



Annual General Meeting
June 27, 2018

Report to
2018 Annual General Meeting
from

BC FORUM Board of Directors
Diane Wood, President

2018 Annual General Meeting

Sisters and brothers,

Welcome!

Since our last Annual General Meeting, held June 21, 2017, we have seen welcome progress on some of the campaigns and issues fought for by the BC Federation of Retired Union Members and our allies. In its first year in office the John Horgan government has taken significant steps on public health care, child care, affordable housing, poverty reduction and more.

It is a dramatic change from what we had to deal with at annual meetings over the last decade. For example, in 2009, we were fighting the Campbell government's decision to close more than 1,000 acute care beds, cut residential care, cut long term care and home support, and throw open the door to the rapid expansion of private for-profit health care. At subsequent meetings, we had to call on that government to restore funding for seniors' outreach and support services, end the freeze on the minimum wage, work to eliminate homelessness, restore funding to the Therapeutics Initiative, eliminate MSP premiums, stop extra billing for health care, end the freeze on disability benefits and reinstate the transit subsidy, expand quality affordable health care, and ban selling blood for profit.

In the past 12 months – with the support of Green MLAs for just a single vote majority in the Legislature – the NDP has moved quickly to begin to undo 16 years of damage to public services, social equity and respect for workers.

A partial list includes a clear plan to eliminate MSP premiums, significant increases in access to MRI scans, hip and knee replacement surgeries, progress on construction of new hospitals, tough new penalties on extra billing for health care, a ban on buying and selling blood for profit, increases in the minimum wage and disability benefits, and large new investments to create affordable housing and expand affordable child care.

BC FORUM participated in the public consultation on many of these initiatives by presenting briefs with our recommendations for the provincial budget, the minimum wage and poverty reduction.

In addition, we have given priority to advocating for an electoral system where every vote counts, prescription drug coverage for everyone in Canada, and pension protection for workers.

There remains lots of work to do on these three issues.

As you know, we will be able to vote by mail from Oct. 22 to Nov. 30 to make the way we elect our governments more democratic. This referendum is our best opportunity – and perhaps our last opportunity for a long time – to ensure that the Legislature more accurately reflects the will of British Columbians, with no more “majority” governments elected by a minority of voters. BC FORUM is working with the alliance supporting

proportional representation and we are represented in the Make Every Vote Count Society.

After breaking their platform promises in the past, and ignoring the recommendations of two royal commissions, the federal Liberal government has started a consultation process on Pharmacare. Despite projected savings of billions of dollars and better health outcomes, Canada remains the only country with public health care that does not cover prescription drugs. We must completely end the patchwork of coverage – not merely “close the gaps” as the federal finance minister suggests – to achieve these benefits.

It is scandalous that long-term workers at corporations that declare bankruptcy lose their pensions. The deferred earnings of workers must not be stolen to satisfy the demands of big banks and large institutional shareholders. We will continue to monitor and advocate on this issue, as well as the seemingly stalled Bill C-27 which threatens the defined pension benefits of thousands.

The imperative for global and local action to fight climate change was dramatically underscored this year when the level of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere reached 410 parts per million. According to data taken from air bubbles in ice cores, this is the highest level in 800,000 years. At that time, sea levels were 10 to 20 meters higher than today. By our biological clocks the climate changes we are seeing may seem slow, but in the life of our planet they are lightning fast. It is very distressing that the Trump administration is going backwards on this file, while other nations are more talk than action. BC FORUM will continue to monitor this crucial issue, share information with our members, and advocate for real action by governments.

This year will see municipal elections held Oct. 20 under new fund-raising rules. As in the past, we will work with the CLC, Labour Councils, the BC Fed and our allies to support the election of labour endorsed candidates.

The next federal election, to be held Oct. 21, 2019, is also fast approaching. Again, we will use our communications and organizational resources to support the election of MPs who support our priorities for older and retired workers and our families.

While we have made progress in some areas, thanks to the new government, it remains critically important for BC FORUM members to join us in advancing the issues that affect us and our families. We ask you to help us grow stronger by signing up a friend, relative or co-worker. Take home a few application forms from this meeting. Or use the one that's printed in The Advocate.

Remember that membership is open to all members of unions affiliated to the B.C. Federation of Labour who are aged 50 or better, working or retired.

Our approach to electoral action

Like other seniors organizations, BC FORUM advocates on public policy issues that affect our members and their families. Unlike most other seniors groups, however, we are both political and partisan. We recognize that there is only one party that truly

understands the needs of workers. We do not pretend to be politically neutral. In civic, provincial and federal elections, we actively support candidates who will speak out for working families. We proudly do all we can to help elect the party of labour.

