



Annual General Meeting
June 19, 2019

Report to
2019 Annual General Meeting
from

BC FORUM Board of Directors
Diane Wood, President

2019 Annual General Meeting

Sisters and brothers,

Welcome!

Since our last annual meeting, we have continued to see progress on some of the campaigns and issues fought for by the BC Federation of Retired Union Members and our allies.

This is the last year that any of us will pay the unfair, wholly regressive MSP premiums – a huge relief for hundreds of thousands of people and particularly for retired workers.

In addition, the John Horgan government continues to take significant steps on public health care, child care, affordable housing, poverty reduction and more. With the support of Green MLAs for just a single vote majority in the Legislature – the NDP is moving decisively to undo 16 years of damage to public services, social equity and respect for workers.

In health care, two recent initiatives will mean a significant improvement in care for the most frail and vulnerable among us. Home support services – many contracted out to for-profit corporations by the previous government – are being returned to the public service as the contracts expire. And the government has eliminated contract flipping in extended care facilities, ensuring continuity of care and stability for both workers and residents.

Another major initiative that puts people first is the steady expansion of team-based care throughout the province. Primary care networks, being rolled out in 15 communities this year, give patients access to a full range of health care options from maternity to end of life. Ten new urgent primary care centres will provide care to patients who don't have a family doctor, as well as weekend and after-hours care. Community health centres will bring together health and social services to improve access to health promotion, preventive care and ongoing services.

BC FORUM and our allies have consistently advocated for a strong public health care system and opposed privatization.

We have advocated for action to reduce poverty.

We have supported the campaign to change employment standards to protect children.

We have spoken out on the vital need to protect our environment and fight climate change.

We salute the Horgan government for its actions on all of these issues and more. At a time when other governments are cutting services to people, the B.C. government is a beacon of hope that the public interest, the common good, will prevail.

The last year wasn't all roses. We were part of the campaign in favour of an electoral system where every vote counts. As you know, that referendum was defeated, likely dashing all hope of achieving proportional representation in our generation.

Other campaign priorities that we've worked on during the last year – including prescription drug coverage for everyone in Canada, and pension protection for workers – are ongoing. These will be critical issues for us in this year's federal election.

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 implement a comprehensive national Pharmacare program – to achieve these benefits.

It is still the case that long-term workers can lose their pensions when corporations declare bankruptcy. The deferred earnings of workers are stolen to satisfy the demands of big banks and large institutional shareholders. We will continue to advocate on this issue, as well as Bill C-27 which threatens the defined pension benefits of thousands.

Floods. Wildfires. Droughts. Massive loss of biodiversity and extinctions of species. All of these are immense threats to the future of humanity and our planet – and the science is clear that they are driven by the human caused rise in greenhouse gases. The level of carbon dioxide in Earth's atmosphere reached 415 parts per million this spring, the highest in more than three million years. At that time, sea levels were 10 to 20 meters higher than today and forests covered parts of Antarctica. In the face of the challenge of the climate crisis many governments are more talk than action and some are actively going backwards. BC FORUM will continue to monitor this crucial issue, share information with our members, and advocate for real action by governments.

The next federal election, to be held Oct. 21, 2019, is fast approaching. Again, we will work closely with the labour movement, and 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 BC NDP government, it remains critically important for BC FORUM members to join us in advancing the issues that affect us and our families at the national level. 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.

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 are members of the B.C. Federation of Labour's Political Action Committee. We also participate in the CLC Pacific Region Federal Election Working Group.

Since our last report, we communicated directly with our members on the crucial and successful provincial by-election in Nanaimo, as well as the federal by-election in Nanaimo Ladysmith. BC FORUM also communicated with our members to provide them with the names of municipal election candidates who were endorsed by their local labour council. The Advocate featured several articles on these elections.

We also work closely with 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 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 continue to explore ways to strengthen our finances. We are encouraged that delegates to the 2018 B.C. Federation of Labour convention passed a resolution to explore ways to provide increased funding to our organization.

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 provide the excellent benefit plans that are available to BC FORUM members – very generously contribute \$40,000 a year. They also prepare BC FORUM's financial statements and payroll, and maintain employee records.

Working Ventures Insurance Solutions Ltd. contributes \$6,000 annually.

UFCW 1518 has again generously committed to paying the cost of printing The Advocate this year. They have also allowed us to host our AGM in their auditorium for several years running.

