

The background image is a scenic landscape photograph. In the foreground, two hikers with backpacks are walking away from the camera on a grassy trail. The middle ground is filled with dense evergreen trees. In the background, there are majestic, rugged mountains with some snow patches under a cloudy sky. A solid teal bar runs across the bottom of the image, containing the text 'ANNUAL REPORT | 2020/21'.

Better Regulations for British Columbians

ANNUAL REPORT | 2020/21



Contents

Message from the Minister	4
Introduction	5
Section One: COVID-19 Pandemic Rapid Response	6
Tools and Technology	7
Eased Costs	9
Reduced Barriers	11
Support for People and Businesses.	14
Section Two: Commitment to Reconciliation, Equity and Inclusion	18
Section Three: People-First Approach	20
Section Four: Initiatives to Build a Strong Economy.	24
Section Five: Investment in a Sustainable Future.	26
Section Six: Accountability and Commitment.	32
Regulatory Requirements Count	33
Better Regulations for British Columbians Amendment Package.	34
Inclusive Language Initiative	34
Our Commitment	34



Ravi Kahlon

Minister of Jobs, Economic
Recovery and Innovation

Message from the Minister

I am proud to present this year's Better Regulations for British Columbians report. The profiled stories feature the role government has played to help people and businesses adapt to unanticipated events and shifting conditions.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for all of us, and we recognize that some have been especially hard hit. Our focus is ensuring that our province's economic recovery works for everyone. The B.C. government has rolled out a \$10 billion COVID-19 response, which includes *StrongerBC for everyone: BC's Economic Recovery Plan* – a strategy that protects people's health and livelihoods while supporting businesses and communities.

This report outlines the actions taken to improve our regulations and services over the past fiscal year to support economic recovery throughout British Columbia. Some of our achievements include caps to rental fee increases, increased childcare spaces, and the launch of the BC Marketplace to help B.C. businesses sell their products and services to online audiences, to name a few.

We have also initiated efforts to modernize language used in government regulations and policies so that everyone can see themselves in the language used by government. This year, we successfully eliminated over 600 instances of gendered language within our regulations, the first jurisdiction in Canada to begin this important work. It is important to reframe our language to build a better B.C., where everyone is included and reflected in government services and policies.

By working together, we continue to create opportunities for people and businesses to build a brighter future for everyone.

Sincerely,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several fluid, connected strokes.

Honourable Ravi Kahlon
Minister of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation

Introduction

British Columbia's long-standing commitment to regulatory and service improvement is supported by three primary goals:

- ✓ to increase access to quality government services that people count on;
- ✓ to promote a modern, efficient, and effective regulatory system; and
- ✓ to enhance accountability for regulatory and service improvement.

Central to our ability to deliver these goals is the continued dedication to eliminate outdated regulations and make services more accessible for British Columbians throughout the province.

The Better Regulations for British Columbians annual report highlights government's work in the past fiscal year to improve services and regulations for people and businesses throughout B.C. The stories featured reflect the extraordinary year experienced by all British Columbians in the context of COVID-19, alongside government's ongoing commitment to its key principles.

The report is organized into the following sections:

- [COVID-19 Pandemic Rapid Response](#): features government's quick actions to enable technologies, ease costs, reduce barriers, and support people and businesses as B.C. navigates the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftereffects;
- [Commitment to Reconciliation, Equity and Inclusion](#): highlights initiatives that ensure all people are seen, heard, respected and supported and have equal access and opportunities to develop to their full potential;
- [People-First Approach](#): promotes the people-centred regulatory and service improvements that British Columbians have come to trust and rely on;
- [Initiatives to Build a Strong Economy](#): profiles economic recovery through supporting B.C. entrepreneurs and businesses, restoring B.C. jobs, and preparing people for careers of the future; and
- [Investment in a Sustainable Future](#): features initiatives that mitigate climate change and increase provincial food security.
- [Accountability and Commitment](#): The final section profiles government's commitment to maintain accountability and measure progress on regulatory and service improvement. It includes an updated regulatory requirements count and a description of this year's bundled amendment package that featured over 600 updates to gendered language in B.C.'s regulations.

Section One:

COVID-19 Pandemic Rapid Response

The COVID-19 pandemic took the world by storm and changed everything in its path. It has had an unprecedented impact on our people and province.

Businesses were forced to act quickly, shifting their delivery models to comply with public health orders to keep British Columbians safe. Some workers were laid off, others lost their jobs, and many more had to adapt to working remotely while simultaneously managing personal and family priorities. The past year has proven how flexible, responsive and resilient British Columbians are, making headlines under Dr. Bonnie Henry's guidance to *"Be Kind, Be Calm, Be Safe."*

Throughout the crisis, government has put people and businesses first. In addition to providing financial support to those who needed it the most, the Province initiated many programs to keep supply chains open, protect people's jobs and livelihoods, and ensure businesses were operating in a way that kept the public safe.

Going forward, we will build on these successes. We will also continue to support British Columbians through the pandemic and economic recovery by remaining responsive. This includes reviewing the temporary changes made in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that improved service delivery for British Columbians to determine if some of these changes should permanently remain.

This section profiles examples of government's efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic through the rapid use of new and enhanced tools and technology, decreased costs to businesses and people in crisis, reduced barriers to accessing services, and continued support for people and businesses.



Tools and Technology

SERVICE DELIVERY IN A TIME OF CRISIS



A temporary Ministerial Order under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA) allowed health-care workers and other provincial public services to quickly adapt to the temporary use of communication technology tools, making it easier to communicate and coordinate service delivery. The same Ministerial Order allowed post-secondary institutions to pivot their teaching practices to include online meetings, discussions and exam formats as an alternative to in-person classes.

Child and Youth Mental Health services trained all provincial intake teams to offer treatment and therapy services for children and youth by phone and/or virtually.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Quick action by Legal Aid BC ensured that vulnerable people in the province were able to access important legal aid services during the pandemic while in-person services were restricted. Adjustments to services include:

- Increased lawyer resources on the Family LawLINE;
- Scheduled duty counsel and family advice lawyers to provide services entirely by telephone;
- Provided summary advice on criminal matters by telephone upon request;
- Increased resources to Prisoners Legal Services to cover increased demand; and
- Launched a remote child support mediation service.

These adjustments not only helped vulnerable citizens, but also streamlined processes and reduced the potential for a COVID-related backlog that would have slowed service delivery.



VIRTUAL INDUSTRIAL SITE INSPECTIONS FOR GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, regulations under the Greenhouse Gas Industrial Reporting and Control Act (GGIRCA) were amended to extend reporting deadlines and allow for virtual site visits by an accredited third party to industrial operations that emit 25,000 tonnes or more of carbon dioxide equivalent greenhouse gases during each one-year reporting cycle. Third parties review data on how facilities measure the release of gases, ensuring consistent and accurate [greenhouse gas emission reporting](#). Having a professional reliance system throughout B.C. ensures that industrial facilities are meeting world emission reporting standards and enables B.C. to track progress and meet target commitments.