Our election work is closely coordinated with the labour movement. Two members of our Board of Directors – President Diane Wood and Director Gord Larkin – are members of the B.C. Federation of Labour’s Political Action Committee.

We work closely with the Canadian Labour Congress, the B.C. Federation of Labour, Labour Councils and other seniors’ organizations – such as the Council of Senior Citizens’ Organizations of BC (COSCO), the Congress of Union Retirees of Canada (CURC) and the National Pensioners’ Federation (NPF) – to maximize the impact of our message.

In solidarity with the groups mentioned above, we are also partners in “Seniors Vote,” which brings together more than 50 organizations across Canada to demand action on retirement security and health care.

Thanks to our allies and supporters

A major part of BC FORUM activities is funded through the dues contributed by members like you. We are very grateful for your support.

Since most retired workers have limited means, we do our utmost to keep our dues as low as possible.

The Board continues to discuss new options to ensure sustainable funding, including advertising in the Advocate. We will continue to explore ways to strengthen our finances.

We are deeply grateful to our partners, allies and supporters for their contribution towards keeping our organization active, vibrant and alive.

Our friends at Working Enterprises Consulting and Benefits – which provides the excellent benefit plans that are available to BC FORUM members – very generously contribute \$40,000 a year.

Working Enterprises also prepares BC FORUM’s financial statements and payroll, and maintains employee records.

Working Ventures Insurance Solutions Ltd. has contributed \$8,000 annually.

UFCW 1518 again committed to paying the cost of printing The Advocate this year.

Other unions, such as BCGEU, provide continuing support including the printing of BC FORUM leaflets, meeting space, and pay expenses for their Board members.

The BC Federation of Labour donates office space and other support. The Public Service Alliance of Canada (BC) kindly makes its boardroom available for BC FORUM’s bi-monthly Board meetings.

A growing number of unions and locals are paying the first year BC FORUM membership dues – and in some cases three years – for their retiring members, and mail out BC

FORUM membership information to retirees. In addition, we thank the affiliates that have made direct donations to support our work during the past year, and affiliates and Labour Councils who took out advertising in the Advocate.

All of these contributions are helping us to balance the budget, continue our activities, and pay the salary of our part-time administrative staff person.

They are made, we believe, in recognition of the fact that retired workers can be a powerful force for political change. We vote. We believe in a civil society. And there are more of us every day.

BC FORUM is a vehicle to bring together retired workers. Like the labour movement itself, our strength depends on our numbers.

We must continue to sign up more older workers and retired union members every day. Again, we ask for your help to make it happen.

Board of Directors and Labour Council representation

The volunteer directors appointed by affiliated unions continue to work very hard to meet the challenges we face as an organization and as a movement.

The President of the BC FED, Irene Lanzinger, also serves as Chair of BC FORUM. This reinforces our relationship with the labour movement in working on common issues. We greatly appreciate the strong support she is providing to BC FORUM.

We have recently welcomed Tony Brown to our volunteer Board of Directors. Tony takes over from Tom Dufresne as the representative of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Canada. We thank Tom for his service.

We also thank Barb Mikulec for her many contributions to our work. Barb represented the BC Teachers Federation on our Board.

BC FORUM's regional representation through delegate status at labour councils is an important part of building and maintaining our presence in communities throughout the province.

We welcomed six new regional representatives in the past year. Appointed as Regional Representatives and Labour Council Delegates were John Hooker, New Westminster and District Labour Council; Edna Park, Kamloops and District Labour Council; Nora Butz and Holly Page, Victoria Labour Council; and Gary Werk, East Kootenay District Labour Council.

We thank Ken Isomura who served long and well as BC FORUM's Regional Representative and Delegate to the New Westminster and District Labour Council.

Coordinating our work at the provincial and regional level is a key priority for the Board. Our delegates are extremely active in their labour councils, building BC FORUM's profile in their communities. Several have acted as local media spokespeople for our organization, speaking out on issues that affect older and retired workers and our

families. Regional representatives attend BC FORUM area membership meetings and are delegates to BC Fed Regional Conferences held in their area.

Every six months or so, we bring together our Directors and Regional Representatives through conference calls. We send representatives frequent e-mail updates on Board decisions and current issues. We provide background information as needed to assist delegates in maximizing media opportunities when they arise. We seize the opportunity to meet with delegates when Board members are in their area for other events. While we recognize that it's difficult for those who live outside the Lower Mainland to attend, we have extended a standing invitation to Regional Representatives to attend Board meetings as observers.

