources

11. Each year, millions of raw logs and other natural resources are shipped to value-added industries in other countries. What specific plans does your party have to prevent this and instead create high-value secondary industries in British Columbia?

Under the BC Liberals we saw irreplaceable old growth forests cut down and raw logs shipped off for processing abroad. We know that many communities depend on forestry - and we are committed to getting local value from the public resource. The BC NDP believe that the best option is for BC logs to create jobs in BC. In 2019, we adjusted the fee-in-lieu of manufacturing so that logs that were harvested

from areas with higher levels of high-value trees would be subject to a higher fee if they were exported - the rationale being that in areas with more high-value fibre are cheaper to log and therefore can be economically milled in BC. In 2020, we adjusted the fee-in-lieu on minimally processed timber to encourage companies to more fully process logs in BC or face a higher fee.

BC New Democrats are committed to rebuilding a healthy, sustainable forestry industry here in BC through innovation, sustainable practices, and more value-added processing. Our platform commits to:

- Providing more logs for job creators: Working with industry and labour, we will dedicate a specific portion of the annual allowable cut towards higher value producers who can demonstrate their ability to create new jobs for workers in BC
- Enhancing mass timber's potential as the construction material of the future: Mass timber's time has arrived – cleaner to produce than traditional lumber or concrete, it is the future of construction. We've already designated the new Royal BC Museum and parts of the new St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver as mass timber.

12. British Columbians care deeply about our environment and believe that climate change is a major issue. What will your party do to reduce our carbon footprint and help lower greenhouse gas emissions?

Our vision for moving to a carbon neutral future is contained in CleanBC, the strongest climate action plan on the continent, which will reduce our emissions by 40% by 2030 compared to 2007 levels.

It is an ambitious target but we believe we must reach it and go further. That is why our platform commits to reaching net zero emissions by 2050. To get there, our platform doubles down on the CleanBC plan with specific measures to strengthen and expand it.

The commitments in our platform related to reducing emissions and supporting the transition to a low-carbon economy total over \$500 million in new spending over 3 years to support CleanBC - that's in addition to the \$1.3 billion previously committed to CleanBC. On top of that our government has committed billions of dollars in new infrastructure spending on a number of important projects, including transit projects, which will support CleanBC goals.

Indigenous Peoples

13. Where does your party stand in relation to Indigenous rights? What plans do you have to ensure meaningful discussions about the integration of Indigenous peoples into the forestry and mining sectors and areas of the economy that flow from their traditional lands? How will your party work to end the many social injustices faced by Indigenous people from across BC?

One of the proudest moments of our government's first three years in office came in late 2019, when BC became the first province to enshrine the United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in law. If re-elected we will continue – to move forward in the spirit of partnership and reconciliation.

Our path together will continue, including:

- Moving further towards long-term agreements that provide greater self-determination: The Province's relationship with Indigenous peoples will continue to move from shortterm

transactional arrangements to longterm agreements that recognize and support reconciliation, self-determination, and economic independence.

- Partnering with Indigenous peoples through evolving shared decision making: As we move forward with key decisions on regional land and resource use allocation (including forestry, mining and other natural resource based industries), we will partner with First Nations, providing a clear, stable and sustainable path for everyone to work together.
- Extending BC's support for cultural preservation and revitalization: We will extend our funding for key projects designed to preserve and respect Indigenous cultures – including the retention and revitalization of First Nations languages, putting additional languages into BC's curriculum, expanding our support of Aboriginal Friendship Centres and reflecting Indigenous peoples' history and cultures in provincial parks and wilderness areas.
- Improving Indigenous input on provincial policy and legislation: In consultation and cooperation with Indigenous leadership, our government will create a dedicated Secretariat to ensure new legislation and policies are consistent with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Working with Indigenous communities to improve access to culturally appropriate justice: We're working with the BC First Nations Justice Council in establishing Indigenous Justice Centres across the province to provide services that include legal advice and representation, advocacy and support in dealing with police and provincial agencies, and restorative justice.