

# Advocate

Official news magazine of the B.C. Federation of Retired Union Members (BC FORUM)



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## We need government that puts people first



John Horgan, Leader of the BC NDP, visits a child care centre just prior to announcing his plan for \$10 a day child care – a key step towards an economy that works for people.

**John Horgan and the NDP are charting a course towards an economy that works for ordinary families, not just mega-corporations and billionaires**

FOR FIVE years, a smiling Christy Clark has topped up her \$200,000 salary with \$50,000 a year from wealthy donors to the BC Liberal Party. While personally profiting from catering to the elite, Clark has taken away bus passes for people with disabilities and skewed the tax system to ensure the super-rich pay a lower rate of taxes than all other British Columbians.

In a dramatic contrast, NDP Leader John Horgan has outlined initiatives to create good jobs, make taxes more fair, and build a strong economy that works for ordinary people.

His proposals include:

- Power BC, a vision for clean sustainable energy and new jobs.
- Elimination of MSP premiums, a massively regressive tax.
- Increasing the minimum wage to \$15 an hour.
- \$10 a day child care to give kids a good start and allow more parents to contribute to our economy.

You will find more details on the NDP's proposals to put people first in this edition of The Advocate.

## Action on child care

BC FORUM has strongly welcomed the BC NDP's plan to bring affordable child care to B.C. "This is an issue that urgently needs to be addressed," said Diane Wood, President of BC FORUM. "We've been fighting for quality, affordable child care for decades. We fought for it as members of our unions. Today, many years later, the need is even more acute."

Wood said the lack of affordable child care steals opportunities from working families, and prevents many parents from contributing their skills to our economy.

"We had a very emotional debate on child care at this year's Annual General Meeting. Grandparents who are looking after their children's children are wondering how many more years they can continue," she said.

Please see "NDP will..." on page 4

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## Advocate

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# In this edition

With the next BC election only months away, this edition includes expanded coverage of provincial issues and proposals to improve the lives of ordinary people. But fear not – we're still keeping an eye on Ottawa!

In this edition:

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# Courage, my friends, it's not too late to build a better world

By Diane Wood  
President, BC FORUM

**D**EMOCRACY IS the most powerful tool we have to build civil societies – communities where every person has the opportunity to fully participate and contribute to our collective well-being. It is based on a shared understanding that none of us stands alone and that we are stronger together.

Canadians have fought and died to defend our right to elect our own governments, but as the US election demonstrated, democracy is fragile.

Donald Trump's campaign strategists said in the days before the election that the only way he could win was to drive down voter turnout. He succeeded. Millions stayed home. Turnout was the lowest in 20 years.

What's particularly dangerous is the way he did it. He denigrated democratic government as a swamp. He called his Republican rivals names: Little Marco, Lyin' Ted, and Low Energy Jeb. In the campaign itself, with no basis in fact, he branded his opponent Crooked Hillary.

Implicitly or explicitly, he spread hate and disrespect towards Latinos, blacks, jews, women, gays and everyone who dared to oppose him.

I have never seen a political campaign so rude, callous, self-centred and devoid of truth.

With the Trump campaign using the social network to send targeted messages to his supporters, even Facebook is caught up in controversy. A story from a fake news site claimed Hillary Clinton was a devotee of satanic rituals. Facebook users shared it more than 3,000 times.

Both Google and Facebook are



Diane Wood

now taking steps to clamp down on fake news sites.

But the damage is done. Even before Trump takes office, America is weaker, and the world is much more dangerous. Xenophobes, bigots, misogynists, autocrats and hate-mongers are rushing to follow the path blazed by the new leader of the free world.

It has already hit very close to home. Hate literature and racist incidents are on the rise in B.C. and Canada.

As we prepare for our provincial election in May, these trends worry

me a great deal.

Will name-calling replace civil debate on the critical issues that affect us and our families?

Will respect for each other, including those with whom we disagree, be burned on the altar of winning at all costs?

Will we be swamped in lies and fake news?

If ever there was a time when it was essential for us to stick together, this is it.

As the US election vividly demonstrated, no candidate is perfect. Every one of them has strengths and weaknesses. Some candidates and parties will work for social justice, equality and respect. Others will not.

We must judge. We must participate – ideally by helping to nominate candidates we trust.

In the end, we must vote. Staying home on election day is not an option.

As Tommy Douglas said:

“Courage, my friends, it's not too late to build a better world.”