Lists of your Board of Directors and Regional Representatives are attached to this report.

Liaison with affiliates

Ensuring that every union member has the opportunity to join BC FORUM when she or he retires is essential if we are to build our membership. That's the time when most members join. Getting our message to the right people at the right time is more easily said than done. Many unions do not have the ability to track retirements.

To collectively address this issue, and other common interests, we frequently consult with affiliated unions, both formally and informally. Twenty affiliates have appointed representatives to liaise with BC FORUM.

The affiliate liaisons work to promote our organization in their newsletters and websites, help distribute our brochures to members nearing retirement, extend invitations to attend their conventions and conferences as a guest and set up a display booth, and foster communication between their administrative staff and ours. We are working to encourage even more affiliates to appoint liaisons.

Pre-retirement planning course

Our modular course on pre-retirement planning – developed in cooperation with the Congress of Union Retirees of Canada and constantly updated by BC FORUM's Education Committee – provides participants with the most recent information about the issues facing British Columbians who are nearing retirement age.

More than a dozen members of BC FORUM have been trained as instructors.

The course is delivered through labour councils and affiliated unions, and appears to be generating increasing interest as a result of word-of-mouth from the sessions we have done, and our outreach to the movement. We look forward to providing this vital information to more workers who are preparing for retirement.

Outreach

BC FORUM is working hard, with notable success, to increase our visibility within the labour movement.

This work by directors and other volunteers takes many forms.

We presented information on BC FORUM and the Union Protein Project (formerly Protein for People) at display booths, and reached out to participants at numerous conventions, meetings and events:

- BC Building Trades Convention
- BCTF AGM
- BCRTA AGM
- PSAC BC Regional Convention
- BCGEU Convention
- MoveUp Convention
- BCGEU Provincial Instructors Bargaining Council
- BC Fed Fall Conference
- CLC Winter School
- FPSE Convention
- Heat and Frost Insulators Retirees
- CoDevelopment Canada event
- BC Health Coalition AGM
- National Pensioners Federation Convention
- 411 Seniors event
- Joint benefits presentations with WE Consulting and Benefits to Unifor Retirees, Kamloops Chapter, School District 43 non-teaching staff retirees, BCGEU community college instructors, and BCGEU Area membership meeting (Langley)
- LiUNA 1600 retiree appreciation event
- SHARE and BC Fed pension forum
- Labour Day celebrations in the Lower Mainland, Fraser Valley and Kamloops.
- BC Fed Executive Council
- CURC Executive Council meetings
- United Way Labour Appreciation event
- Union Protein Project AGM

- Meetings with BC Fed affiliates
- BC FORUM member “Meet and Greet” in conjunction with BC Fed regional conference in Victoria
- We also participated in annual events such as the Day of Mourning for workers killed or injured on the job, United Nations International Day of Older Persons (Oct. 1) and continued to provide support on picket lines and BC Fed affiliates’ campaigns

Benefits

Our partnership with WE Consulting and Benefits Services is one of the core strengths of BC FORUM, and we are promoting it with increasing vigour. Once a year, in the summer edition, The Advocate includes a four page supplement detailing the excellent group benefit plans that are available to all BC FORUM members, including group rates on extended health and dental coverage insurance. These services are vital to many of our members – indeed, more than half of the hundreds of calls handled by our office deal with group benefits and insurance issues.

Working Ventures Insurance Solutions Ltd. provides discounts on home, marine, RV and travel insurance. The benefits available to BC FORUM members always draw much interest at public events. With the rising cost of insurance, and some employers reducing benefit coverage, this is expected to become an even more important part of the services we provide in the future.

WE Consulting and Benefits also makes it possible for BC FORUM to provide members with free \$2,500 AD&D coverage, world-wide, until they reach their 86th birthday (the highest we’ve been able to negotiate). We have expanded this coverage to make it available to the spouses of members, at the low rate of \$5 per year.

Speaking out on issues that matter

BC FORUM speaks out on issues in many ways:

- Our website and Facebook pages are updated frequently.
- The Advocate is mailed to all BC MLAs and Members of Parliament, and distributed by the BC Fed as part of their general mail out to affiliates and Labour Councils.
- Lobbying and direct contact with MPs, MLAs, opinion leaders and decision-makers.

Ron Stipp, the CLC liaison to BC FORUM, attends most board meetings to coordinate our efforts on common issues.

We work with the B.C. Health Coalition, Congress of Union Retirees of Canada (CURC), National Pensioners Federation (NPF), the BC Retired Teachers Association (BCRTA) and the Council of Senior Citizens’ Organizations (COSCO) to highlight the concerns of seniors, and particularly the need to strengthen Canada’s public health care system, including universal home support and Pharmacare, and a national strategy to help people and families dealing with dementia.

