



November 26, 2020

Honourable Mike Farnworth
Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, British Columbia V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Farnworth:

Thank you for agreeing to serve British Columbians as Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General. You are taking on this responsibility at a time when people in our province face significant challenges as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 has turned the lives of British Columbians upside down. None of us expected to face the challenges of the past number of months, yet British Columbians have demonstrated incredible resilience, time and time again. We will get through the pandemic and its aftereffects by building on this resilience and focusing on what matters most to people.

British Columbians voted for a government focused on their priorities: fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, providing better health care for people and families, delivering affordability and security in our communities, and investing in good jobs and livelihoods in a clean-energy future.

I expect you – and the work of your ministry – to focus on the commitments detailed in our platform, *Working for You*, along with the following foundational principles:

- **Putting people first:** Since 2017, our government has focused on making decisions to meet people's needs. That focus drove our work in our first term and will continue to be our priority. British Columbians are counting on the government to keep them safe and to build an economic recovery that works for everyone, not just those at the top. Keeping people at the centre of everything we do means protecting and enhancing the public services people rely on and working to make life more affordable for everyone.
- **Lasting and meaningful reconciliation:** Reconciliation is an ongoing process and a shared responsibility for us all. The unanimous passage of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* was a significant step forward in this journey. True

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reconciliation will take time and ongoing commitment to work with Indigenous peoples as they move toward self-determination. Our government – and every ministry – must remain focused on creating opportunities for Indigenous peoples to be full partners in our economy and providing a clear and sustainable path for everyone to work toward lasting reconciliation.

- **Equity and anti-racism:** Our province's history, identity and strength are rooted in its diverse population. Yet racialized and marginalized people face historic and present-day barriers that limit their full participation in their communities, workplaces, government and their lives. Our government has a moral and ethical responsibility to tackle systemic discrimination in all its forms – and every ministry has a role in this work. While our caucus elected a record number of women, more work remains to address gender equity. Delivering on our commitments to address racial discrimination will require a commitment by all of government to ensure increased IBPOC (Indigenous, Black and People of Colour) representation within the public service, including in government appointments. Our efforts to address systemic discrimination must also inform policy and budget decisions by reviewing all decisions through a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens.
- **A better future through fighting climate change:** In 2018, our government launched our CleanBC climate action plan. CleanBC puts British Columbia on the path to a cleaner, better future by building a low-carbon economy with new clean-energy jobs and opportunities, protecting our air, land and water and supporting communities to prepare for climate impacts. It is every Minister's responsibility to ensure your ministry's work continues to achieve CleanBC's goals.
- **A strong, sustainable economy that works for everyone:** We will continue our work to support British Columbians through the pandemic and the economic recovery by investing in health care, getting people back to work, helping businesses and communities, and building the clean, innovative economy of the future. Our plan will train the workforce of tomorrow, help businesses hire and grow and invest in the infrastructure needed to build our province.

The pandemic has reminded us that we're strongest when we work together. Delivering on our commitments to people will require a coordinated effort with your cabinet and caucus colleagues, supported by the skilled professionals in the public service. You will also support your cabinet colleagues to do their work, particularly where commitments cross ministry lines.

British Columbians expect their elected representatives to work together to advance the broader public good despite their partisan perspectives. That means seeking out, fostering and championing good ideas, regardless of their origin. I expect you to reach out to elected members from all parties as you deliver on your mandate. Further, you will build thoughtful and sustained relationships through public and stakeholder engagement plans that connect with people to incorporate their perspectives early in the policy development process. These plans must include measurable outcomes and ensure active dialogue and ongoing outreach in your ministry's actions and priorities.