That's our goal. By standing together – from issue to issue and election to election – we will work in solidarity to help achieve that vision for ourselves, our children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

## Happy Holidays

**O**N BEHALF of the volunteer board of directors of BC FORUM, I extend to you and your loved ones our very best wishes for the holidays.

This is a time of year when we come together to celebrate and support each other. Let's keep that spirit alive to carry us forward into a happy and productive new year.



John Horgan, Leader of the BC NDP, met with the BC FORUM board of directors in September. He was accompanied by Selina Robinson, the party's spokesperson on seniors, and Shane Simpson, caucus chair and spokesperson on economic development.

Horgan, Robinson and Simpson discussed a wide-range of issues and participated in a lively question and answer session with board members. The next provincial election will take place in just a few months on Tuesday May 9, 2017.

# NDP will address child care crisis

Continued from page 1

The burden of inadequate child care falls on all generations, said Wood.

While acknowledging that a provincial child care program would have significant start-up costs, Wood said this is more than repaid in early education benefits to children, economic stimulus, and long-term returns to government.

"It's a money maker," said Wood, citing research published in 2012 by the Research Chair in Taxation and Public Finance, Université de Sherbrooke.

The authors found that Quebec's affordable child care program made it possible for 70,000 more women to take long term jobs, increasing the provincial GDP by \$5.1 billion.

The tax-transfer return to government significantly exceeds the cost of subsidies.

The report concluded that universal child care improves the lives of children and families, and is "a profitable enterprise" for all levels of government.

The BC NDP says the Christy Clark government's failure to invest in affordable universal child care has created a crisis for working families.

"It's time families have affordable, universal child care in B.C. We're going to work toward a \$10-a-day program. It's the right thing to do for our kids, for working families and for our economy," said NDP Leader John Horgan.

"Parents are paying some of the highest child care fees in the coun-

try. Too many parents can't find child care and spend years on waitlists," he said.

Roughly 20 percent of children have access to regulated childcare. Fees in the Lower Mainland can run to over \$1200 per month.

"Lack of affordable, quality child care prevents parents from participating in the labour force. B.C.'s business and labour sectors agree with New Democrats that the Clark government's ongoing neglect of child care makes it difficult for businesses to attract women, young families and skilled workers."

B.C. mothers' participation rates are the second lowest in Canada. Forty percent of B.C. families report that a parent could not return to work at the end of parental leave due to lack of childcare spaces.

# Be wary when buying out of province/country travel medical

By David Porteous

UNFORTUNATELY WE have all heard of nightmare vacations caused by medical problems. Buy out of province/country travel insurance wisely. You must play close attention to the type of insurance you buy. Is the policy you buy a "first payer" and how does the subrogation work if any. Do "not" buy the cheapest policy; cheapest could affect "if" and "how" the policy pays out.

Thinking of buying travel medical on-line? Don't assume the on-line policy wordings will be the same as policies issued through licensed agents. Over the past few years our

office has helped many retirees who purchased on-line policies and then called us once they were denied coverage!

For this and other reasons we created a program called Complex Case Management that includes help for those who have been stuck with a big U.S. hospital bill whether insurance was purchased or not.

This case management can help in many ways by the process of a detailed audit on policy wordings to determine if the insurance provider should have paid the claim. Also we test for clinical relevance and a comparative analysis followed by collaborative review of the bills with the

revenue officers at the U.S. hospital if needed. This analysis will help reduce the overcharging by U.S. hospitals.

Working or retired make sure you have out of province/country coverage. Yes, I mention out of province again because you need coverage when visiting other provinces. Medical costs can be higher than BC's. You could be billed any difference.

*David J.A. Porteous is an Elder Planning Counselor (EPC) and President of Working Enterprises Consulting & Benefits Services Ltd.*

*He is a charter member of the Canadian Initiative for Elder Planning Studies.*

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# Seniors deserve better than what they're getting

By Holly Reid

HOME SUPPORT in B.C. is in crisis. The BC Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU) represents thousands of members who work in community health. Our members tell us that the situation is troubling: B.C.'s senior population has increased by four per cent in just the past year, but three out of five health authorities are providing fewer home support hours. This is because the B.C. Liberal government has allowed funding for public home support services to stall. As a result, seniors' care has been suffering.

That's why the BCGEU has launched *Seniors Deserve Better*, a campaign aimed at pressuring the government to increase funding for home support, and making this an important election issue.

"Our members have been saying for years that cuts in funding have forced them to do the same work in less time," says BCGEU president Stephanie Smith. "They are now expected to care for more patients than

ever before, in the same work day."