Due to strict compliance guidelines, not all site visits can be done remotely, but of the 102 facilities that required verification for the 2019 reporting year, 50 facilities engaged in virtual verification in line with international best practices.

As a result of positive reviews from industry, verification bodies and accreditation bodies, the regulations under the GGIRCA have been changed to permanently enable virtual site visits. This makes B.C. the first jurisdiction to allow virtual site visits, and maintains the same standard reporting as before while reducing the costs and time involved in third-party verifiers traveling to remote sites.



ELECTRONIC MEETINGS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS

Various Ministerial and Emergency Orders were put in place quickly, which enabled the temporary use of electronic meetings in several contexts. This flexibility protects public health while also ensuring that business is conducted in a timely and efficient manner. Examples include:

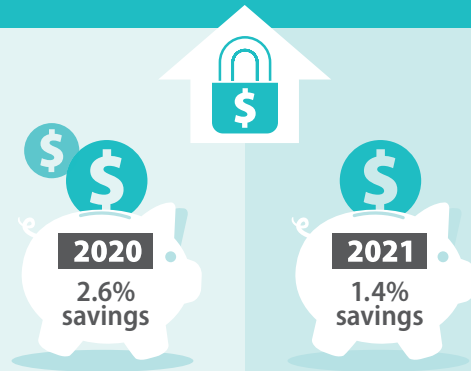
- Societies, cooperative associations and companies were able to meet their obligations under the Cooperative Association Act, Societies Act and Business Corporations Act by holding annual general meetings in an electronic format.
- Strata corporations were able to hold remote/electronic annual and special general meetings. Owners or residents without a computer, smart phone or tablet were able to attend meetings in person, or participate by telephone or by proxy.
- Credit unions were able to hold electronic meetings to ensure they remained engaged with membership and conducted business safely.
- Local governments continued to uphold the principles of transparency, accountability, and accessibility while holding public hearings electronically. While different modes of access were based on local circumstances, public participation and comments were accepted via email, letter, phone, and/or electronically when available. This allowed local governments to provide certainty and ensure important land use decisions were made in a timely manner.

Public in-person hearings are a statutory requirement prior to adopting certain land use bylaws, such as official community plans and zoning bylaw amendments. Emergency Order M192 provides local governments with the authority to hold public hearings electronically during the COVID-19 pandemic so that they can continue making important land use decisions and allow development such as housing to proceed. This is meant to provide continuity, certainty and more predictable timelines to the development industry while supporting economic recovery.

Eased Costs

RENTAL RATE INCREASES FROZEN

Rental rates are frozen until December 2021, saving approximately 1.5 million renters in British Columbia 2.6% of their rental costs in 2020 and 1.4% in 2021.



LOWERED LIQUOR PRICING FOR BUSINESSES

Permanent policy changes now allow restaurants, bars and tourism operators with liquor licences to purchase beer, wine and spirits at the wholesale price set by the BC Liquor Distribution Branch. Prior to this change, hospitality licensees paid full retail price on most liquor purchases.

Reduced liquor pricing better positions the 8,500 business owners in B.C.'s hospitality and restaurant sector, who employ 190,000 British Columbians, to increase revenue as they navigate through the pandemic to economic recovery.



CAPPED DELIVERY SERVICE FEES

Delivery service commissions and other related fees charged to restaurants have been temporarily capped at 15% of the customer's order for delivery services and 5% for all other services to put more money back in business owners' pockets. As a result of the impact of COVID-19, restaurants have increased reliance on delivery services to create new revenue streams and stay afloat during pandemic restrictions and physical distancing. The delivery fee caps ensure immediate relief for businesses by placing a limit on the fees that restaurants must pay for this service.

TAX DEFERRAL IN A TIME OF NEED

- As part of B.C.'s COVID-19 Action Plan, effective March 24, 2020, the due dates for certain tax returns and payments made to government under the consumption tax acts (Carbon Tax Act, Motor Fuel Tax Act, Provincial Sales Tax Act and Tobacco Tax Act) were extended to September 30, 2020. In addition, due dates for the Employer Health Tax were extended. The final 2019 return and payment was extended from June 15, 2020, September 15, 2020 and December 15, 2020 to December 31, 2020, January 31, 2021 and February 28, 2021, respectively. These changes provided immediate relief to businesses in a time when they needed it the most.
- Approximately 45 businesses who purchased multi-jurisdictional vehicles before May 4, 2020 and applied for a B.C.-only licence between March 11, 2020 and September 30, 2020, were waived from paying the exit tax on these vehicles. This temporary measure was used to support the commercial transport industry by allowing certain vehicles to change their licensing status in response to COVID-19 without paying the exit tax that normally would be required from the licensing change.
- Changes to the Land Tax Deferment Act and Regulations modernize the property tax deferment program by implementing online applications as well as automatic renewals and equity checks. The online format makes it easier and faster for homeowners to apply, reduces the mistakes that can happen in paper-based applications and eliminates the need to reapply for future renewal.



WAIVED CIVIL RESOLUTION TRIBUNAL FEE REQUIREMENTS

In response to the hardships brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, B.C.'s [Civil Resolution Tribunal](#) (CRT) on a case-by-case basis, exercised discretion to waive fees for those who lost their incomes as a result of COVID-19 and who can no longer afford CRT fees. These changes saved successful applicants \$25-\$200 in CRT fees per item as current household income documents at the time would not have been able to prove loss of income to obtain the fee waiver.

FLEXIBILITY FOR STRATA CORPORATIONS

Updates to the Strata Property Regulation allow strata corporations the added flexibility to [postpone meetings](#) when a state of emergency is in effect as well as [pay for rising insurance costs from their contingency reserve fund](#), without prior approval from owners, if the payment is required before there is time to arrange a general meeting.

WAIVED RENT FOR COMMERCIAL RECREATION OPERATORS

Eligible holders of commercial recreation tenures and park-use permits, such as outdoor adventure businesses, fishing and hunting lodges, guest ranches, ecotourism lodges, seasonal campgrounds and other commercial recreation operators, will have one year of annual base rent waived by the Province between May 1, 2020 and April 30, 2021.

The total amount of rent forgiveness that has been provided to eligible commercial recreation businesses is \$3.23 million for 1,473 tenures and permits – about \$2.89 million for 990 Land Act tenures and about \$341,000 for 483 Park Act permits.

