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Message from the Minister

This Better Regulations for British Columbians Annual Report highlights some of the ways government has improved services for people and businesses this past fiscal year. Work is happening across government, and our Industrial Blueprint ensures those efforts are well coordinated, with people at the very centre of what we're doing.

We've taken action to foster innovation across our economy, including through our BC Manufacturing Jobs Fund supporting high-value industrial and manufacturing capital projects for local businesses and organizations in communities throughout the province.

B.C. is committed to strengthening our public health care systems to ensure people have access to the resources and services they need. Our province has experienced record growth in the life sciences sector, and the investments made through B.C.'s Life Sciences and Biomanufacturing Strategy will help us continue to address the world's most pressing health care issues, and providing increased access to innovative, life-saving medical therapies to people in B.C.

We know B.C. is in a housing crisis and a climate crisis, and we are building more homes than ever before making sure they are resilient and climate friendly. Our Ministry of Housing is a national leader in the adoption of building codes and best practices that address climate change and drive economic productivity. I'm proud that we have adopted updates to the BC Building Code that include changes to expand the use of encapsulated mass timber construction helping to keep our province at the cutting edge of low carbon construction.

To ensure every person in this province has opportunities to succeed, across government we continue to work in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and Rightsholders to make progress on true and meaningful reconciliation, and the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

Clean and Competitive: A Blueprint for B.C.'s Industrial Future lays out the Province's work to drive new investment, create new jobs and seize new opportunities in growing clean energy and sustainable industries. By leveraging B.C.'s strengths to create good jobs and opportunities in every community, we are improving the quality of life for people, while strengthening the province's diverse economy.

Honourable Brenda Bailey

Minister of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation

Goals and Objectives

This year's annual report showcases specific actions British Columbia (B.C.) has taken to deliver more homes for people, strengthen our public health care systems, continue to promote meaningful reconciliation, and implement digital processes and tools to increase access to the services people depend on. The Province is working hard to make sure our laws, policies, and programs are clear, streamlined and meet the needs of the people of B.C. and their businesses.

The Province's long-standing commitment to better, smarter regulations and services that promote economic growth, innovation and inclusion is supported by three main goals:

1. Increasing access to quality government services that people count on;
2. Promoting a modern, efficient, and effective regulatory system; and,
3. Enhancing accountability for regulatory and service improvement activities.

Accountability and Commitment

The Better Regulations for British Columbians Annual Report is a legislated requirement under the Regulatory Reporting Act and associated regulation. The Annual Report must be published on or before June 30 each year and must include the following:

- The goals and objectives of the government's regulatory reform initiatives;
- The number of regulatory requirements, as determined by the Minister, on March 31 of the year in which the report is published;
- An explanation of the methodology used by the Minister to determine the number of regulatory requirements;
- A historical comparison of the number of regulatory requirements;
- An assessment of the government's regulatory reform initiatives undertaken during the 12-month period ending on March 31 of the year in which the report is published.

If you have suggestions to address service improvement or efficiency in B.C.'s legislative frameworks and government processes, please contact us at BetterRegulations@gov.bc.ca.

Regulatory Requirements Count

The regulatory requirements count (the count) is a performance measure used to monitor the number of regulatory requirements for people living in B.C. In 2004, the Province introduced the Net Zero Increase (NZI) commitment to prevent unnecessary increases in the number of regulatory requirements on B.C. residents and their businesses. The NZI established a baseline of 197,242 requirements that was not to be exceeded. As of March 31, 2024, the number of regulatory requirements stands at 171,538.

[A regulatory requirement is any action a person, business or government must take to access services, conduct business or meet legal responsibilities.](#)

B.C.'s Regulatory Requirements Count

Since the NZI and count were introduced, the province has grown substantially in terms of population and complexity of the economy. To provide a more meaningful assessment of the relevance of regulatory requirements on British Columbians, relative measures have been added to the annual report; these measures reflect the number of regulatory requirements compared with three indicators:

1. Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
2. Population
3. Number of businesses

Assessing the number of regulatory requirements against these indicators allows for a greater understanding of how the number of requirements change over time relative to the areas where requirements have the most impact.