Access to home support services has been declining significantly in B.C. since 2001. Home support clients are likely to be older, with serious health problems, and more complex needs. Access limitations are also destabilizing the health of seniors with moderate care needs who cannot get timely services. These services would keep them healthy and living at home. Some find they can't qualify for home support services until a health crisis puts them in hospital. This is an expensive way to identify a need.

Many of us have aging loved ones. We have first-hand experience with the struggle to gain publicly funded home support for them. We've not all succeeded. Where we have, we've seen the length of home support visits get shorter and less frequent. On the flipside, the home support caregivers we represent at the BCGEU tell us they're frustrated because they can't provide their clients with the level of care they need.

Our members in community



health are skilled, professional and committed. They work in the publicly funded health care system, travelling to clients' homes to provide both medical and other support services. A typical work day will see them visiting a number of clients. Community health workers are cost effective. They provide the services that allow seniors and people with disabilities to remain living at home – a much more economical option than hospital or assisted/long-term care. Not to mention that when seniors and people with disabilities live and are cared for in their own homes, it helps them lead longer, healthier and happier lives.

With the provincial election just months away, we are at an opportune time to make changes. We need you to join our network of people who will push to make funding for home support an election issue. Visit [www.seniorsdeservebetter.ca](http://www.seniorsdeservebetter.ca) and sign up for updates.

Our campaign work will continue leading up to the election. If you'd like more information or to offer your help get in touch with Holly Reid, BCGEU digital campaigns: [holly.reid@bcgeu.ca](mailto:holly.reid@bcgeu.ca).

## Seniors Deserve Better Fund Public Home Support Now



Tell the government to fully fund home support. Sign the petition at:

[SeniorsDeserveBetter.ca](http://SeniorsDeserveBetter.ca)



## HEALTH CARE

# Staffing crisis in seniors' care

By Jennifer Whiteside,  
Secretary-Business Manager,  
Hospital Employees' Union

**S**ENIORS' CARE is about people looking after people. It's about providing care in as safe and dignified manner as possible. Yet, right now in B.C., we are facing a crisis which is seriously undercutting our ability to deliver that standard of care.

It's been fuelled by underfunding, chronic understaffing, and a surge in profit-making businesses where many seniors' homes are being bought and sold like real estate, and entire care teams are fired and replaced in the process.

The casualties are both seniors and the people who provide their care.

Last spring, B.C.'s Seniors Advocate Isobel Mackenzie revealed that four out of every five residential care homes in B.C. don't receive enough funding to meet the government's own minimum staffing guidelines.

She also noted that home support hours are dropping in three out of five health authorities.

In response, the provincial government ordered a review of the staffing levels and staffing mix in residential care, which is expected to be released this fall.

Our union is calling for the following actions:

- First, as an urgent interim measure, every care home must be funded to meet the government's current minimum staffing guideline of 3.36 hours of care per resident per day. This measure must also include mechanisms to ensure new funding supports higher staffing, not more profits or administration.
- Second, government needs to strike a comprehensive review involving all stakeholders to establish an appropriate minimum staffing level that is both legislated and enforceable.
- And third, government must stop the ongoing mass staff layoffs brought about by repeated contracting out in our publicly-funded, but privately-owned and operated, long-term care homes.

These recommendations are based on putting the funding and accountability measures into place that will ensure every care home in B.C. has safe, adequate staffing and a higher standard of care.

Because if you are a senior, who is dependent on staff to meet your urgent needs – care can't wait.

# Dignity and Respect.

They earned it.



But four out of five care homes in B.C. aren't funded to meet government's minimum staffing guidelines.

## Join the campaign for safe, quality care for the elderly at

[carecantwait.ca](http://carecantwait.ca)



**A MESSAGE** from  
HEU members in your  
community

# Canada needs smarter investment for the future, not more P3 projects

**I**N ITS most recent fiscal update, the federal government announced that it is prioritizing infrastructure investment to support long-term growth. And while investments in public transit, green infrastructure and rural and northern communities are welcome, there is concern that investments in clean air, clean water, social housing, and child care were not addressed.

"We support the priorities that the government is continuing to fund under their infrastructure plan. Public transit can lower congestion and emissions, as well as improve productivity and well being," said CLC president Hassan Yussuff.

"But investment in clean air and clean water are critical to the health and well being of everyone in Canada. Investments in social housing and child care are sorely needed, and would help create good jobs," added Yussuff.

The government also announced the establishment of a new Canada Infrastructure Bank (CIB) to promote private-public partnerships.