Over the course of our mandate, I expect you will make progress on the following items:

- Working closely with the Provincial Health Officer and your cabinet colleagues, continue to oversee the COVID-19 state of emergency and implement emergency orders as needed to support the health and well-being of British Columbians.
- Help B.C. restaurants and hospitality businesses through COVID-19 and beyond by delivering a temporary cap on food delivery app fees and making permanent urgent actions our government took in the spring: authorizing the expansion of service areas, allowing restaurants and pubs to purchase alcohol at wholesale cost, and allowing liquor delivery with takeout.
- Deliver a fair deal to B.C. drivers by providing COVID-19 premium rebates from any surplus ICBC delivers during the pandemic.
- Make car insurance more affordable by continuing to move ICBC to a new enhanced care model, reducing premiums by an average of 20 percent while increasing the care available for people who are seriously injured in accidents.
- Establish an ICBC Fairness Officer to improve transparency and accountability.
- Work with police to address serious crime in B.C. communities, including cracking down on those who distribute toxic drugs on the streets.
- Make our streets safer from gangs and guns by introducing legislation to improve information sharing for law enforcement agencies, regulate imitation firearms, strengthen regulation of shooting ranges and close regulatory gaps.
- Increase support for initiatives that are proven to prevent and reduce crime and increase the use of restorative justice programs.
- With support from your cabinet colleagues, continue to work to implement the Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.
- Take concrete steps to evaluate the recommendations of the Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act and, with the assistance of the Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives, bring forward recommendations to address systemic racism, create dedicated hate crime units within local police forces, and review training and procedures related to ‘wellness checks’.
- Work with the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and the Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing to fast track the move toward decriminalization by working with police chiefs to push Ottawa to decriminalize simple possession of small amounts of illicit drugs for personal use. In the absence of prompt federal action, develop a made-in-B.C. solution that will help save lives.

- Support the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions to invest in community-based mental health and social services so there are more trained front-line workers to help people in crisis, and free up police to focus on more serious crimes.
- Work with the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and interested municipalities to expand the successful 'situation table' model that connects front-line workers from different health, safety, and social service sectors to identify and help vulnerable people.
- Support the work of the Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity to develop an action plan to end gender-based violence, including minimum standards for sexual assault response, more training for police, crown council and justices, and core funding for sexual assault centres.
- Support the work of the Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors' Services and Long-Term Care to work with community groups and the B.C. Seniors Advocate to develop a made-in-B.C. Silver Alert system to help assist first responders in locating missing seniors, particularly those with dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

To assist you in meeting the commitments we have made to British Columbians, you are assigned a Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Preparedness. You will work closely together and ensure your Parliamentary Secretary receives appropriate support to deliver on the following priorities, outlined in the mandate letter issued to them:

- Work with communities to identify gaps in existing emergency response procedures and resources, with the goal of updating and future-proofing our province-wide ability to respond to crises, including pandemics.
- Work to complete the modernization of the *Emergency Programs Act*.
- Support the work of the Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development to work with local governments to reduce wildfire risk and better prepare and support communities for future wildfires.

Our work as a government must continually evolve to meet the changing needs of people in this province. Issues not contemplated in this letter will come forward for government action and I ask you to bring such matters forward for consideration by the Planning and Priorities Committee of cabinet, with the expectation that any proposed initiatives will be subject to the usual cabinet and Treasury Board oversight. Your ministry's priorities must reflect our government's overall strategic plan as determined by cabinet.

All cabinet members are expected to review, understand, and act according to the *Members' Conflict of Interest Act* and conduct themselves with the highest level of integrity. As a minister of the Crown, your conduct will reflect not only on you but on cabinet and our government. You are responsible for providing strong, professional and ethical leadership within cabinet and your ministry. You will establish a collaborative working relationship with your deputy minister and the public servants under their direction who provide the professional, non-partisan advice that is

fundamental to delivering on our government's priorities. You must ensure your minister's office meets the highest standards for integrity and provides a respectful and rewarding environment for all staff.

My commitment to all British Columbians is to do my level best to make sure people's lives are better, safer and more affordable. I believe the challenges we face can and will be overcome by working together. By way of this letter, I am expressing my faith that people can expect the same commitment from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "John J. Horgan", followed by a long horizontal flourish.

John Horgan
Premier