Our organization has a long history of working with the Canadian Labour Congress and the B.C. Federation of Labour in the campaign for better pensions. President Diane Wood has spoken out frequently on the issue, calling for improvements in the Canada Pension Plan, an increase in the GIS, and maintaining OAS and GIS eligibility at age 65. We also wrote Bill Morneau, federal minister of finance, expressing our strong opposition to Bill C-27, a dangerous and immediate attack on the pensions of future and current retirees in the federal private sector and Crown corporations.

Our members are frequent participants in rallies, protests and solidarity events, and directors often serve on the planning committees for such events. We have raised our voices on important public policy issues that affect our families and communities and will continue to do so.

Our President represents BC FORUM on the Executive Council of the B.C. Federation of Labour, and our Secretary attends these key coordinating meetings as an Observer. In addition, BC FORUM is represented by Board members on several BC Fed committees: Constitution and Structure, Andy Ross; Women's Rights, Marion Pollack; Political Action, Diane Wood and Gord Larkin. BC FORUM delegates also attend the BC Fed convention and conferences.

We are a full member of the B.C. Health Coalition, supporting its important work to improve public health care, and actively participate in the BCHC Seniors Working Group where Agnes Jackman, Regional Representative and Chair of BC FORUM's health committee represents BC FORUM.

We are partners with the Union Protein Project, previously known as Protein for People, supporting that organization's work to feed the hungry, and are represented on their Board by President Wood. Each year, the Protein Project distributes protein valued at close to \$1 million to food banks, helping more than 250,000 people.

We support the United Way as part of labour's involvement. Board member Gordon Larkin is a member of the Labour Participation Committee.

We endorse the \$10 a day child care plan, recognizing that high quality public child care is an important driver of economic growth because it frees parents to go to work and contribute their skills to building our province.

We actively support the campaign for a \$15 minimum wage, a key step towards lessening inequality among all generations.

We stand with seniors and allies in calling for restoration of door-to-door mail delivery to communities that have lost it, and have written directly to all MPs on this issue.

With our allies, we will continue to advocate for universal Pharmacare until it is achieved.

In addition, BC FORUM is active in a number of organizations that represent seniors.

We are the provincial affiliate of the Congress of Union Retirees of Canada (CURC) and President Wood represents BC FORUM on the Executive Council. Through CURC, we are

linked to the CLC's political action initiatives at the national level, the Canadian Health Coalition, Seniors Voice and the Council of Canadians. CURC meetings also provide an opportunity for us to meet face to face with MPs to present our issues to them first-hand.

We are affiliated to the Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of B.C. (COSCO). President Diane Wood serves as a General Vice-President of COSCO, bringing BC FORUM's perspective to the monthly executive meetings. In addition, five Board members attend COSCO's monthly delegate meetings.

We are affiliated to the National Pensioners Federation (NPF) and were active participants in the NPF convention held in October in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. President Wood serves on the NPF communications committee and participates in NPF Affiliate Leaders meetings held by conference call.

BC FORUM supports the Stephen Lewis Foundation, which is doing much needed work to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa. Of particular note is the Foundation's Grandmothers to Grandmothers campaign, an initiative to aid the many women who are raising their grandchildren after losing their own children to this devastating disease.

Communications

The quarterly publication of our news magazine The Advocate is possible due to the generosity of UFCW 1518 which covers the cost of printing. Each edition is mailed to all members, to all BC MLAs and every MP across Canada, and distributed by the BCFED to all affiliated unions and labour councils through their general mailing. The Advocate is also made available to other seniors' organizations and handed out at our booths and seniors' forums.

Soren Bech, editor of The Advocate, produces our quarterly publication. He also assists with ongoing communications, other publications and promotion of BC FORUM.

Through Michelle Boudreau our website is updated frequently to provide the most current information on BC FORUM and labour movement campaigns and events. The number of visitors to www.bcforum.ca continues to grow.

Our membership brochure has again been updated. We thank the BCGEU for their contribution in printing thousands of copies of this vital tool.

From time to time, we send personal e-mails to our members, particularly on emerging political issues and campaigns such as proportional representation and universal pharmacare. While there are still a number of members who do not have e-mail addresses, the number of members who do continues to grow.

Administration

Theresa Couture (and during her absence last year Elsbeth Couture) staffs our office at the BC Federation of Labour four days a week, responding to members' requests, dealing with renewals, and providing administrative support to our volunteer board.