Reduced Barriers

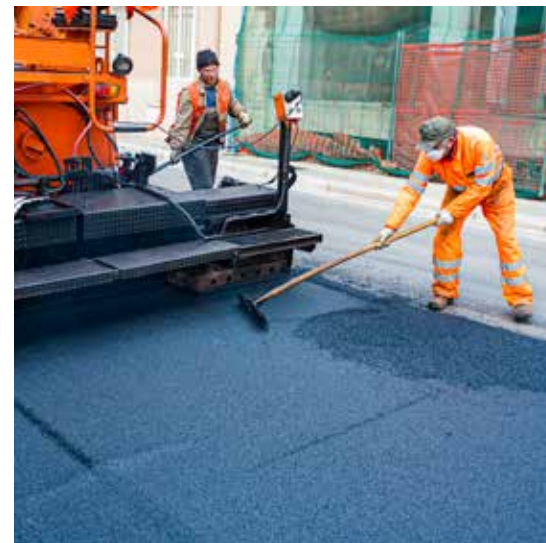


PROTECTED CHILD CARE SPACES

Approximately 4,000 Early Childhood Educators and Early Childhood Educator Assistants received one extra year to complete the professional development and work experience hours needed to renew their certifications. These changes kept people at work in these jobs, and ensured that there was no loss of child care spaces as a result of workers not being able to complete requirements to maintain their certification during the COVID-19 pandemic when child care spaces were scarce.

FINANCIAL FLEXIBILITY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

A Ministerial Order provided local governments with emergency liquidity in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. This package involved several measures including authorizing local governments to borrow from their capital reserves to cover operational revenue shortfalls in 2020. This money could then be repaid to the capital reserve fund over five years. These changes allowed local governments to use their reserve funds to continue providing critical services to residents and businesses, while providing a timely repayment to those for future capital needs.





EXPANDED FOOD AND LIQUOR SERVICE AREAS

Food Primary, Liquor Primary and/or Manufacturer licensees (such as wineries, breweries, and distilleries) can apply for a [temporary authorization to expand service areas](#) until the end of October 2021. So far, approximately 1,318 licensees have been able to temporarily expand their service areas into larger outdoor patio spaces. These changes allowed for more customers to be accommodated safely while still adhering to the required physical distances.

EXTENDED HOURS OF SALE AND DELIVERY OF LIQUOR PRODUCTS

The hours of liquor sales and delivery services were temporarily extended to begin at 7 a.m. instead of 9 a.m. This helped licensees protect and support vulnerable people, such as elderly and/or immunocompromised customers, by providing a greater window of time for customers to shop.

PACKAGED LIQUOR FOR OFF-SITE CONSUMPTION AND DELIVERY

Permanent changes allow Liquor Primary and Food Primary licensees to sell and deliver packaged liquor for off-site consumption with the purchase of meals ordered through take-out or delivery options. These changes open a potential new revenue stream for foodservice businesses.

PACKAGING AND SALE OF GROWLERS FOR OFF-SITE CONSUMPTION AND DELIVERY

Food Primary and Liquor Primary licensees were authorized to package and sell growlers of draught beer for off-site consumption for 60 days. This allowed licensees to mitigate financial loss by selling product which might otherwise have spoiled due to prohibitions to on-site service, and provided a temporary additional revenue stream to maintain operations and employment.



MADE-IN-B.C. SANITIZER

A temporary authorization allowed breweries, wineries and distilleries to use their establishments to manufacture, package, sell and donate sanitizer in response to a recommendation from industry. Participating establishments were able to pivot their operations, create new revenue streams and help manufacturers who may have had to close their lounge areas or tasting rooms, or lose sales revenue due to closures in the hospitality industry. These changes increased the production, distribution and availability of these essential health and safety products required by people, businesses, hospitals and other institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic, and put more sanitizer on the market to ensure B.C. had an ample supply.



SAFER ELECTION PROCESSES FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Over two dozen Ministerial Orders (MOs) were signed by the Minister under the Local Government Act (LGA) to support local governments in conducting safer by-elections and assent votes during the pandemic. The MOs were developed directly with each local government to provide specific exemptions to election procedure bylaws or the LGA to help reduce the spread of COVID-19, and included such measures as allowing mail-in ballots for all eligible voters and enabling oral declarations when signing the voting book. As a result of these changes, local governments continue to implement these important democratic processes in a manner that is safer for their citizens.



FLEXIBLE DESIGNATION OF FARM PROPERTIES

Due to COVID-19, government has waived this year's minimum income requirement for properties that were classed as a farm in 2020. This saved approximately 400 farm properties and 900 developing farms from potentially losing their farm class status. Farm class status provides many benefits, including a significant reduction in property taxes. By waiving the income requirements and the need to submit sales receipts for 2021, the Province helped to ensure the continued operation of many farm properties throughout British Columbia.

There are nearly 18,500 farm properties in B.C., and approximately 5,800 would have been required to submit income reports for 2020. Of these, up to 900 developing farms and approximately 400 farm properties with a history of income below the required threshold would have been most at risk of losing farm class status for 2021.



STREAMLINED TRANSPORTATION RESOURCE REQUESTS

To streamline COVID-19 transportation requests, the Province created a web portal so requestors, including health authorities, Indigenous communities, and local governments, could submit their COVID-19 transportation requests online and receive transportation assistance sooner. Examples of requests include health authorities seeking air transport of blood samples from remote communities to labs for COVID-19 testing; transport of patients from remote communities to COVID-19 prepared hospitals; requests from rural, remote, and coastal communities to transport people in need of advanced medical care to and from the Lower Mainland; and Indigenous communities requesting assistance to control traffic into their communities to reduce the spread of COVID-19. This transportation request process will now become part of the Province's standard emergency response procedures during any major emergency event.

Support for People and Businesses

COVID-19 WEBSITE



The [COVID-19 website](#) continues to provide information for residents of British Columbia about COVID-19, and has had 61 million page views since launch. Through this page, British Columbians can stay informed about programs and services, how to stay healthy, how to access financial supports, and how to keep their businesses safe and viable throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

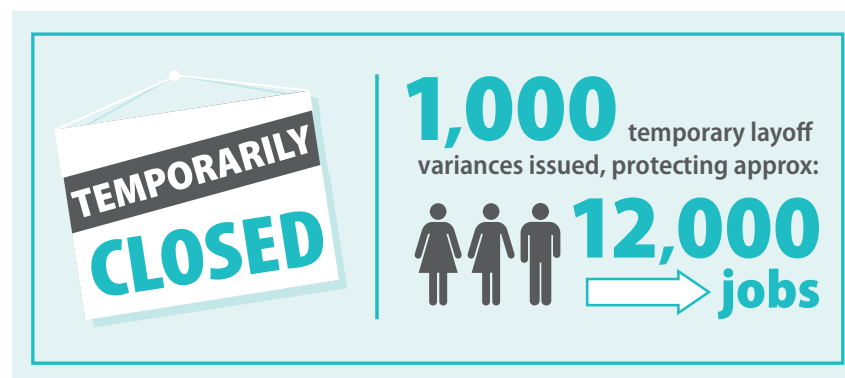
In addition, the website includes topic areas such as:

- COVID-19 immunization plan and how and where to get vaccinated;
- Information about vaccination in multiple languages;
- Provincial restrictions;
- K to 12 education;
- Recovery benefits;
- Travel restrictions;
- Violation tickets;
- Mental health;
- Quarantine requirements;
- Economic recovery planning;
- Provincial Health Officer orders; and
- Links to health information at the BC Centre for Disease Control.