"We have serious concerns about private investment in public infrastructure. It prioritizes investments such as toll bridges and highways over clean air and clean water," said Yussuff.

In 2014, an Ontario auditor general report found that most P3 projects have turned out to be more expensive to both government (cost overruns) and consumers (user fees, tolls and lower quality services).

Yussuff said it's odd that the federal government would set up a bank to facilitate public borrowing from the private sector at a time when the federal government can borrow money at record low interest rates.

"Canada needs investment in a green industrial transformation, not more of the same private-public partnerships that short-change workers and communities," said Yussuff.



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

## Trudeau: keep the promise

**C**LC PRESIDENT Hassan Yussuff and partners in the Every Voter Counts Alliance have called on the federal government to fulfill its promise on electoral reform and institute a made in Canada version of proportional representation.

"This is an opportunity to uphold the democratic principle of making every vote count. The only way to do that is through proportional representation," said Yussuff.

Throughout the summer and fall, Labour activists have been attending

electoral reform town hall meetings and appearing before the special committee on electoral reform to demonstrate support for proportional representation.

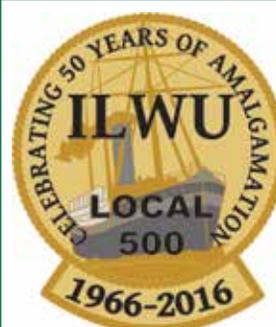
"No party should be able to get a majority of seats without getting a majority of the votes," he said.

"The number of seats a party receives in the House of Commons should correlate to that party's share of the popular vote.

"It's not complicated. It's just fair."



The ILWU  
Canada family  
wishes you  
and yours a  
safe & happy  
holiday season



It's Union Members  
and Retirees like  
you that give us the  
legs to stand on.  
Keep up the great  
work!  
Happy holidays.

*ILWU Local 500 proudly celebrates its 50th year of amalgamation.*

## CPP expansion one step closer

### BC ends holdout on approving agreement for better pensions

A SIGNIFICANT expansion in Canada Pension Plan benefits is one step closer to becoming a reality after BC ended its holdout status and formally signed on to the agreement in principle reached at a First Ministers' meeting in July.

"Improving CPP benefits and retirement security for millions of Canadians is the most important expansion of a social program in Canada for decades," said Irene Lanzinger, Chair of BC FORUM and President of the BC Federation of Labour.

Diane Wood, President of BC FORUM, thanked members who participated in the "public engagement" process which convinced the BC government to support improvement of the CPP.

"I was very concerned to read reports, earlier this year, which suggested the BC government was backing away from supporting CPP enhancement. This would have destroyed the entire deal for Canada. It was very important to let the government know that while the CPP enhancement won't help retired workers, it will sure help our younger colleagues, our kids, grandkids, nieces and nephews," said Wood.

BC's participation is essential to meet the population requirements for amending the CPP.

"There are already 600,000 Canadians living in poverty, and in today's economy workers change jobs frequently and most do not have a workplace pension plan. The only

realistic solution is to improve the CPP," said Wood.

"Pension reform is a priority issue for all working people in Canada," said Lanzinger, adding that the labour movement's campaign to expand the CPP will make life better for many Canadians.

CPP benefits are currently a maximum of 25 percent of pensionable earnings, or \$1,092.50 a month. The average retirement pension paid to new beneficiaries in July 2016 was \$642.45.

## Measures to improve the fairness of the tax system

BC's TAX system has been made "remarkably regressive," says the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' BC Office. "When all BC personal taxes are considered – income, sales, property, carbon, and MSP premiums – we find that lower-income households pay a higher overall tax rate as a share of their income than higher-income households," the CCPA said during consultations on the 2017 provincial budget.

"This is unfair and should be urgently remedied."

The CCPA called on the provincial government to strike a Fair Tax Commission to recommend changes to make taxes more equitable.

"The Commission should meaningfully engage with British Columbians from all walks of life throughout the province about the services they want and how we can fairly pay for them," said the CCPA.

As a priority, the CCPA recommended that "highly regressive MSP premiums" be eliminated in the next budget. The BC Liberals have more than doubled MSP premiums.

"A two parent family with a combined income of \$40,000 currently pays \$1,800 per year, the same as a family making \$400,000. That's

Under the agreement reached between the federal and provincial governments benefits will gradually increase to one third of pensionable earnings. Premiums paid by employers and workers will increase marginally starting in 2019.

