Message from the Minister

I am pleased to present the 2019/20 annual Better Regulations for British Columbians report. This report features our government’s goals, objectives and the initiatives we have taken to improve services and regulations for people and businesses throughout B.C.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for communities, economies and governments around the world. Government initiatives like easy-to-access quality services and efficient regulatory frameworks are more important now than ever and will be key to supporting recovery.

Showcased on the pages that follow are our successes over the course of the last fiscal year. The stories are inspiring and are a catalyst to spur further innovation and improvement.

In brief, some of our achievements include: an increase in accessibility in B.C.’s tourism industry; continued support to accelerate economic development throughout B.C.; preparing people for future job opportunities; promoting Indigenous culture and values through a new online course; and helping seniors to age with dignity. These are a few of the last year’s many initiatives that support three key commitments of the government:

- Making life easier and more affordable for people throughout British Columbia
- Delivering the services that people count on
- Building a strong, sustainable and innovative economy that works for everyone

These commitments guide our work and focus our priorities. I know my colleagues across our government have been working hard toward these goals and I would like to extend a special thanks to them for the great work they do every day. We will continue to build on our commitments, as we know these efforts encourage economic growth and innovation, create good jobs, support people and businesses, and improve the service experience for all British Columbians.

Over the longer-term, as part of B.C.’s COVID-19 Action Plan, we have allocated $1.5 billion for economic stimulus and recovery. Through our continued work, we hope to build a better B.C. for everyone.

Sincerely,

Michelle Mungall
Minister of Jobs, Economic Development and Competitiveness

Goals and Objectives

British Columbia’s long-standing commitment to regulatory and service improvement focuses on promoting a modern, efficient and effective regulatory system, enhancing access to quality government services people count on, and enhancing accountability for regulatory and service improvement
activities. Central to delivering these goals is the continued dedication to eliminating outdated regulations and making services more accessible for British Columbians throughout the province.

**Making Life More Affordable**
We are working hard to make life more affordable for people and families. This work supports British Columbians and includes initiatives that lower the costs of child care, offer easier access to justice and dispute resolution, as well as help support workplace pensions, to name a few. These initiatives help build a better, more affordable B.C. that benefits all British Columbians.

**Affordable Child Care**
The Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative supports parents, early childhood educators and nearly 5,000 licensed child care facilities throughout B.C. The [Child Care Operating Funding](#) website now includes the tools and step-by-step guidance for applicants to revise and save their information online without time limits. Plain-language updates have improved the [Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative Guidelines](#) and the [Early Childhood Educator Wage Enhancement Guidelines](#). Together, these improvements have reduced the administrative burden for Licensed Child Care Providers, giving them more time to focus on providing quality care for children and their families.

Reducing child care costs for parents has contributed to a decrease in Metro Vancouver’s 2019 living wage from $22.47 an hour to $19.50 an hour – a difference of over 13%.

**Better Bonding Processes Help Students**
Changes to the Bonding Act allow quicker tuition fee refunds and protect students who are owed money when an independent school closes. Good bonding practices ensure tuition fees are refunded to students, taxpayers do not have to cover the costs and the B.C. education sector maintains its reputation.

**Access to Justice**

**New Justice Access Centre**
B.C.’s newest [Justice Access Centre](#) (JAC) opened in the Surrey Provincial Courthouse in June 2019. The JAC provides comprehensive family justice services, such as legal information, mediation and referrals, as well as resources and supports for other types of civil cases. Staff assist people in identifying their legal and non-legal needs and offer on-site supports, such as:

- a family justice counsellor (mediator) or child support officer
- referral to other resources or partners available in the community

JACs throughout the province have helped people with increased understanding, better service and decreased court appearances.

Results from people who used JACs throughout the province:

- 92% found the assessment process for family problems helpful
- 90% would recommend JAC services
- 67% did not file family court applications and had no court appearances for at least two years
Quicker Dispute Resolution for Minor Motor Vehicle Accidents
The Civil Resolution Tribunal (CRT) has expanded its services to include disputes for British Columbians who are injured in motor vehicle accidents. CRT processes are cheaper and faster as they eliminate the need for disputes to be heard by the Supreme Court of British Columbia. People with minor motor vehicle injuries can now use the online CRT’s dispute resolution process, which uses negotiation and mediation to help people reach an agreement, and makes binding adjudicative decisions, when people can’t agree, that are enforceable as court orders. The CRT can be used for motor vehicle injury disputes of $50,000 or less. The CRT saves people time, the costs of lawyer fees, and decreases stress by avoiding court and resolving these claims online.