Soren Bech assists with communications and is Editor of The Advocate.

Michelle Boudreau provides website management and development services.

Working together

The work that we do is made possible through the solidarity and support of our members, affiliated unions, labour councils, and the generous contributions made by our allies in the movement.

We particularly extend our thanks to:

- WE Consulting and Benefits for the financial contribution that assists us in keeping one part-time office staff person, and for the provision of group AD&D coverage to members and their spouses up to age 85.
- The B.C. Federation of Labour for contributing office and meeting space, advice about information technology, waiving delegate fees to BC Fed conventions and conferences, help with mailings and much more. The BCFED also ensures that information about BC FORUM, including The Advocate, is regularly distributed to all affiliates and at their conventions and conferences.
- UFCW 1518 for their generous contribution to help ensure The Advocate is printed on a regular basis.
- BCGEU for their contributions towards printing, mailings, and paying expenses for President Wood and BCGEU Board members. This allows us to fully participate in CURC's national meetings, the NPF convention, as well as other provincial and local meetings, events, conferences and conventions.
- Working Ventures Insurance Solutions Ltd. for their ongoing advertising in regular editions of the Advocate.

We greatly appreciate the in-kind support that we are receiving from the BC FED and a growing number of affiliated unions. These contributions help us to stretch scarce dollars and advocate more effectively on behalf of older and retired workers.

Conclusion

BC FORUM is recognized as the voice for senior union members and retirees.

Our volunteer board is focused and working hard. Our visibility and impact continue to grow. Union leaders continue to provide great encouragement and support. Retired workers, and workers nearing retirement, are more aware of our organization.

Still, we are determined to do more. We must increase our membership, and help ensure that former union members remain active and aware participants in promoting labour's agenda.

In the years ahead, with the support of WE Consulting and Benefits, the BC FED, affiliated unions, union retiree organizations, labour councils, our members and activists, we look forward to expansion of our membership, activities, and even stronger advocacy on behalf of retired workers. We ask for your help. Please grab a membership card, and sign up a friend, relative or co-worker today. Together we're strong.

In solidarity,

Diane Wood

President, BC FORUM

USW 2009

BC FORUM Board of Directors

Irene Lanzinger, Chair	BCFED
Diane Wood, President	BCGEU
Bill Silvester, Vice President	USW
Sam Wiese, Vice President	PSAC
Dan Bradford, Treasurer	BCGEU
Miriam Olney, Secretary	UFCW
Donisa Bernardo	HEU
Tony Brown	ILWU
Fred Girling	USW
Gord Larkin	CLC
(Vacant)	BCTF
Marion Pollack	CUPW
John Savage	UNIFOR
John Radosevic	UNIFOR
Andy Ross	MoveUP
Gord Savard	CUPE
Maureen Shaw	FPSE
Russ St. Eloi	BCYT-BCTC

Regional Representatives

Sandy Bauer	Vancouver and District Labour Council
Suzanne Bennett	Campbell River, Courtenay and District Labour Council
Nora Butz	Victoria Labour Council
John Colbourne	South Okanagan Boundary Labour Council
Mary Gay	West Kootenay Labour Council
Doug Gibson	North Okanagan Labour Council
Terry Green	South Okanagan Boundary Labour Council
Ray Haynes	Sunshine Coast Labour Council
John Hooker	New Westminster and District Labour Council

Regional Representatives (continued)

Agnes Jackman	Vancouver and District Labour Council
Chris Johns	East Kootenay and District Labour Council
Victor Johnson	North Central Labour Council
Mogens Jorgensen	Kamloops and District Labour Council
Mike Lang	Port Alberni and District Labour Council
Greg McGowan	North Okanagan Labour Council
Holly Page	Victoria Labour Council
Edna Park	Kamloops and District Labour Council
Raymond Raj	Kitimat, Terrace and District Labour Council
Lynda Reid	Campbell River, Courtenay and District Labour Council
Heather Sapergia	North Central Labour Council
Iris Taylor	Nanaimo, Duncan and District
Gerry Townsend	New Westminster and District Labour Council
Gary Werk	East Kootenay District Labour Council
Ron Williams	North Central Labour Council
Pamela Willingshofer	Fraser Valley Labour Council
Marie Worth	Squamish and District Labour Committee

National representative

Len Hope, President Congress of Union Retirees of Canada

Staff

Theresa Couture USW

Communications Resource and Editor of Advocate

Soren Bech UNIFOR

Website Resource

Michelle Boudreau UNIFOR

CLC Liaison to BC FORUM

Ron Stipp CLC