EXTENSIONS TO THE TEMPORARY LAYOFF PERIOD

Amendments to the Employment Standards Regulation allowed employers and employees to extend the maximum period for a temporary layoff to August 30, 2020, if the layoff was a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The extension gave businesses the opportunity to recall their employees back to work at a later date, instead of having to terminate employees, pay severance and lose an experienced workforce. The extension also supported employees by allowing them to keep their jobs and employment-related benefits while accessing the federal Canada Emergency Response Benefit. Additional amendments removed technical requirements based on a paper-based process and enabled a new, digital solution for employers and employees.

A simplified temporary layoff variance application was developed to enable a joint digital process to assist those employers and employees who wanted to extend a temporary layoff period past the August 30, 2020 deadline. The new process enabled the secure upload of supporting content directly to the Employment Standards Branch and resulted in over 1,000 temporary layoff variances being issued, protecting approximately 12,000 jobs. It continues to be efficiently used to keep employees and employers connected during the COVID-19 pandemic to support B.C.'s workplaces.



TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKER QUARANTINE PROGRAM



Seasonal labourers are essential to ensuring a stable food supply in B.C. The Province introduced the Agricultural Temporary Foreign Worker Quarantine Program to allow agricultural Temporary Foreign Workers (agTFWs) to safely quarantine upon arrival to Canada as required by the federal Quarantine Act. The program is centrally managed and funded through the Province, saving farmers the time and money it would have taken to upgrade their on-farm accommodations to ensure a safe quarantine.

The Province provided accommodation, food-services, laundry services, wellness walks, interpretation and translation services, health screening and other necessary supports to agTFWs during their 14-day quarantine period. Of the 5,000 agTFWs who arrived between April 13, 2020 and December 31, 2020, 64 were found to be COVID-19 positive. All COVID-19 positive agTFWs recovered while under the care of the provincial quarantine program's on-site medical team. The program prevented COVID-19 positive agTFWs from potentially spreading the virus to others, and protected the Province's food supply by ensuring the sector's continued access to needed labour.

The Province will continue the agTFW Quarantine Program in 2021, and has recently been consulted by the federal government for advice and materials to assist other provinces in safeguarding agTFWs and the communities that welcome them from the risks of COVID-19 transmission.

SUPPORT FOR B.C. AGRI-BUSINESSES

Through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP), a joint federal-provincial cost-shared initiative investing in the agriculture and agrifoods sector, businesses that specialize in agriculture and food processing can access [coaching, consulting and business planning services](#) to help with recovery from the impacts of COVID-19. The supports are tailored to businesses' specific circumstances and include coaching services and support in business structures, business strategy, production economics, cash flow and financial analysis and/or recovery, value added ventures, succession planning, human resources management, and risk assessment and mitigation aimed at helping businesses adapt to changes and pivot in the ever-changing economic climate brought on by COVID-19.





B.C. BUSINESS COVID-19 SUPPORT SERVICE

Through a partnership with the Government of Canada and the Province, Small Business BC launched the [B.C. Business COVID-19 Support Service](#): a single outlet of information and resources for businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. Advisors are available by phone, email or through use of a live-chat feature to answer questions and offer support in multiple languages. Advisors offer tailored guidance for businesses on how to benefit from and obtain supports from the provincial and federal governments, industry and community partners. The website also includes updates and other resources, making it faster and easier for businesses to access the information they need for recovery.

As of the end of March 2021, the B.C. Business COVID-19 Support Service has served more than 23,226 businesses through phone, email and chat since its launch in April 2020, and has had more than 800,000 visits to its COVID-19 web page.

As of the end of March 2021, the B.C. BUSINESS COVID-19 SUPPORT SERVICE:

has served more than

23,226

businesses through



Phone



Email



Chat

has had more than

800,000

visits to its COVID-19
web page





BC TOURISM RESILIENCY NETWORK

The [BC Tourism Resiliency Network](#) was established in partnership between Western Economic Diversification Canada, Island Coastal Economic Trust and the provincial government to help B.C.'s 19,000 tourism businesses throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Available resources include online guides to government funding, online courses to assist employers, as well as access to targeted one-on-one support from experts in human resources, finance, marketing, and business strategy and transition. Since its launch, the network has had over 30,000 points of contact with businesses and provided direct support to over 1,780 businesses that are registered in the program as of February 2021.

BC MARKETPLACE

Through a partnership between the B.C. Government, Western Economic Diversification Canada and Small Business BC, the [BC Marketplace](#) was launched to link British Columbians to local products and services available for purchase online. The BC Marketplace is a free, online resource that currently showcases more than 2,500 B.C.-based businesses. This service helps boost small businesses' growth and online presence and connects businesses with customers who want to buy local products and services.

COVID-19-RELATED LEAVE

Amendments to the Employment Standards Act provide the option for unpaid leave to employees unable to work because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This change provides job protection to employees impacted by COVID-19 and helps reduce the risk of virus transmission. Eligible employees receive financial support while on COVID-19-related leave through the federal Canada Emergency Response Benefit or Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit.



Section Two: Commitment to Reconciliation, Equity and Inclusion

Reconciliation, equity and inclusion are foundational principles of our government that inform all that we do. From signing the First Nations Children and Youth in Care Protocol dedicated to increasing First Nations students' success, to supporting post-secondary students' mental health, we continue to build a B.C. where everyone feels seen, heard and has the opportunity to fully participate.

FIRST NATIONS CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CARE PROTOCOL

The First Nations Children and Youth in Care Protocol was signed, demonstrating the Province's commitment to working in partnership with First Nations leadership to address systemic barriers facing First Nations students who are also children and youth in care. Through this partnership, B.C.'s legislation and policies will be reviewed and improved to better support the educational outcomes and well-being of First Nations youth in care as they transition from the school system to post-secondary education and/or into the workforce.

INDIGENOUS JUSTICE CENTRES

The B.C. government and BC First Nations Justice Council partnered to open Indigenous Justice Centres (IJC) in British Columbia. To date, three IJCs have opened in Merritt, Prince George and Prince Rupert, improving culturally appropriate access to justice for Indigenous communities.

IJCs provide culturally appropriate information, advice, support and representation directly to Indigenous people at the community level, focusing primarily on criminal law and child protection issues. IJCs take a holistic approach to client and community wellness by facilitating client connections to supports such as housing, mental health and addictions treatment, and employment services.

WILLIAMS LAKE INDIGENOUS COURT

The establishment of the [Williams Lake Indigenous Court](#) will offer better outcomes for those in conflict with the law by providing a holistic, culturally appropriate approach to justice and finding ways to address underlying challenges that may drive criminal behaviour. Indigenous courts are sentencing courts tailored to delivering service specific to the needs of Indigenous offenders, generally adopting an approach to justice that focuses on healing, holding the offender accountable, and reintegrating the offender into the community to achieve better future outcomes.

