



February 20, 2024

Honourable George Chow
Minister of Citizens' Services
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Chow:

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

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

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

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

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

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**Office of the
Premier**

Web Site:
www.gov.bc.ca

Mailing Address:
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9E1

Location:
Parliament Buildings
Victoria

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

British Columbians receive services from government in many different ways – through non-profit organizations, Indigenous organizations, directly from a government employee, through a website or publication – the variations are endless. Ensuring services are delivered efficiently, effectively, and that maximize benefits for British Columbians in urban and rural communities is critical. Different service delivery and procurement models bring different costs and benefits for economic development, training, and service experience.

Coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, British Columbians know our government can deliver services quickly online. They have also seen us use data effectively to manage risk and respond to changing circumstances. This legacy of quick movement during the pandemic offers lessons for us to ensure that the best parts of our response will inform our government on the continued development of accessible multi-channel services, including online learning and government procurement, by expanding our modernization efforts informed by high-quality data.

Finally, access to high-speed internet connectivity is vital for British Columbians to participate in the global economy and to access Indigenous, federal, provincial and local government services. Our investments to expand high-speed internet are investments in our communities that will pay social and economic dividends for generations.

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

- Adapting to the changing context of COVID-19 to ensure British Columbians have access to government services.

- Expanding high-speed internet to rural, remote, and Indigenous communities, with more than 570 communities already benefitting from projects underway.
- Expanding the pro-active disclosure of government information.
- Improving government procurement processes that deliver benefits for people, businesses, and communities.

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

- Continue to expand the use of cross-government data to increase evidence-based decision making and better inform policy and programs for our key priorities, building on government's Data Innovation Program.
- Work with partners and the public to modernize government services and leverage best-in-class digital tools that enhance cross-sector coordination, and provide services that are efficient, equitable, and prioritize user experience.
- Continue to improve how procurement processes deliver benefits for people and businesses in communities across the province.
- With support from the Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives, continue work to help dismantle systemic racism and improve access to government programs and services for Indigenous, Black, and other people of colour by implementing the *Anti-Racism Data Act*.
- Begin the work to address barriers to effective use of data in delivering services to British Columbians more efficiently and effectively.

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

British Columbians expect their elected representatives to work together to advance the public good. That means seeking out, fostering, and championing good ideas regardless of their origin. I expect you to reach out to elected members from all parties as you deliver

on your mandate. Further, you will build thoughtful and sustained relationships both with title holders and through public and stakeholder engagement plans that incorporate diverse perspectives early in the policy development process. Federal partnerships and resources will be particularly important and, on behalf of our government, you will engage with the federal government on advancing priorities to improve the lives of British Columbians.

As a Cabinet, we will uphold the highest standards of ethics, collaboration, and good conduct in service of the public, and as a Minister of the Crown, you are expected to review, understand, and act according to the *Members' Conflict of Interest Act*. You will establish a collaborative working relationship with your Deputy Minister, and the public servants under their direction, who provide the professional, non-partisan advice that is fundamental to delivering on our government's priorities. Your Minister's Office must meet the highest standards for integrity and provide a respectful, rewarding environment for all staff.

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

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

Sincerely,

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

David Eby, KC
Premier