



December 7, 2022

Honourable Jagrup Brar
Minister of State for Trade
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Brar:

Thank you for agreeing to serve as Minister of State for Trade. I trust in your leadership at this critical time to deliver results for the people of British Columbia.

British Columbians continue to recover from and respond to the upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate related natural disasters, while global inflation is driving up costs for more households and the world's economic outlook is concerning. Now more than ever, we need to focus on building a secure, low emission, sustainable economy, and a province where everyone can find a good home – whether you live in a rural area, in a city, or in an Indigenous community. We will continue working toward true and meaningful reconciliation by supporting opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to be full partners in the inclusive and sustainable province we are building together.

Our government is committed to delivering on the mandate British Columbians gave us in 2020. Together we can make life better for people in B.C., improve the services we all rely on, and ensure a sustainable province for future generations.

As we renew our work, my priority as Premier is to deliver results that people can see and feel in four key areas:

- **Attainable and affordable housing:** In the wake of soaring prices and record migration to B.C., we will take on the important work of building new homes that are actually attainable for the middle class, while continuing our work to address the housing crisis for those in distress on our streets.

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- **Safer communities:** To address concerns about public safety, both for the people struggling with mental health and addiction on our streets, as well as the feeling that downtown centres are not as safe as they were before the pandemic, we will work with our partners at all levels of government, the justice and health care systems, the non-profit sector, and community leaders to find solutions for this complex challenge facing our province, and work overtime to seize the assets of high-level criminals.
- **Improved health care:** Amid unprecedented pressures we will continue to work to strengthen our public health care system, from family doctors to new hospitals, so care is there for each of us when we need it.
- **A sustainable, clean, secure, and fair economy:** We will continue our work investing in British Columbians, fighting racism and promoting equity, and building a clean economy that addresses our obligations to combat climate change by driving down emissions, while creating good, family supporting jobs.

Building strong trade relationships will help protect British Columbia against uncertain global economic forces. In the context of rising inflation, supply chain challenges, and labour shortages, diversifying our trade relationships, identifying emerging areas of focus, and fortifying our existing connections will ensure that we can solidify our strong employment numbers and grow our economy in a way that is sustainable for future generations.

Our province is already known for value-added resource commodities, clean and safe foods and manufactured goods, and game-changing services. Championing British Columbia beyond our borders – internationally and within Canada – means a continued focus on what we do well to ensure that businesses big and small can reach their customers and help build a strong economy across the province.

Home to world class post-secondary and skills training facilities, remarkable natural resources, and exceptional arts and cultural industries, our province is also quickly developing a reputation as a leader in innovative technologies, including in the hydrogen, cleantech, and biotech sectors. Through ambitious efforts to build new trade relationships and promote our high-tech sectors, we can bring made-in-B.C. goods and services to markets around the world, meeting the demand for clean, sustainable, and responsibly produced products.

Since 2020, our government has made considerable progress on important initiatives including:

- Working with your colleagues and the people of British Columbia to launch the ambitious StrongerBC Economic Plan that focuses on the missions of clean and inclusive growth for our province.
- Creating the Office of Mass Timber Implementation and investing \$5.4 million to accelerate the use of mass timber demonstration projects, making B.C. a world leader in this new sector.

As you continue to make progress on items in the previous mandate letter, over the remaining period of this mandate I expect you to prioritize making progress on the following:

- Continue to leverage our role as the trade gateway to Canada by seeking new strategies to expand export opportunities and diversify our trading partners across the globe, and by arranging opportunities for B.C. to showcase our remarkable products and services to potential trading partners with strong prospects for growth in trade with our province.
- Work with all ministries to ensure more regular interactions with the federal government on B.C.'s international trade and economic priorities, including increased opportunities for face-to-face meetings with staff and key ministers in Ottawa.
- Build on relationships with B.C.'s neighbouring jurisdictions – including through the Pacific Coast Collaborative, the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region, and inter-provincial trade – to expand trade opportunities for B.C. businesses and support our shared efforts to reduce emissions.
- Continue to work across ministries and with the federal government to ensure British Columbia's interests are protected and advanced in trade negotiations and disputes, including supporting the Minister of Forests on softwood lumber negotiations with the United States.

Our work together must continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of people in this province. Issues not contemplated by 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 and include measurable outcomes for British Columbians. Your ministry's priorities must reflect our government's overall strategic plan as determined by Cabinet.

British Columbians expect their elected representatives to work together to advance the public good. 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 both with title holders and through public and stakeholder engagement plans that incorporate diverse perspectives early in the policy development process. Federal partnerships and resources will be particularly important and, on behalf of our government, you will engage with the federal government on advancing priorities to improve the lives of British Columbians.

As a Cabinet, we will uphold the highest standards of ethics, collaboration, and good conduct in service of the public, and as a Minister of the Crown, you are expected to review, understand, and act according to the *Members' Conflict of Interest Act*. 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. Your Minister's Office must meet the highest standards for integrity and provide a respectful, rewarding environment for all staff.

The rural and urban challenges that we face are urgent and complex. In response, we must be forward-thinking, strategic, and ready to work across disciplines and old divisions in new ways. Labour shortages are a major issue globally, and British Columbia is no exception, including in the public service. Maintaining the BC Public Service as an employer of excellence will be key to retaining and recruiting the diverse professionals we rely on to deliver essential services, advice, and analysis.

At the core of this work is listening and responding to the priorities of people in B.C. Together, we can deliver results in very real ways – ways that people can see, feel, and touch, and that change their lives for the better. Thank you for doing this important work with me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Eby", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Eby, KC
Premier