While this improvement will help many of today's workers, especially young workers, to retire in dignity, it falls short of the Canadian Labour Congress goal of having the CPP replace 50 percent of pensionable earnings.

4.5 percent of the first family's income and only 0.45 percent of the second's."

The CCPA also recommended that costly natural gas royalty credits which subsidize fracking operations be ended. BC should consider a shift to a minimum royalty for each unit rather than the current approach that only pays reasonable royalties when market prices are very high, said the brief.

"More broadly, BC has the lowest top marginal income tax rate in Canada, the lowest corporate income tax rate, and the third-lowest small business tax rate (after Manitoba and Saskatchewan). Partly as a result, provincial public spending has shrunk as a share of GDP even as public investment is urgently needed to tackle the range of collective challenges we face."

The brief suggested BC should set tax rates closer to the average of other Canadian provinces and make crucial investments in people and public services. "Lack of public investment is actually costing BC billions each year, and, more importantly, perpetuating poverty, putting the environment at risk, and ultimately damaging people's lives."

# BCFED calls for good jobs, good wages action plan

**Statistics Canada data shows continued growth in part-time, low paid precarious work as wages fail to keep up with rising costs in BC**

**T**HE BC Federation of Labour has criticized the Clark government for poor economic management, declining wages, and the loss of good-paying, full-time jobs that support families and communities.

**“Unless we do something fast and chart a different course, our province is going to be a place where only the rich can live.”**

“There’s a crisis taking shape across our economy because good jobs are disappearing in BC, while wages aren’t keeping pace,” said BCFED Secretary-Treasurer Aaron Ekman in a presentation to Liberal and NDP politicians on the finance committee of the provincial legislature.

“And we face the mounting problems of poverty and inequality that the Clark government has failed to address,” he told the politicians.

Ekman says the recent timber mill closure in Merritt that will put 200 mill workers out of work just before Christmas symbolizes the looming crisis.

“Good-paying, full-time jobs – like the 200 in Merritt – that support



Aaron Ekman, Secretary-Treasurer of the B.C. Federation of Labour, outlined the case for action on good jobs, good wages in a presentation to the Legislature’s finance committee.

*Advocate file photo*

families and communities are on the decline,” he told the committee.

“And a deeper analysis of monthly government employment statistics shows that part-time jobs with low wages and instability for workers are on the rise.”

Historically, average wages in BC used to be among the high-

est in Canada, Ekman says.

“But under the Liberals, we’ve fallen to the low end, in a province where living costs are skyrocketing.”

The BCFED’s nine-point action plan includes a call that Victoria implement a good jobs strategy to create more full-time work in all sectors of the economy instead of precarious part-time positions.

It calls on the BC government to set a goal of making BC first in Canada in the creation of good-paying, full-time jobs.

Ekman also demanded that the government shift gears with policies to make BC first in Canada for the highest average wage, including a \$15 per hour minimum wage that would lift 500,000 BC workers – 25% of the work force – out of poverty.

“For workers, life is less affordable because wages just aren’t keeping up.

“We’re paying more for everything.

“And the government is piling on higher costs for the basics like Hydro, ICBC, and MSP premiums.

“Unless we do something fast and chart a different course, our province is going to be a place where only the rich can live,” he said.



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# Website helps you shop union

**B**C FORUM members who want to support other union members at work should take a look at a website developed here in BC which helps progressive consumers identify union goods and services.

ShopUnion.ca launched in January, 2012, and it has thousands of listings of common products and services which we buy every day of the week.

Items as diverse as car batteries, breakfast cereals, work clothing,

beer, wine, taxi cabs and other consumer items are being added to the site every week.

Simply type in the name of the item you want to buy. The key word search tells you the name of the

company that makes it, its location, its website and its union affiliation.

Check out **www.shopunion.ca**

Support the union members who produce these goods for you.

## Information for retired workers

- Seniors are frequent targets of scam artists. The Canadian Centre for Elder Law has published a series of fact sheets on the most common frauds and how you can protect yourself on the phone, in your home and community, on the internet, and how to prevent identity theft. Google "Be a Savvy Senior Fraud Protection."
- A People's Law School publication summarizes benefits which may be available to seniors in B.C., including OAS, CPP, EI and welfare. Search the web for "When I'm 64: Benefits for Seniors" to download the publication or order a free copy.
- The Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of B.C. (COSCO) offers a wide range of free workshops to seniors groups throughout the province. Visit **www.coscobc.org** for a complete listing of topics and details on how to schedule a workshop for your group.