Economy-based (GDP Count Ratio)

Regulation influences economic activity and production of goods and services in B.C. Examining the ratio of regulatory requirements relative to the economic output of the province—measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP)—provides awareness of the impact of regulation on economic performance.

The ratio of regulatory requirements relative to GDP has been on a downward trend since 2004. Over the last ten years (since 2013), provincial GDP has expanded by 32 per cent, while the number of regulatory requirements decreased 3 per cent.

People-based (Population Count Ratio)

Regulations are relevant and beneficial to all people living in B.C. Looking at the number of regulatory requirements relative to the working-age population in B.C. provides insight on the potential for regulatory impact on workers.

The ratio of regulatory requirements relative to population (aged 15 and over) has been on a downward trend since 2004. Over the last ten years (since 2013), population has increased by 21 per cent, while regulatory requirements decreased 3 per cent.

Business-based (Business Count Ratio)

A strong and growing business environment is essential for B.C.'s economy. There are over 500,000 small businesses (those with fewer than 50 employees) in the province, accounting for 98 per cent of all businesses within B.C. Approximately 58 per cent of B.C. businesses are owned and operated by someone who is self-employed without paid help. Of the approximately 213,500 businesses in the province with employees, 57 per cent have fewer than five employees and 96 per cent have less than 50 employees.

The ratio of regulatory requirements relative to business count has been on a downward trend since 2004. Over the last ten years (since 2013), the total number of businesses in B.C. has increased by 15 per cent, while the number of regulatory requirements decreased 3 per cent.

Better Regulations for British Columbians Package

Established in 2016, the Better Regulations for British Columbians (BR4BC) process groups together minor changes that clarify, correct, or repeal outdated information and has resulted in more than 1,600 amendments that modernize B.C.'s regulatory framework.

The 2024 BR4BC package included the opportunity to update regulations with digital options, such as amendments to allow electronic payment and virtual attendance at meetings and help create efficiencies.

Outside of BR4BC, ministries continue to take steps to modernize and improve the accessibility and inclusion of systems and services, such as:

- A new standard for gender and sex data will help make data collection more inclusive and provide more accurate information for programs and services in B.C. The standard clarifies the difference between gender and sex by providing alternative definitions that recognize a range of gender identities.
- The Drainage, Ditch and Dike Act and Water Users' Communities Act was amended to enable electronic meetings to take place. The legislation still allows in-person meetings, but now provides increased flexibility for individuals organizing and attending meetings.
- Updates to the Supreme Court Civil Rules and Supreme Court Family Rules will make it easier for people in B.C. to access court services. The use of plain language will improve accessibility, particularly for people who speak English as an additional language. These changes were recommended by the Supreme Court Civil and Family Rules Committee based on feedback from court users.
- Hunters in B.C. must have certain game species inspected by a provincial inspector. The Hunter Compulsory Inspection program has been updated from a paper-based system to an electronic reporting system. Although paper forms will still be accepted, under the new system the quality of incoming data will be improved, and biological data will become available much more quickly.
- Amendments to the Supreme Court Act will replace the title of "master" with the title of "associate judge." The current title has connotations of hierarchy, subservience, colonialism, and slavery.

2023/24 Achievements

The stories profiled in the 2023/24 Annual Report are a sample of the efforts made to improve access to the services British Columbians count on. The stories are organized into the following themes:

- Delivering More Homes for People
- Strengthening B.C.'s Public Health Care Systems
- Continuing to Work Towards True and Meaningful Reconciliation
- Fostering Innovation Across Our Economy
- Removing Barriers and Increasing Accessibility

More achievements from 2023/24 can be found online. Please visit our Better Regulations for British Columbians [webpage](#) to read more.