Dispute Resolution Extended to Societies and Cooperative Associations
The Province amended three acts to give the Civil Resolution Tribunal (CRT) jurisdiction to hear disputes involving societies and cooperative associations. These entities are generally not-for-profits and provide valuable services, such as housing, health, sports, cultural and other community-based activities throughout British Columbia. CRT’s Solution Explorer helps them find answers to questions and receive tailored access to free legal information, tools and forms based on their individualized answers.

Delivering Services People Count On
The B.C. government is constantly improving access to services, making use of new technologies to reach citizens in every corner of the province. From making B.C.’s tourism industry more accessible to people with disabilities, to responding quicker in emergencies and offering better health management online, B.C.’s services are designed and delivered with people in mind.

Accessible Travel for a Barrier-free B.C.
People with physical disabilities can now plan and prepare for travel through Destination BC’s Accessibility Resources page and accessible travel itineraries that highlight over 250 accessible attractions and experiences in B.C. People can search Hello BC’s accessible business listings to ensure that their destinations will accommodate their needs. So far, nearly 400 businesses have added features to their listings that include:

- one or more automated entry points
- lowered counter(s) at reception or ticket desks
- shuttle services equipped with lift or roll-in access
- braille/large print signage in publicly accessible areas
- availability of hearing-loop technology
- rooms for guests using mobility devices
- staff trained on guide and service dog policies; and more

Destination BC’s Learning Centre features an Accessible Tourism section with resources to help people create and provide accessible travel experiences.

These initiatives are just the start of a multi-phased plan working toward the Province’s goal of a barrier-free B.C. that welcomes and is accessible to all. Over 926,000 people over the age of 15 (almost 25% of B.C.’s population) identify as living with some form of disability.
What is Hearing Loop Technology?
In places that offer hearing loop technology, a wire is strung around the perimeter of a room and attached to an audio amplifier which is connected to a sound source such as a TV, microphone, computer or stereo. For people using hearing devices, hearing loops improve accessibility as they clarify sounds and speeches in public places by decreasing background noise, reverberation and interruption.

Funeral Services in Remote Areas
Amendments to the Cremation, Interment and Funeral Services Regulation will improve availability of basic funeral services for residents of remote areas. Individuals in remote communities can now apply for a licensing exemption to provide basic funeral services. The regulation was developed to facilitate delivery of funeral services on Haida Gwaii as currently the community has no licensed funeral directors or funeral providers.

Air Quality Alert System Launched
To share environmental health information with people interested in air quality, the Province has developed an Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) alert system for sulphur dioxide gas (SO2) emitted by industrial operations in the airshed around Kitimat. Anyone can access the Air Quality Subscription Service to receive email alerts when SO2 levels reach certain thresholds. Additionally, the public can access the SO2 Data Map which is updated hourly to learn about SO2 levels throughout B.C.

New Course Reflects Indigenous Values
A free online course for Indigenous families experiencing separation or divorce meets the requirements of 17 court registries where a parenting education course is required, and reflects and respects Indigenous peoples’ history, cultural perspectives and values. The course helps families understand the separation process, get help when needed and recognize the range of dispute resolution options, allowing them to make informed decisions in the best interests of the children.

Within 3 months of launch, the course reported that 126 people had registered and 42 people had completed the course. Survey results show the following:

- 87% agreed the course was culturally appropriate as it considers the unique realities and cultures of Indigenous peoples
- 92% were satisfied with the course
- 92% would recommend the course to others

More Flexibility Supports Seniors’ Independence
Amendments to the regulation give seniors more flexibility to “age in place” at their chosen assisted living residences rather than moving to long-term care before complex care is needed. The changes allow seniors unlimited access to services in assisted living residences, effectively increasing their independence.

Easier Access to HOV Lanes for Electric Vehicles
Owners of electric vehicles can now apply for the official high occupancy vehicle (HOV) decal through an automated application system, replacing a paper application system. Car dealerships and vehicle owners can apply online and finish the application within a few minutes, cutting processing times by 50%.
Vehicle owners are now receiving their decals within 1-2 weeks compared to the previous 3-6 weeks wait time. Electric vehicles displaying the official decal can use high occupancy vehicle lanes regardless of the number of passengers in the car.