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# Affordability getting worse for seniors in metro Vancouver

**T**HE AFFORDABILITY crisis is hitting seniors in metro Vancouver especially hard, and it's getting worse, say the New Democrats.

A recent report on affordability in metro Vancouver showed that there was a 38-per-cent increase in the number of seniors waiting for affordable housing between 2012 and 2016, all of this while the Christy Clark government claimed to be taking action.

"Seniors are facing long waits for basic, affordable housing," said New Democrat spokesperson for seniors, Selina Robinson.

"They're living with family members or left for too long in temporary accommodations. The Clark government simply hasn't taken the appropriate steps to ensure that seniors have a home of their own."

Robinson outlined the story of Linda Brunden, a Burnaby senior who moved into a temporary residence in August, 2015 and has been on the housing registry ever since.

"In March, there were more than 3,500 seniors like Linda on the housing registry," said Robinson.

"She lost her job because the business she was working for was sold, and as a result, she wound up homeless and lived on the street for two weeks. She called BC211, and was told to go to an emergency shelter in the downtown eastside of Vancouver.

"She eventually found temporary housing, meant to last three to six months, and has been there more than a year.

"Linda is the embodiment of the failure of the Clark Liberal government to address the serious housing affordability crisis."



Selina Robinson, NDP spokesperson for seniors (right), along with John Horgan, party leader, and MLA Shane Simpson (not pictured), met with President Diane Wood and other members of the BC FORUM board of directors in September.

## Some of Christy Clark's benefit clawbacks to end

**A**FTER MONTHS of pressure the Clark government has finally agreed to end benefit clawback policies that drove families deeper into poverty, says B.C. New Democrat social development spokesperson Michelle Mungall.

"John Horgan and the B.C. New Democrats demanded that the government do the right thing for families by putting an end to their cruel policy of taking away parental leave and other Employment Insurance benefits from disabled British Columbians," said Mungall.

Unfortunately, this is just one of many backwards B.C. Liberal policies that have left families struggling to afford the basics, she said.

"The Christy Clark government continues to refuse to reverse the bus pass clawback that has left over

3,500 people with disabilities unable to afford a bus pass – making it harder for them to participate in their communities," said Mungall, and many people with disabilities are forced to choose between transportation and food.

"British Columbia is the only province in Canada without a poverty reduction plan, and it shows," said Mungall. "More than half of British Columbians are living paycheck to paycheck. One quarter of children are living below the poverty line. Wages are stagnant and the cost of living is skyrocketing.

"In Christy Clark's B.C. the only people who aren't struggling are the ones who can afford to spend \$20,000 to sit next to her at fundraising dinners. That's just wrong, and the Christy Clark government has the wrong priorities."

# PowerBC will create jobs and clean, affordable electricity

**P**OWERBC is a sweeping energy plan that will create jobs in every community in B.C. while protecting families and businesses from runaway Hydro bills.

“Our kids and grandkids deserve real leadership. With our plan we are looking forward and creating clean energy jobs throughout B.C.,” says NDP Leader John Horgan.

“By far the most efficient way to meet B.C.’s future energy needs is to save energy now,” says Jennie Moore, Associate Dean for Building Design and Construction Technology at BCIT. “Here at BCIT we showed that it is possible to achieve a 75 percent reduction in energy demand with deep building retrofits.”

“There is huge potential in new clean energy technologies,” says Rob Baxter of Vancouver Renewable Energy. “PowerBC will allow us to take advantage of the best of these technologies.”

PowerBC will conserve, invest and innovate to:

- Protect BC Hydro customers from runaway bills.
- Produce good-paying jobs close to home, in every community in British Columbia.
- Protect our farmland and natural environment.
- Respect First Nations land title.
- Launch careers in clean energy and retrofit construction, maintenance, manufacturing, and high-tech engineering.
- Guarantee B.C. jobs and training opportunities through local procurement and local hiring.
- Ensure B.C. has access to clean and affordable electricity for generations to come.



George Heyman, NDP spokesperson on the environment and green jobs, Rob Baxter of Vancouver Renewable Energy, John Horgan, NDP Leader, and Jennie Moore of BCIT, unveiled PowerBC late last year. The ambitious plan is key to a strong BC economy.

PowerBC has four components:

## Retrofit public buildings

A serious long-term commitment to energy efficiency in public buildings will save money, reduce overall demand, and create good-paying jobs and apprenticeships. For every dollar spent, according to BC Stats, such retrofits create twice as many jobs as dam construction.