Delivering More Homes for People

People want to live in British Columbia due to its strong economy, high-quality public services and stunning natural beauty. However, many people across the province struggle to find an affordable home. To make homes more attainable for people, the Province implemented measures to simplify the permitting processes, revise strata regulations, rein in short-term rentals and enable the construction of more small-scale multi-unit homes.

Single Housing Application Service

The new [Single Housing Application Service \(SHAS\)](#) is helping to deliver more homes faster by creating a simpler permitting application for homebuilders. Homebuilding in B.C. can require multiple permits from different ministries, each with different processes. SHAS was introduced to help identify which permits are needed for a proposed housing project, provide status updates, and generate location-based reports. The service is expected to clear permitting backlogs and reduce permitting timelines by up to two months.

Changes to Strata Property Regulation

Changes to the Strata Property Regulation ensure that residents of strata buildings with 55+ age restrictions can remain in their homes even if their family structure changes. The amendments allow residents to have their children, of any age, live with them and allow for spouses and partners to live with residents even if they are under 55 years old. Previously, exceptions only existed for live-in caregivers and residents who lived in the building before an age limit was imposed. These changes support families by making sure strata are inclusive and accommodating to all types of family structures.

Legislation to Rein in Short-Term Rentals

Faced with a shortage of long-term rentals units in B.C., the province introduced the Short-Term Rental Accommodation Act which specifies that short-term rentals can only be offered at a host's principal residence or property. Designed to target areas with high housing needs, the Act only applies to municipalities with a population of 10,000 or higher; other exemptions include 14 resort regions and mountain/ski resorts. The legislation strikes a balance between the need for residents to have stable long-term housing and supporting B.C.'s world-class tourism sector.

More Small-Scale, Multi-Unit Homes Coming to B.C.

In many B.C. communities, traditional zoning rules have led to most housing being built in the form of condos or single-family homes. In response, the Province recently introduced several pieces of new legislation to increase the availability of small-scale, multi-unit homes. Now, municipalities with more than 5,000 people can allow for three to four units to be built on lots initially zoned for single-family or duplex use (and six units on larger lots).

[A preliminary analysis predicts that the province could see more than 130,000 new small-scale multi-unit homes in B.C. during the next 10 years due to these legislative updates.](#)

Strengthening B.C.'s Public Health Care Systems

It is vital that our public health care services are efficient, comprehensive, and accessible. From improved access to cancer screening services, the development of a new clinical services delivery program, better regulation of school psychologists and strengthened mental health pathways, the Province has taken important steps to support the health and well being of people of all ages.

HPV Transition Project

B.C. has launched an innovative, first in Canada, approach to screening high-risk human papillomavirus (HPV), the leading cause of cervical cancer in Canada. Individuals from 25 to 69 can now [order a kit to self-screen](#) for HPV at home or have a screening sample collected by a health-care provider. This project is a key component of preventative health care and is intended to help people with no identifiable symptoms detect cancer sooner and reduce demands on the health-care system.

99% of cervical cancers are caused by high-risk HPV. The choice to screen at home is a first in Canada.

Hospital at Home

Hospital at Home is an innovative clinical service which delivers a combination of virtual and in-person short-term care services in patients' homes. Patients are registered with their local hospital but remain at home for treatment, if deemed safe and appropriate. Daily, in-person visits are supplemented by virtual visits with Hospital at Home team members as needed. Patients have access to a full-time care team and remain under the care of a hospital physician while in the program. This service reduces the stress and anxiety associated with hospitalization and gives patients more comfort, convenience, and privacy.

Regulation of School Psychologists

Updates to B.C.'s Psychologists Regulation now require school psychologists to be regulated by the College of Psychologists of BC. Prior to these changes, psychologists employed by school districts and private schools in B.C. were not regulated. These updates ensure that mental health supports in schools are provided by competent, ethical, and properly certified psychologists.