New Apps
Mapping App Supports Children and Youth in Care
What used to take hours, now only takes a minute or two. Authorized ministry staff can view, at-a-glance, real time maps showing the locations of children and youth in care in relation to evacuation alerts and orders resulting from emergency events. Enhancing situational awareness, the mapping app allows authorized staff to quickly provide support and services to children, youth and caregivers during local and provincial emergencies. Originally launched in 2018 to provide support for areas impacted by wildfires, the app was also used during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Faster Mining Compliance
MineSpace, a system created for and with people who operate mines across B.C., enables direct filing of key mining reports with the Province. The tool makes it easier for operators to manage mandatory reporting and view their variance, permit and inspection history.

Mining businesses can now:

- Upload reports specified in the Health, Safety and Reclamation Code
- View code variances granted to and incidents reported by their mine
- View their mine permits and amendment history
- See a list of relevant Ministry contacts

MineSpace improves the speed and accuracy of filing, enables faster response times and improves compliance tracking and enforcement by flagging overdue reports in real time.

Better Health Management
The Health Gateway App provides B.C. residents with an all-round view of their health. The beta application is now available, enrolling new users and developing new features based on feedback. After a quick and easy 5 to 10-minute set-up on the BC Services Card mobile app, people can log in securely and see their medication history at any time, from anywhere. B.C. residents are encouraged to participate as early users in shaping the future of the app.

Multilingual Phonelines
The Service BC Provincial Contact Centre, the Province’s front-line support for hundreds of government programs, now offers a toll-free multilingual phone service in over 120 languages. Multilingual operators are available Monday to Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Pacific Time) to join the conversation with the caller and the agent, helping the caller gain the information they need. The Service BC Contact Centre handles over 750,000 enquiries per year, improving accessibility for B.C.’s diverse population and providing real-time access to information in many languages.
Easier Access to Freedom of Information Requests
An updated Freedom of Information Online Request Form has modernized the process to request records from the Province. The online form guides applicants through a service journey, based on responses to required fields. It is fast, easy and combines multiple request forms into one smooth process. Examples, links and detailed information are available to help applicants understand the Freedom of Information (FOI) process. The new form also tells applicants about ways they can receive records without submitting a request, which saves the public time and money by using available resources instead. With up to 12,000 FOI requests every year, the updated form has greatly reduced confusion, questions and misdirection of incoming requests. It supports transparency of government, while improving access to FOI requests in British Columbia.

Faster BC Services Card Identity Verification
Since June 2019, over 60,000 British Columbians have verified their identity online using their mobile device, saving them the time it would take to do so in person. British Columbians who use a mobile BC Services Card and wish to access participating government services online have the option to verify their identity via a video call with a Service BC agent. This new Verify by Video service channel allows people to securely and conveniently use their mobile BC Services Card to digitally verify their identity and access online government services from anywhere, at any time.

“The Verify by Video service is a ‘game changer’ for us in terms of being able to deliver services to citizens and business in a way that meets modern expectations.”
- Beverly Dicks, Assistant Deputy Minister, Service BC Division, Ministry of Citizens’ Services.

Simplified Arts Applications
To keep up with increasing demand, the British Columbia Arts Council (BCAC) introduced the Online Grants Application System. Over 3,000 applicants can now apply for grants through the online form using any device and be guided through the process. The system manages payments, reporting and the peer review process. The adjudication process, including the ability to work collaboratively on an application, is better streamlined and applicants are provided updates on where they are in the process. This also helps eliminate paper-based applications, saving applicants’ money and time.

Simplified Divorce Filing for Families with Children
The Online Divorce Assistant, a tool that connects people with easy-to-use guides and forms has now been expanded to provide service for mutually agreed divorces for couples that involve children. Since inception, the tool has saved British Columbians approximately 800-900 trips to court registries and has increased the number of filings accepted on the first attempt to 95% - an impressive feat considering previous paper processes averaged 3-5 attempted filings. The tool continues to provide people access to digital court interactions, which reduces stress, decreases legal fees and saves time.

Improved Autism Resources
Families of children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder can learn about autism, find information about autism funding and access all necessary forms and resources online through the refreshed Autism Program website. Additionally, the updated Registry of Autism Service Providers (RASP) makes it possible to search for support via profession, location and other key factors. Online resources and
information are provided on one comprehensive site, prioritizing the needs of families and service providers by using plain language and making it easier to find information in one place.