## Retrofit homes and businesses

The cheapest and greenest source of electricity is conservation. By helping families and businesses replace wasteful equipment, seal leaks and install proper insulation, we can cut Hydro bills, free up generating capacity, and reduce climate changing emissions where oil or gas are used for heat. In an average detached single-family home, a retrofit can cut energy bills by up to 25 percent, a household savings of hundreds of dollars every year.

## Maximize existing dams

Many dams are operating tur-

bines and transformers designed in the 1950s. Some are not built out to full capacity. By installing new, high-efficiency technology and adding capacity, we can generate more electricity without flooding farms and sensitive ecosystems or encroaching on First Nations land title.

## Invest in clean energy

Whether it's wind, solar, battery technology or electric vehicles, the costs are dropping and demand is surging. B.C. has tremendous opportunities to produce renewable energy and export renewable energy technology. With investment and leadership, B.C. can support our technology sector and foster the good-paying research, engineering and trades jobs of the future.

The NDP will position B.C. to become a clean energy powerhouse by taking advantage of the more than 300 promising sites for wind generated power, both inland and on the coast.

## NEWS IN BRIEF



BC FORUM Board members Diane Wood, John Radosevic, Miriam Olney and Russ St. Eloi helped the New Westminster and District Labour Council celebrate its 50th anniversary.



Agnew Jackman, Marion Pollack, Bill Silvester, Miriam Olney, Fred Girling, Diane Wood and Barb Mikulec represented BC FORUM at a major COSCO conference in September.

## Senior Citizens' Repair Service

We provide low-cost minor house repairs, renovations and maintenance for seniors 55 years and over and for people with disabilities.

Services include plumbing, carpentry, electrical work, gas fitting, painting, yard work and general handyman services.

All services are guaranteed for 30 days and offered by retired or semi-retired experienced tradespeople.

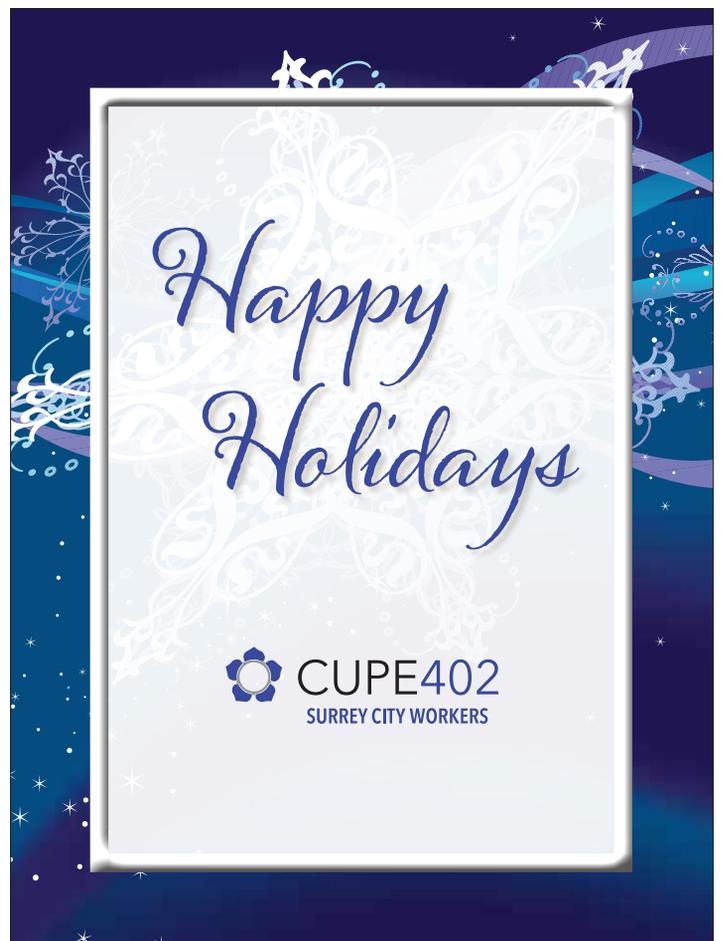
Office hours are 9 am to 12 noon, Monday to Friday.

Serves Metro Vancouver.

Phone: 604 529-1100



*Sponsored by the Plumbers and Pipefitters Union Local 170*



**Strengthening BC FORUM has never been more important**

**Please encourage your friends to join our team**

THROUGH OUR UNIONS, before we retired, we've all seen the benefits of collective action. Our voices are strongest when we stand together in solidarity.