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, strengthen our communications, 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.

We have recently welcomed several new members to our volunteer Board of Directors.

Laird Cronk, the newly elected President of the BC FED, is the new Chair of BC FORUM, taking over from his predecessor Irene Lanzinger. Their direct involvement over the past year greatly strengthened our relationship with the labour movement in working on common issues. We greatly appreciate the strong support Laird and Irene have provided to BC FORUM.

Gwenne Farrell takes over from Andy Ross as the representative of MoveUP. We thank Andy for his contribution and particularly his work to update BC FORUM's constitution and bylaws.

Gerry Tiede is the new representative of the BC Teachers Federation. We thank Barb Mikulec for her many contributions to our work.

Ivan Limpricht, former President of UFCW 1518, joins Miriam Olney as their union's second representative on our board.

We also extend our thanks to Gord Larkin, CLC, who served BC FORUM at the board table and elsewhere for many years.

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 currently have 25 regional representatives who speak on our behalf at 16 labour councils throughout the province. We thank Sandy Bauer who served long and well as BC FORUM's Regional Representative and Delegate to the Vancouver and District Labour Council.

Coordinating our work at the provincial and regional level is a key priority for the Board. Our delegates are 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.

We send our regional 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 continues to work 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 Fed Convention and regional conference
- BCTF AGM
- BCRTA AGM
- CUPE BC Convention
- MoveUP Convention
- HSA Convention
- HEU Convention
- CLC Winter School, five weeks, Jan. 13 to Feb. 15
- FPSE AGM, Kelowna
- USW District 3, Kamloops
- USW National Conference, Vancouver
- BC Health Coalition AGM
- National Pensioners Federation Convention
- UBC Staff Pension Plan Fair
- SHARE and BC Fed pension forum
- Labour Day celebrations in the Lower Mainland, Fraser Valley and Kamloops.
- BC Fed Executive Council

- BC Building Trades Convention
- BC Building Trades golf tournament
- CURC Executive Council meetings and convention
- 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
- BC Summit for Older Adults on Safe Medication Use, co-hosted by COSCO and the Canadian Deprescribing Network.
- 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 to BC Fed affiliates’ campaigns and job action

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 is updated frequently.
- The Advocate is mailed to all BC FORUM members, 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. It is also distributed to COSCO, CURC, NPF and other allies.

- We lobby and make direct contact with MPs, MLAs, opinion leaders and decision-makers.
- We made several submissions to the provincial government to present our views on poverty reduction, child care, the minimum wage, and to advocate for budget priorities that emphasized services and support for seniors.

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), 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 have also contacted 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. Our First Vice President Sam Wiese 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, Women's Rights, and Political Action. 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 display information on the Protein Project at our displays at conventions and conferences.

We support the United Way as part of labour's involvement in our communities.

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 supported and campaigned 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.

We actively support affiliates' campaigns such as HEU's Care Can't Wait, BCGEU's Seniors Deserve Better and CUPW's Postal Banking.

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

We support NDP MP Don Davies' petition for a universal Dental Care plan.

Our voice on these issues and more is strengthened by BC FORUM's participation 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 September in Regina. 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. In addition, The Advocate is posted to our BC FORUM's website, as well as the websites of other organizations and allies.

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

Michelle Boudreau frequently updates our website to provide the most current information on BC FORUM and labour movement campaigns and events. She is also working on revitalizing our organization's presence on Facebook.

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. 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 staffs our office at the BC Federation of Labour four days a week.

We are fortunate to have a person with her experience and dedication to help with responding to members' requests, dealing with renewals, and providing administrative support to our volunteer board.

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

Laird Cronk, Chair	BCFED
Diane Wood, President	BCGEU
Gord Savard, Vice President	CUPE
Sam Wiese, Vice President	PSAC
Dan Bradford, Treasurer	BCGEU
Miriam Olney, Secretary	UFCW
Donisa Bernardo	HEU
Tony Brown	ILWU
Gwenne Farrell	MoveUP
Fred Girling	USW
Ivan Imlight	UFCW 1518
Marion Pollack	CUPW
John Radosevic	UNIFOR
John Savage	UNIFOR
Bill Silvester	USW
Maureen Shaw	FPSE
Russ St. Eloi	BCYT-BCTC
Gerry Tiede	BCTF

Regional Representatives

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

Bill Chedore, 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