The Williams Lake Indigenous Court sits once a month, with a judge, Crown, defence lawyer, the client and Elders (Knowledge Keepers) sitting in circle to consider the details of the case and background of an offender. Participants discuss the offending behaviour and its impacts, while working together to develop a Healing Plan.

PROTECTION FROM HOUSEHOLD VIOLENCE

Changes to B.C.'s Residential Tenancy Act protect renters and roommates and allow them to find new homes and end their fixed-term tenancies early without penalty due to violence or if their safety is threatened by continuing to live in a rental unit.

LAW FOUNDATION LEGAL CLINICS

A [poverty law legal clinic in Kelowna](#) and the [Immigration and Refugee Legal Clinic in Vancouver](#) are now open, expanding the network of provincially-funded legal clinics from five to seven. The legal clinics provide free legal information, advice and representation to low-income individuals in locations where a need for poverty law and other specialized legal services, such as disability, housing, and immigration and refugee law, are identified. The legal clinics have increased access to justice in B.C. by filling a gap in service for vulnerable populations that otherwise would not have been able to access legal support.

IMPROVED MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS FOR POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS

The first of its kind in Canada, [Here2Talk](#) is a free and confidential 24/7 mental health counselling and referral service designed to support post-secondary students. Students can access masters-level trained counsellors any time, any day, as often as needed by phone, app or the web. Here2Talk's call and chat services are provided in English and French, with some additional languages such as Punjabi, Mandarin, Cantonese, Spanish and Arabic offered over the phone based on availability.

NEW DOMESTIC ARBITRATION ACT

A new Arbitration Act came into force in B.C. in September 2020, which modernizes, repeals and replaces outdated domestic arbitration legislation. The new act supports party autonomy to efficiently resolve disputes out of court. Party and court resources have been freed up through a streamlined, simplified appeal process: four rounds of appeal hearings in court under the previous legislation have been condensed to two rounds maximum, with parties given the ability to opt out of appeals altogether.

Section Three: People-First Approach

Our people-first approach allows government to design and deliver the services people count on to keep all people in B.C. healthy, safe and living affordably.

Some of this year's updates include new and improved digitized and streamlined processes, not only to adhere to social distancing practices and help people living with disabilities, but also to serve people in rural or remote communities, as well as anyone who would have difficulty navigating in-person or hardcopy processes.

UPDATES TO THE WORKERS COMPENSATION ACT

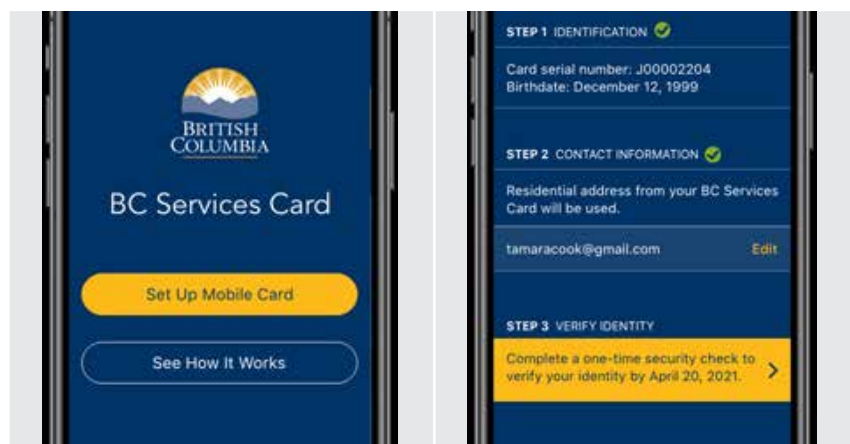
Nearly three dozen legislative amendments to the Workers Compensation Act provide better support to injured workers and their families and enhance WorkSafeBC's ability to investigate workplace incidents, improving the health and safety of workers while keeping employer premiums stable.

Some of the amendments that directly benefit workers include:

- Increased maximum annual salary amount on which workers' compensation benefits are based;
- Fast-tracked effective date of presumptions for occupational diseases caused by viral pathogens, including COVID-19; and
- Courts now have explicit authority to hear victim impact statements as part of a prosecution relating to occupational health and safety violations.



FASTER BC SERVICES CARD IDENTITY VERIFICATION



Remote identity verification in British Columbia has become even easier. The Province has launched Send Video, the newest way to verify a person's identity in order to activate a mobile BC Services Card and [access online government services](#).

People can use Send Video within the BC Services Card app from their iPhone, iPad, Android phone or tablet to send Service BC a photo and a short video of themselves at any time. A Service BC representative reviews and verifies the person's identity and activates their mobile BC Services Card for online use, eliminating the need to visit a Service BC Centre for in-person identity verification.

British Columbia is the first jurisdiction in North America to use an identity-verification solution through video. These services are another step forward in government's work to help British Columbians conveniently, safely, and quickly access services online. These efforts also support B.C.'s new digital framework, which aims to improve the experiences and interactions people have with government services.

FLEXIBLE USE OF BASIC RESPITE

Families are getting easier access to the supports they need through changes in policy. For example, automatic renewal of respite funding is reducing the burden on families and providing assurance that funding is on its way. And until March 31, 2022, families who receive Children and Youth with Support Needs Direct Funded/At Home Program respite funds have more flexible options in how they use this funding to access supports that meet their needs. If families are unable to secure traditional respite support, funds can be used later during the term of the agreement and can be used for meal preparation/grocery shopping assistance, homemaker supports, caregiver relief support for siblings, online programs for children, counselling services and any other options that support family functioning. As well, families are not required to provide expense forms.

REMOTE EXECUTION, SIGNING AND WITNESSING OF WILLS

Amendments to the Wills, Estates and Succession Act enable courts to accept electronically signed wills and allow for the remote witnessing of wills.

BETTER MANAGEMENT FOR STRATA INSURANCE

Amendments to B.C.'s acts and regulations were intended to bring further transparency to the strata insurance market and mitigate rising costs so that strata councils and owners can make informed decisions on their insurance policies. These changes:

- Require prompt notice to owners of changes to strata corporation insurance coverage;
- Allow strata corporations to use their contingency reserve fund when necessary to pay for premium increases;
- End referral fees; and
- Require insurance agents to disclose their commission amount.

ENHANCED CARE COVERAGE AUTO INSURANCE

Effective May 1, 2021, ICBC's new [Enhanced Care coverage](#) delivers affordable auto insurance that provides all care and recovery supports for British Columbians in the event of a crash. These improvements to B.C.'s insurance system are made possible because of the elimination of significant costs associated with the historic litigation-based system. ICBC will apply those savings – more than \$1.5 billion per year – towards lower, more stable insurance rates and better benefits for British Columbians.