**Understanding B.C.’s Housing Market**

People can now access the [Provincial Housing Market Visualization Platform](#), a tool featuring B.C.’s housing and population data. The website provides statistics related to housing in the province, including information about B.C.’s population, number of dwellings, housing cost and mobility and property sales. The tool allows users to easily visualize and make sense of B.C.’s housing data, supporting people to make informed decisions.

**Hunter and Guide Outfitters Transactions Moved Online**

British Columbians can now submit guide outfitter reports, permit to accompany reports, royalty payments and guiding territory certificate transactions through [BC Hunting Online Service](#). These changes are part of the fourth release of the Fish and Wildlife Data and Licensing Transformation project. The project is a multi-phase plan that includes the automation of fish and wildlife business transactions to make it easier for hunters and guide outfitters to access services by simplifying processes and eliminating paperwork.

**Building a Strong, Sustainable and Innovative Economy**

**Good Jobs Guide and Tools**

The Province has launched a new guide to help British Columbians make career planning decisions, whether they are starting their career, returning to the workforce or transitioning to something new. The [Good Jobs Guide](#) shows where, when and what kinds of jobs are expected to be available in B.C. between 2019 and 2029, along with the type of education and training they require. Additionally, two online tools help identify occupations and the educational level needed for them. The [high opportunity occupations tool](#) focuses on occupations in highest demand and offering higher pay, while the more general tool includes all occupations.

**Using Blockchain to Verify B.C. Businesses**

[OrgBook BC](#) is an innovative, modern business tool that creates a trusted digital identity of businesses in B.C. OrgBook BC is a searchable public directory of verifiable data issued by the Corporate Registry that provides a digital confirmation through the Government of British Columbia that a business is legally incorporated in B.C. OrgBook BC makes it easier for businesses to prove they have the required permits and licences to operate in B.C. The tool allows businesses to digitally share information with other levels of government, suppliers, banks and other partners, significantly reducing time and paperwork for business owners and start-ups.

**Enabling Tall Mass Timber Buildings**

Updates to the B.C. Building Code allow eligible local governments to approve the construction of buildings up to 12 storeys high using mass timber. Allowing the early adopters to apply these rules without requiring individual projects to go through a provincial site-specific approval process saves time and money for developers, communities and people, while getting housing to market faster and more efficiently. These changes will also help to build and support value-added manufacturing of mass timber within the B.C. forestry industry, which employs 57,000 people in over 140 communities in the province.
Did you know?

Mass timber buildings can be one-fifth the weight of comparable concrete buildings, while still meeting performance standards for safety, structural resilience and fire protection. The estimated carbon benefit from the wood used in UBC’s Brock Commons Tallwood House building was equivalent to taking 511 cars off the road for a year. The development of innovative and cost-effective low-carbon building solutions supports government’s CleanBC goal of making every building more efficient, while creating more jobs and economic opportunities for people, businesses and communities located throughout B.C.

Export Navigator Expansion

In 2019, the Export Navigator Program was expanded to include dedicated support for businesses owned by Indigenous peoples, women and youth. The program offers small- and medium-sized businesses free guidance on exporting their products in six B.C. economic development regions:

- Vancouver Island/Coast
- Cariboo
- Thompson-Okanagan
- Kootenay
- North Coast and Nechako
- Northeast

Guiding entrepreneurs through complex export processes means people can spend less time and money researching and understanding permits, product labelling standards and government regulations and more time growing their businesses. The Export Navigator program is managed by the Province in partnership with Western Economic Diversification Canada and delivered through Small Business BC and Community Futures.

As of March 2020, Export Navigator has helped over 420 B.C. businesses on their journey to export their products across Canada and internationally; growing revenues by $20 million, creating 140 new jobs and growing export sales within Canada and internationally by over $3 million.

The Export Navigator program won the 2019 Community Futures Partnership award.

Workers’ Compensation for Mental Health Disorders

Amendments to the Mental Disorder Presumption Regulation extended the presumption of mental health disorders to the following occupations in B.C.: emergency dispatchers, nurses and publicly funded health-care assistants. There is no longer a need for specific evidence that a claimant’s disease or disorder is work-related as the causal link between work and the disorder is presumed, unless the contrary is proven, providing easier access to workers’ compensation by fast-tracking the claims process for compensation.