Strengthening Mental Health Pathways for Downtown Eastside Youth

Young people facing mental and physical health challenges in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES) will now have access to improved support through the launch of the first DTES Youth Outreach Centre. Operated by Vancouver Coastal Health, the centre will help to save lives by connecting young people ages 15 to 24 to vital services on their way to recovery. The DTES Youth Outreach Team is being expanded from two workers to eight to further support the new centre. Workers will include mental-health and substance-use nurses, youth care workers, Indigenous peer advocates, and social workers.

Continuing to Work Towards True and Meaningful Reconciliation

In collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and Rightsholders, B.C. continues to make progress on true and meaningful reconciliation and the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act by creating exemptions for financial settlements, increasing Indigenous jurisdiction over their children, introducing Indigenous school requirements for graduation, and increasing Indigenous oversight on education.

Indigenous Financial Settlements Exemption

B.C.'s Employment and Assistance Regulation and Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Regulation have been updated to exempt Indigenous Financial Settlement payments from being counted as income or assets. Prior to this, each time a new settlement agreement was completed, an Order in Council exempting the specific settlement had to be approved by Cabinet. This process was time consuming and caused uncertainty about whether payments from settlement agreements would affect eligibility for financial aid.

[Examples of eligible settlement payments include the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement and the Sixties Scoop Settlement Agreement.](#)

Legislative Amendments Support Indigenous Jurisdiction

Regulatory amendments were made under the Indigenous Self-Government in Child and Family Services Act to create court processes for the expedited return of Indigenous children under provincial care to their home communities. In addition, the new Indigenous Child Welfare Director (ICWD) position will provide support and oversight for services delivered by the Province to Indigenous children and families and collaborate with Indigenous partners to ensure alignment. Finally, regulation was brought into force enabling authorization of the provincial court system to administer Indigenous laws as a ready-made dispute resolution option for Indigenous governing bodies.

[First Nations in B.C. are working on a variety of agreements with the Province and the federal government to achieve their self-determination over child and family services. The ICWD will hold powers equal to the provincial director of child welfare, with both roles appointed at the assistant deputy minister level.](#)

Introduction of an Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement

High school students in B.C. must now successfully complete at least four credits in Indigenous-focused coursework to meet graduation requirements. This applies to students in B.C.'s public, independent, First Nations, and offshore schools. Students can meet the graduation requirement through a variety of course options; some of the courses will also satisfy Language Arts or Social Studies graduation requirements. This change represents an important step towards lasting and meaningful reconciliation, building on work to incorporate Indigenous content and perspectives into the provincial curriculum, professional development, and standards for certified educators in B.C.

Systemic Changes Improve Outcomes for K-12 Indigenous Students

Indigenous people will soon have more input into the decisions and processes affecting the education of their children and youth in B.C. public schools. The changes require boards of education to create an Indigenous education council in their school districts to ensure input into decisions affecting Indigenous students. The amendments also include a new "school-of-choice" provision which enables First Nations to decide which school students who live on reserve, self-governing, or Treaty Lands will attend. These amendments were developed collaboratively with the First Nations Education Steering Committee and reflect consultation with Indigenous people across B.C.

Fostering Innovation Across Our Economy

The Province continues to modernize and enhance government services by implementing new and streamlined digital processes through the introduction of online tools like BC Registry Services, PlanningTogetherBC, the Find Your Path Tool, and the implementation of the Emergency and Disaster Management Act.

BC Registry Services Going Digital

The [BC Registries modernization initiative](#) is shifting many provincial services online, and moving away from manual, paper-based processes. As part of this effort, a [Digital Business Card](#) has been created that allows sole proprietors in the City of Vancouver to digitally prove their ownership and that their business is active and registered. Prior to this, business owners had to present registration documents and personal identification, often in person, to obtain a business licence or open a bank account.