That's where BC FORUM comes in. We are the only provincial organization that represents union members who have retired or are nearing retirement. We are an integral part of the labour movement, with formal representation in leadership bodies, and maintain strong links with provincial and national seniors' groups.

Together, we can make a difference for ourselves and our families. Please encourage friends, colleagues and family members to join us using the form below, or on-line at [www.bcforum.ca](http://www.bcforum.ca).

**Renew your membership – and sign up a friend**

PLEASE HAVE A LOOK at the mailing label on this edition of *The Advocate* to check whether your membership is now due for renewal. If your membership is about to expire, you can renew by mailing the coupon below to BC FORUM, #200 - 5118 Joyce St., Vancouver, B.C. V5R 4H1.

You can also renew your membership on-line at [www.bcforum.ca](http://www.bcforum.ca).

We also ask for your help in reaching out to people who are nearing retirement or have already retired. Like all membership-based organizations, we are all stronger when as many people as possible work together.

Remember that BC FORUM actively welcomes workers who are 50 and older, so don't be shy about encouraging your friends and family members to join us, even if they are still in the workforce.

Solidarity makes us strong.



BC FORUM has always provided free \$2,500 Accidental Death and Dismemberment insurance coverage to members.

We are proud to now extend this coverage to members' spouses at the low cost of \$5 per year. All you have to do is check the appropriate box when you apply or renew your membership. BC FORUM's AD&D coverage is valid until you reach age 86, the maximum age we were able to negotiate.



Please check your expiry date on the mailing label. BCGEU, HSA, MoveUp, CEU, CUPE 386, UFCW, Heat and Frost, UNIFOR 2301 and LiUNA 1611 pay first year dues for qualified members.



B.C. Federation of Retired Union Members • #200 - 5118 Joyce St., Vancouver, V5R 4H1  
604 688-4565 • 1 800 896-5678 • Fax: 604 430-5917 • [bcforum@bcfed.ca](mailto:bcforum@bcfed.ca) • [www.bcforum.ca](http://www.bcforum.ca)

**Membership:  Application  Renewal  New address**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
LAST FIRST INITIAL

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
STREET ADDRESS CITY POSTAL CODE

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Union: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth:\* \_\_\_\_\_  
DAY MONTH YEAR

Spouse's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's birth date:\* \_\_\_\_\_  
DAY MONTH YEAR

\$20 - 1 year  \$49 - 3 years (free \$2,500 AD&D for member)

\$25 - 1 year  \$64 - 3 years (adds \$2,500 AD&D for spouse)

Payment:  Cheque  Visa  MC Expiry: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Card number: \_\_\_\_\_

.....  
SIGNATURE

Date of application: \_\_\_\_\_  
DAY MONTH YEAR

\* Required for AD&D group insurance coverage to age 86.

# Helping to build a better BC

**T**HERE ARE many reasons for joining BC FORUM, including access to group benefit plans and supporting collective action on issues that affect our families.

“I joined because it’s a good way to stay connected with progressive people and issues and the labour movement,” says Libby Davies, former Deputy Leader of Canada’s NDP.

“I really like the idea that we are activists for life – and retirement doesn’t mean you go to some other world that’s distant from what you care about and want to be involved in,” says Davies.

“I also like that the BC Forum has real benefits... for example, I loved (seeing the information about) the maintenance/repair service provided by retired trades folks. How cool is that!”

A Vancouver City councillor for 11 years, Davies was elected as MP for Vancouver East in 1997. She served as NDP House Leader from 2003 to 2015, and Deputy Leader from 2007 to 2015. In her many critic roles, she was a strong advocate on affordable housing, homelessness, multiculturalism, drug policy reform, and public health care, including improvements in end of life care. She did not seek re-election in 2015.

“BC FORUM is clearly very involved in current issues that concern us all, like education, health care, decent wages and workplace safety, and as ‘retired’ folks we can count ourselves in to help, motivate, and make the tent bigger,” says Davies.

“You know what they say about women as we age – we get more radical.

“It seems to me this is a good time to get our province going in a progressive direction and retired folks can be a key part of that,” says Davies.



Libby Davies, an icon to progressive people in Canada, speaks out about why she joined people working for change through the BC Federation of Retired Union Members.

## **New address? New e-mail address?**

Please send your new address and e-mail address to BC FORUM. You can mail in the form on page 15, or you can reach us by telephone or e-mail: 1.800.896.5678 (toll free), 604.688.4565, [bcforum@bcfed.ca](mailto:bcforum@bcfed.ca)



**Please check the expiry date on your label. Is your membership due for renewal?**