Customers with full basic and optional insurance will save 20%, on average, on their annual insurance premiums. All British Columbians – regardless if they are a driver, passenger, pedestrian or cyclist – will automatically be protected under Enhanced Care if they are injured in a car crash in Canada or the United States. Key features to Enhanced Care include no overall limit to medical and rehabilitation benefits, enhanced income replacement benefits, a new permanent impairment compensation payment, and more.

NATIONAL SAFETY CODE ONLINE KNOWLEDGE TEST

To improve road safety, business practices and service delivery, online knowledge tests and resources have been launched as part of the National Safety Code (NSC) application process for commercial vehicle operators to obtain an NSC certificate.

The NSC Online Knowledge Test (available through the [VehicleSafetyBC](#) portal) replaces the former paper-based knowledge test that was only available in the Lower Mainland. It can be re-taken at no additional cost. The test is also designed to encourage the customer to refer to the improved and expanded online [Carrier Safety Guide](#) which helps users quickly and easily understand the necessary information to operate safely.

LEARN2RIDE ONLINE

Developed in partnership between TransLink and the Province, [Learn2Ride Online](#) is a free web-based bike skills course helping children ages 9-12 learn basic bike safety. So far, almost 1,600 students have participated in the online Learn2Ride course since it was launched in June 2020, helping B.C. youth learn to cycle safely by learning about bike parts, the importance of bike helmets and other safety gear, and how to be aware of surroundings and to communicate effectively when biking.



CLEARER DRIVEBC 511 SIGNAGE

DriveBC has replaced a 1-800 number on highway signs with the easier to see and remember 511 number. By dialing 511, callers are now able to access a menu through their phone where they can receive information and updates such as road conditions and events on B.C. highways in real time. Additionally, the 511 number is increasingly used throughout North America, making it safer and more intuitive for travelers visiting from elsewhere to get the information they need.

VARIABLE SPEED LIMITS USING SMART TECHNOLOGY

The Province has launched a [new variable speed limit system](#) in the Fraser Valley that adjusts speed limits to align with current congestion or weather conditions. The speed limits are set based on data provided by traffic and road weather sensors installed approximately every 500 metres along the highway. There are also multiple road/weather sensors that measure parameters, such as level of grip on the road, visibility, and temperature. The variable speed limits make driving safer by slowing traffic before congestion to reduce rear-end collisions caused by sudden changes in travel speed that typically occur in this area.

AIR QUALITY SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE EXPANSION

Expansion of the [Air Quality Subscription Service](#) now allows people to automatically receive real-time air quality advisories by SMS text message notification. In addition to the sulphur dioxide alerts previously rolled out, the alerts will warn users about poor air quality and smoky skies while also providing health advice and safety suggestions via text message.



Section Four:

Initiatives to Build a Strong Economy

As we lay the foundation for economic recovery, we aim to build a B.C. that works for everyone. We continue to support B.C. entrepreneurs and businesses and encourage investment, growth and innovation throughout the province. We strive to prepare people for future career paths by creating opportunities and supports for all British Columbians to obtain the skills and experience necessary to reach their full potential.

MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL REGISTRY ACCESS SERVICE

The [Multi-jurisdictional Registry Access Service](#) (MRAS), a new online service, simplifies the business registration process across provincial lines, making it easier for owners to register their business in multiple provinces. Until now, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba had separate processes and systems for corporations and limited partnerships to complete their extra-provincial business registrations and maintenance filings. The four provinces are now the first to implement the online MRAS, a hub that allows corporate information sharing between the provinces, making registration in multiple provinces faster and easier for business owners.

There has been a 25% increase in the number of extra-provincial registrations from 248 registrations in the quarter (July 2020 - Sept 2020) before the launch of the MRAS initiative to 311 registrations in the quarter after its implementation.



DIGITAL MARKETING BOOTCAMP

The [Digital Marketing Bootcamp](#), developed in partnership between the B.C. government and Alacrity Canada, is a new online course offered for free to small and medium-sized businesses. It provides participants with a foundation in digital marketing, including search engine optimization, paid advertising, analytics, content marketing and more.

In April 2021, the Digital Marketing Bootcamp program received funding to support more participants. It is expected that nearly 5,900 people will be trained by May 31, 2022.

DIGITAL MARKETING BOOTCAMP Three months following the completion of the first course:

75% of the businesses who participated have had an increase in digital customer acquisition.



56.3% of the respondents have had an increase in revenue from their online sales.



BUILDING BENEFIT COMPANIES

Changes to the Business Corporations Act give British Columbians the opportunity to classify their businesses as a benefit company, provided they meet the requirements. British Columbia is the first province in Canada to create the option of benefit companies. This builds a new way to do business that benefits people, communities and future generations. It also offers benefit companies greater exposure to consumers who value and want to support businesses dedicated to corporate social responsibility.

DID YOU KNOW? A benefit company is a for-profit corporation committed to conducting its business in a responsible and sustainable manner, as well as promoting public benefits in addition to serving the interests of its shareholders. For example, the benefits could be artistic, charitable, cultural, economic, educational, environmental, literary, medical, religious, scientific and/or technological.

DIGITAL SEALS FOR ENGINEERED DESIGN DRAWINGS AND DOCUMENTS

What used to take days and weeks now takes minutes. Professional Engineers and Geoscientists working on Ministry and Transportation and Infrastructure projects now have the option to [sign, seal and deliver their drawings and documents digitally](#). These changes improve efficiency and productivity, reduce the environmental footprint, and eliminate courier, printing and archiving costs.



BUSINESS STRUCTURES WIZARD

The [Business Structures Wizard](#) (the Wizard) is a free online tool that helps entrepreneurs select the best entity type when starting their business (i.e., sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation). The tool guides users through a series of 10 easy-to-follow questions and enables entrepreneurs to better understand their options and the implications of each business structure as related to considerations such as liability and financing.

The Wizard was developed in collaboration between the provincial and federal governments and aims to enhance service delivery by providing easy access to government services, avoiding confusion and reducing errors in the registration process so that entrepreneurs can spend more time growing their businesses.

Section Five:

Investment in a Sustainable Future

B.C.'s economic recovery includes investment and preparation for a cleaner, brighter future that addresses climate change. We continue to work hard to leverage opportunities that create value from our natural and renewable resources and also protect our land, air and water. The harvest of local food keeps jobs and supply chains in B.C. and lowers our carbon footprint. From increased recycling incentives to reduced barriers in the cannabis market, B.C. is well-positioned for a sustainable future.

MODERNIZED RECYCLING

Changes to the Recycling Regulation support physical distancing and drive increased recycling due to added convenience and incentives. The minimum deposit for all beverage containers is now set at 10 cents and can now be paid by cheque or electronically, such as through e-transfer, in addition to the current cash refund requirement. These changes are expected to increase container return rates, incentivize participation in recycling programs, and provide ease and efficiency for the consumer.