Improving Access to Social Assistance

The application process for people with persistent multiple barriers has been simplified and access expanded by removing a restriction for people with addictions. In addition, access times have been
reduced for the work-search period from five weeks to three weeks for new applicants. These policy changes allow people to access assistance faster, ensuring assistance is tailored to their needs.

**Removing Barriers Between People and Supports**
The need for regulatory amendments to update the income and disability monthly reports has been removed, creating more responsive, people-centred services. Other improvements include streamlining the assistance reaplication process and aligning the Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal process with other tribunals in B.C. so people can receive eligible assistance sooner. These updates improve ministry services and ensure people can access the supports they need when trying to overcome social and economic barriers.

**Introducing House-Made Yogurt and Ice Cream Products**
Changes in regulation allow licensed B.C. restaurants to make and sell yogurt and ice cream using milk products pasteurized at a licensed dairy plant. The elimination of unnecessary paperwork and costs will allow more restaurants to create unique products for British Columbians to enjoy using local ingredients. This is another step toward helping B.C. businesses grow, encouraging the use of B.C. products in restaurants and supporting B.C. farmers and food producers.

**Eliminating Personal Limits on Out-of-Province Liquor**
Canada is known world-wide for its high-quality liquor products and now British Columbians traveling through Canada can bring home unlimited liquor products for personal consumption. These changes remove interprovincial trade barriers, making it easier for people to purchase liquor within Canada.

**Maintaining Accountability and Measuring Progress**

**Regulatory Requirements Count**
The regulatory requirements count is a longstanding performance measure used to monitor the overall number of provincial regulatory requirements for people, business and government.

A regulatory requirement is any action a person, business or government must take to access services, carry out business or meet legal responsibilities. The number of regulatory requirements in B.C.’s statutes, regulations and associated policies and forms is tracked from year to year.

To prevent undue increases to B.C.’s overall regulatory burden, a regulatory baseline was established in 2004 and a commitment made not to increase the total number of regulatory requirements. This means when a new regulatory requirement is introduced, an existing regulatory requirement must be removed. The baseline set in 2004 was 197,242 regulatory requirements. As of March 31, 2020, the regulatory requirements count was 167,635 – a decrease of 15% compared with the 2004 baseline. The Net Zero Increase commitment is in place until 2022.

**Better Regulations for British Columbians**
Better Regulations for British Columbians is an annual process that bundles together multiple, minor regulatory amendments from across government that improve service delivery in a dedicated channel – an efficient solution for small changes. These amendments take effect on or before Red Tape Reduction
Day in March each year. During the 2019/20 fiscal year, the B.C. government made 20 amendments through this process, including:

- The Gaming Control Regulation was updated to streamline worker registration by permitting work at multiple sites without multiple registration processes, and by simplifying how workers receive their identification cards. The amendments will reduce wait times for workers and businesses and eliminate unnecessary or duplicative administrative processes.

- A selection of regulations under the Employment and Assistance Act, Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act, Metal Dealers and Recyclers Act, Offence Act and the Police Act were amended to modernize non-inclusive gendered language, supporting the Province’s commitment to gender equity and inclusion.

- The Wildlife Act Regulation was amended to update reference to the Nisga’a Nation, demonstrating respect for Indigenous names.

- The Jury Regulation was amended to align jury travel rates to existing benchmarks, eliminating the need for updates in the future.

- Four Use Recreation and Enjoyment of Public Reserves were rescinded where B.C. parks have already been established. Removing these redundancies saves British Columbians time and simplifies the permitting process.

- Two land reserve Orders in Council under the Land Act that are no longer needed were rescinded, clarifying the public record and enabling the land to be used for other purposes.

- The Violation Ticket Administration and Fines Regulation and the Forest Recreation Regulation were updated to remove a requirement already included in the Off-Road Vehicle Act, eliminating duplication.

- A Monument Reserve Order in Council was amended to align with the cancellation of reserves around survey monuments throughout B.C. This change clarifies the status of the land.

- The Police (Uniforms) Regulation was updated to clarify the decision-making authority regarding uniform standards.

- Several outdated regulations were repealed under the Victoria Regional Transit Commission’s Property Tax Regulations that had been replaced by newer regulations, helping to clean the regulatory books.

- The Limited Entry Hunting Regulation and Hunting Regulation were updated to clarify the definitions of "adult mountain goat" and "kid," making definitions cohesive across legislation and practice, supporting smooth service delivery.