Integrated Planning Using PlanningTogetherBC

[PlanningTogetherBC](#) (PTBC) is an integrated planning approach that has been developed to better align transportation and land use planning. Integrated planning is a collaborative, step-based approach meant to achieve multiple benefits such as affordability, emissions reductions, and healthy, equitable, and resilient communities. Transportation and land use planning over the past few decades have typically been undertaken as separate processes—often by separate agencies. This approach breaks down these silos by examining the complete system; and enhances the planning processes to ensure the development of complete, connected communities and safe and integrated transportation systems.

New Find Your Path Tool

With the new [Find Your Path](#) digital tool, people can explore in-demand careers and map out their educational journey with easy-to-navigate steps to guide them. The tool maps education and skills pathways for more than 250 occupations, including many of the high-opportunity occupations identified in the 2023 Labour Market Outlook. In the first few months since the tool's launch, the site has been viewed over 18,000 times and users have saved over 2,225 different education and career paths.

Implementation of New Emergency Management Act

Under B.C.'s new emergency management legislation, people and communities are safer and better prepared for future climate emergencies. The Emergency and Disaster Management Act focuses on disaster risk reduction and enhanced emergency preparedness. The act is the most comprehensive and forward-looking emergency management legislation in Canada. Updates include shifting from response-focused management to emergency preparedness; implementing climate-informed risk assessments to understand and prepare for the hazards communities face; and establishing a framework for agreements between First Nations and other authorities.

[The Emergency and Disaster Management Act replaces the Emergency Program Act, which had not been substantially updated since 1993.](#)

Removing Barriers and Increasing Accessibility

B.C. is committed to removing barriers and increasing accessibility, regardless of gender, race, class, sexual orientation or ability, and implementing inclusive policies and initiatives that foster a culture of acceptance and support. To further these goals, the Province has introduced expanded language resources for newcomers, enacted the Pay Transparency Act, expanded the number of electoral districts and eased student loan repayment.

Multi-Language Resources for Newcomers

To make the transition to life in B.C. simpler and easier for newcomers, a new [multi-language web hub](#) helps people find important information on topics like healthcare, driver's licence and emergency resources. The content was created out of user research and discussions with over 250 people in 14 communities in B.C. and is available in multiple languages including simplified and traditional Chinese, Punjabi and French.

Pay Transparency Act

The new Pay Transparency Act places requirements on employers to address systemic discrimination in the workplace. Employers must now include the expected pay, or expected pay range, for job opportunities they advertise publicly. The new legislation prohibits employers from asking prospective employees about what they have been paid in other positions and stipulates that employees cannot be punished for disclosing their pay to co-workers. B.C. employers are gradually required to publicly post reports on their gender pay gap. This requirement is being introduced in stages, by number of employees, to give employers time to prepare.

[In 2023, women in B.C. earned 17% less than men. The pay gap also disproportionately affects Indigenous women, women of colour, immigrant women, as well as women with disabilities and non-binary people.](#)

Ensuring Every Vote Counts

In response to recommendations from the independent Electoral Boundaries Commission, the Province introduced amendments to the Electoral Districts Act to make sure votes are weighted evenly across B.C. The amendments repealed the existing Electoral Districts Act and replaced it with a new act to establish 93 electoral districts. This is an increase of six districts, with four new districts in the Lower Mainland, one on Vancouver Island, and one in the Interior. The commission recommended these changes in response to the province's estimated population growth of 500,000 people since 2015 and projected population growth in urban areas.

B.C. Increases Student Financial Aid and Eases Repayment

Post-secondary students now have access to increased financial aid and more flexible repayment terms helping to make education and skills training more accessible and affordable. B.C. is increasing the student loan maximum for the first time since 2006 from \$110 to \$220 per week for single students, and from \$140 to \$280 per week for students with dependents. Student loan repayment terms have also been updated to better align with the Federal government's [Repayment Assistance Plan](#). These updates help reduce financial barriers that people often face when pursuing education to build their careers.