INCREASED B.C. GROWN FOOD

Through the [Feed BC program](#), the Province is helping health care, post-secondary, K-12 education and other sectors find and procure more B.C. food to meet the daily needs of patients, residents, students and clients. Feed BC provides targeted training, technology, guidance and business-to-business value chain support to B.C. producers and processors interested in selling to B.C.'s public sector institutions and beyond. This initiative will increase the availability and variety of B.C. grown and processed food for people served by hospitals, residential/long-term care facilities, public post-secondary institutions and other government-supported facilities.

WILDFIRE APP

In May 2020, the Province launched the BC Wildfire Service mobile app which provides real-time wildfire information and an interactive map that users can customize to display a variety of fire-related data.





Key features of the Wildfire App include:

- Interactive wildfire map;
- Latest wildfire news and advisories;
- Statistics for the current wildfire season;
- Push notifications (including 'Near Me' evacuation orders and alerts); and
- Information to help the public report wildfires.

As of April 2021, there have been approximately four million page views on the app and over 40,000 app installs. The BC Wildfire Service mobile app is available for [Apple \(iOS\)](#) and [Android](#) devices and is free to download in the App Store and Google Play.

NEW WEB REPORTING TOOL FOR RIVER HEALTH

The [Canada-B.C. Water Quality Monitoring Program](#) is a web reporting tool to help people learn about current water quality and detect future issues that may threaten aquatic life in an easy to read and transparent format. Typically, water quality trend data are published in technical reports and are not easily available to decision makers and the public. This online interactive tool reports water quality trends in key rivers throughout B.C. in a format that is easy to understand for all. It also provides quick access to provincial, regional, and local decision-makers when assessing projects that may impact water quality, while also providing long-term trend analyses to assess potential impacts from resource development, urbanization, agriculture and climate change.

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PESTICIDE APPLICATORS CERTIFICATION SYSTEM

A series of projects were completed to streamline and modernize the way industry and the public obtain training materials, arrange exam sessions, and successfully complete the [Pesticide Certification program](#) which is required for applying pesticides.

This included:

- An online ordering platform that allows the public and industry to order required training materials 24 hours a day, 7 days a week as opposed to being restricted to business hours and having to pay for materials in person or by phone;
- A new exam management system that allows for better tracking and greater efficiency in providing updates and feedback to applicants;
- Software to facilitate exam scheduling and status tracking;
- Redesigned Integrated Pest Management Training and Certification webpage with a user-experience and accessibility lens; and
- Exams translated into additional languages, such as Chinese, Punjabi, Vietnamese and Spanish.



NEW EMERGENCY INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM SOFTWARE

As of November 2020, all dangerous good incident reports are being captured, tracked and managed in a new [BC Emergency Incident Management System](#), providing a single unified information technology platform for B.C. emergency managers, responders, stakeholders and partners. The new software provides an emergency incident management platform to enable fast and effective decision-making and response to better protect the safety of B.C.'s responders and environment.

Increased access to information will improve transparency and situational awareness, and assist the processing of Freedom of Information requests, litigation, and information sharing with partner agencies and stakeholders.

ONLINE ACCESS TO HUNTING AND TRAPPING REGULATIONS SYNOPSIS

The [2020-2022 Hunting and Trapping Regulations Synopsis](#) features more than 100 amendments to existing hunting and trapping regulations and can now be viewed online. The Synopsis is published every two years, responding to the most current information available about wildlife populations and sustainability. It features proposed changes to hunting, trapping, motor vehicle prohibitions, and weapons restriction regulations made in consultation with First Nations and stakeholders. The updates ensure the continued conservation of wildlife or habitat, address safety concerns, maintain or enhance recreational opportunities, and uphold the principles of humane treatment of wildlife.



EFFICIENT TIMBER SALES

Regulatory amendments allow Timber Sales Managers to immediately re-advertise a Timber Sales License (TSL) that does not receive any eligible bids, with a reduced advertising period of five days, ensuring a timely bidding process. The amended regulation has already been successfully used to re-advertise TSLs which received no bids, making timber more readily available at the market price (determined by bids) for the forest industry.



TRANSPARENT WALLS FOR CANNABIS RETAIL STORES

Updates to regulations now allow cannabis retail stores to feature transparent walls, provided that all cannabis-related accessories, products and packaging are not visible from outside the store. These updates allow licensees to configure their stores in ways that protect minors from exposure to non-medical cannabis products and address concerns regarding employee safety, while also meeting the requirements in the federal Cannabis Act.

CANNABIS PREPAID PURCHASE CARDS

Cannabis prepaid purchase cards can now be used at all of a non-medical cannabis retail store's locations, including online purchases. Previous rules stated that prepaid cards could only be used at the location where the card was purchased. These changes provide convenience for consumers and make the cards more appealing to buy and sell.

IMPROVEMENTS TO CANNABIS WORKER SCREENING

Security screening for cannabis workers has moved to expire every five years instead of every two years. The changes ensure that the security screening process for cannabis workers is timely and cost effective, while also allowing provincial security screening resources to focus on the qualification of new workers rather than the requalification of current workers.



STREAMLINED SPILL RECOVERY REPORTS

Following a spill, a Conclusion of Recovery Report is required as part of the process to ensure environmental recovery targets have been carried out and achieved. [Online guidance for how to properly draft Conclusion of Recovery Reports](#) is now available, providing a template to use and making it quicker and easier for people to include the required recovery plan content and meet the regulatory requirements outlined in the Spill Preparedness, Response and Recovery Regulation.

JOB CONNECTIONS THROUGH NEW ONLINE WEBSITE

[The B.C. Farm, Fish and Food Job Connector](#) site links British Columbians looking for careers in agriculture to current job vacancies offered by farmers, seafood businesses and food processors. Available jobs include positions for crop and seafood harvesters, food processing workers and farm managers, agrologists, large machinery operators and marketing specialists. The site acts as a single hiring resource for employers, offering sector-specific information and resources to support businesses through the hiring process, saving businesses time and money so they can focus on growing and harvesting food.

Jobs are available in more than 30 communities in the Fraser Valley, Okanagan, Metro Vancouver and Vancouver Island, as well as in the Kootenays, Cariboo and northern B.C.

There are close to 600 postings for more than a thousand positions posted on WorkBC in the agriculture, seafood and food and beverage sectors.

B.C. farms, ranches, seafood and food processing companies generated a record \$15 billion in revenue in 2019.

INCREASED LOCAL MEAT SUPPLY IN SELECT REGIONS

Updates to the Meat Inspection Regulation increase local meat supply and streamline administrative processes. Class D licences are now able to be issued in select regional districts within the Alberni Valley, the Kootenays, and the Robson Valley. Each license adds up to 25 animal units to the local market where the meat was slaughtered, increasing local meat supply for select regions. Additionally, Class D and E meat slaughter licences are now regulated under the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, which will streamline the licensing process for provincial meat inspection for B.C. consumers, ranchers and producers as they no longer have to contact regional health authorities, reducing administrative burden for businesses.

SOIL AND FILL IN THE AGRICULTURAL LAND RESERVE

Farmers looking to build additional housing for their extended relatives who live on their properties within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) will now have an easier time building and maintaining roads on their properties, due to updates to the Agricultural Land

Commission Act. Updated regulations increase the amount of soil removal or fill placement permitted for annual farm-road maintenance without requiring permission. These changes reduce farmers' application fees by 40% and increase flexibility for use of their properties.

UPDATED CONTAMINATED SITE IDENTIFICATION PROCESSES

Changes to the Environmental Management Act and Contaminated Sites Regulation streamline the site identification process, eliminating unnecessary steps and making the process clearer and more predictable for practitioners, municipalities and the general public through:

- An automatic requirement for site investigation when a regulated industrial or commercial activity has occurred on a site, and if a person, owner or operator is seeking re-development or shutting down operations; and
- Identification of industrial or commercial sites where owners or operators are undergoing bankruptcy to increase the likelihood that contamination is addressed by the responsible person and not the taxpayer.



Section Six:

Accountability and Commitment

Our commitment to better regulations means constantly updating and improving our regulations and services in B.C. to ensure they are modern and inclusive. The stories profiled in this report are a sample of the efforts made in every ministry to improve access to the services British Columbians count on. We're working hard to develop regulations and policies that simultaneously encourage competitiveness, growth and innovation while protecting the environment, public health and safety.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we worked diligently to make a series of rapid changes to regulations and legislation to help businesses, communities and people in need. Many of these initiatives are featured in this report, such as how we changed liquor regulations to enable restaurants to pivot their service models or when we permitted remote municipal meetings and elections. We continue to respond quickly to ensure flexibility and support for all British Columbians during and after these challenging times.

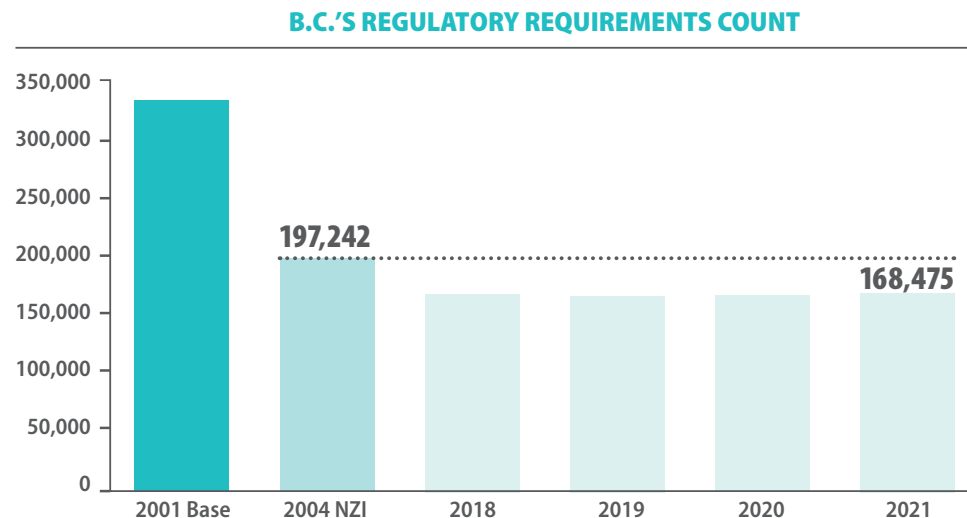
We are proud to share that even with the unprecedented volume of amended and new legislation and regulation due to the pandemic, the regulatory requirements count has remained stable at 15% below the baseline count established in 2004. We are committed to developing better regulations and services that consider impacts to all people and businesses and promote equity, economic recovery, and accessible service delivery.

Regulatory Requirements Count

Our regulatory requirements count and regulatory impact assessment process ensure that we stay accountable in designing modern, effective and efficient laws and regulations. To achieve this, all new or amended legislation, regulations, and associated policies and forms must include analysis of all potential impacts for people and businesses. Any changes to regulatory requirements must be documented.

A regulatory requirement is any action a person, business or government must take to access services, carry out business or meet legal responsibilities.

To stay accountable to the initial 40% reduction of regulatory requirements achieved between 2001 and 2004, a baseline regulatory count was established in 2004. The Net Zero Increase commitment (NZI), in place until 2022, caps total regulatory requirements at the 2004 count of 197,242. As of March 31, 2021, the regulatory requirements count was 15% below this baseline with a total of 168,475.



Better Regulations for British Columbians Amendment Package

The Better Regulations for British Columbians annual regulatory amendment package allows government to make many small changes at once in a streamlined process, keeping our regulatory framework current. In March 2021 we [updated 17 regulations](#) to clarify, modernize or repeal outdated sections.

Inclusive Language Initiative

Demonstrating our government's commitment to equity and inclusion, we also made significant changes to regulations in 15 ministries by updating approximately [600 instances](#) of gendered language through an amendment package. Terms such as he, she, mother, father, aunt, uncle, brother, sister and man-made have been updated in amended regulations to more inclusive wording that does not use gendered language. This is typically achieved by a slight rewording of the affected sentence, or using non-gendered substitutes such as parent or sibling. This work is just beginning; there are many examples of gendered and outdated language within our regulatory framework and policies, and we will build on the momentum and success of this year's amendment package.

Our Commitment

We are committed to continuing our efforts to ensure that B.C.'s laws and regulations are inclusive and representative of all British Columbians, and that all impacts on people, communities and businesses are considered when developing government policy. We will build on our existing regulatory improvement mechanisms by leveraging technology to identify outdated, complex or burdensome language to target our improvement initiatives. Finally, we will continue to collaborate with our partners and stakeholders to identify and address regulations and policies that are a barrier to access, innovation and growth, ensuring that B.C. is known for having better, smarter, and more inclusive regulations.

- If you have encountered a regulation or service that you think could be improved, contact us at BetterRegulations@gov.bc.ca.

We accomplish more when we work together. Based on recommendations from B.C.'s Mining Jobs Task Force 2018 report, the Province provided funding and support to the Mining Association of British Columbia to develop a BC Mining Innovation Roadmap. Over 280 people from mining, government, environmental and Indigenous groups worked together to share ideas and build the Roadmap's themes. The Roadmap was released in March 2021 and outlines a shared path to solidifying B.C. as a globally competitive mining region with a thriving culture of innovation and collaboration, a regulatory regime that supports innovation and high environmental and safety standards, and a workforce prepared for the future. Through the Roadmap and the future Mining Innovation Hub, government, communities and the mining industry are working together to position B.C. as a global leader in regulatory excellence and mining innovation, prepare for future jobs in an inclusive mining industry, and protect B.C.'s land, air and water through sustainable practices.





BRITISH
COLUMBIA