



November 26, 2020

Honourable Katrine Conroy
Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource
Operations and Rural Development
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, British Columbia V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Conroy:

Thank you for agreeing to serve British Columbians as Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development and Minister responsible for the Columbia Basin Trust, Columbia Power Corporation and the Columbia River Treaty. You are taking on this responsibility at a time when people in our province face significant challenges as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 has turned the lives of British Columbians upside down. None of us expected to face the challenges of the past number of months, yet British Columbians have demonstrated incredible resilience, time and time again. We will get through the pandemic and its aftereffects by building on this resilience and focusing on what matters most to people.

British Columbians voted for a government focused on their priorities: fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, providing better health care for people and families, delivering affordability and security in our communities, and investing in good jobs and livelihoods in a clean-energy future.

I expect you – and the work of your ministry – to focus on the commitments detailed in our platform, *Working for You*, along with the following foundational principles:

- **Putting people first:** Since 2017, our government has focused on making decisions to meet people's needs. That focus drove our work in our first term and will continue to be our priority. British Columbians are counting on the government to keep them safe and to build an economic recovery that works for everyone, not just those at the top. Keeping people at the centre of everything we do means protecting and enhancing the public services people rely on and working to make life more affordable for everyone.

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- **Lasting and meaningful reconciliation:** Reconciliation is an ongoing process and a shared responsibility for us all. The unanimous passage of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* was a significant step forward in this journey. True reconciliation will take time and ongoing commitment to work with Indigenous peoples as they move toward self-determination. Our government – and every ministry – must remain focused on creating opportunities for Indigenous peoples to be full partners in our economy and providing a clear and sustainable path for everyone to work toward lasting reconciliation.
- **Equity and anti-racism:** Our province's history, identity and strength are rooted in its diverse population. Yet racialized and marginalized people face historic and present-day barriers that limit their full participation in their communities, workplaces, government and their lives. Our government has a moral and ethical responsibility to tackle systemic discrimination in all its forms – and every ministry has a role in this work. While our caucus elected a record number of women, more work remains to address gender equity. Delivering on our commitments to address racial discrimination will require a commitment by all of government to ensure increased IBPOC (Indigenous, Black and People of Colour) representation within the public service, including in government appointments. Our efforts to address systemic discrimination must also inform policy and budget decisions by reviewing all decisions through a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens.
- **A better future through fighting climate change:** In 2018, our government launched our CleanBC climate action plan. CleanBC puts British Columbia on the path to a cleaner, better future by building a low-carbon economy with new clean-energy jobs and opportunities, protecting our air, land and water and supporting communities to prepare for climate impacts. It is every Minister's responsibility to ensure your ministry's work continues to achieve CleanBC's goals.
- **A strong, sustainable economy that works for everyone:** We will continue our work to support British Columbians through the pandemic and the economic recovery by investing in health care, getting people back to work, helping businesses and communities, and building the clean, innovative economy of the future. Our plan will train the workforce of tomorrow, help businesses hire and grow and invest in the infrastructure needed to build our province.

The pandemic has reminded us that we're strongest when we work together. Delivering on our commitments to people will require a coordinated effort with your cabinet and caucus colleagues, supported by the skilled professionals in the public service. You will also support your cabinet colleagues to do their work, particularly where commitments cross ministry lines.

British Columbians expect their elected representatives to work together to advance the broader public good despite their partisan perspectives. 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 through public and stakeholder engagement plans that connect with people to

incorporate their perspectives early in the policy development process. These plans must include measurable outcomes and ensure active dialogue and ongoing outreach in your ministry's actions and priorities.

Over the course of our mandate, I expect you will make progress on the following items:

- Support people and businesses, with a focus on rural communities, in our government's COVID-19 response and recovery.
- Support the Minister of State for Lands and Natural Resource Operations to create a new Ministry for Lands and Natural Resource Operations that will develop and implement land use policies that support B.C.'s goals for economic activity, environmental sustainability, and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.
- Continue work to update and modernize forest policy and legislation to ensure a competitive, sustainable future for forest communities, Indigenous peoples, workers, and companies.
- Lead the transition of our forestry sector from high-volume to high-value production, increasing the value-added initiatives of our forest economy, including by making mass timber a priority in public buildings moving forward.
- Support the Minister of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation to advance the mass timber action plan.
- Working with industry and labour, dedicate a specific portion of the annual allowable cut toward higher value producers who can demonstrate their ability to create new jobs for workers in B.C.
- Continue collaborating with the forest industry and stakeholders to implement the Interior Forest Sector Renewal process and the Coast Forest Sector Revitalization Initiative.
- Implement the recommendations of the Old Growth Strategic Review in collaboration with Indigenous leaders, labour, industry, and environmental groups to protect more old-growth stands – in addition to the 353,000 hectares protected in September 2020.
- With support from the Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Preparedness, lead work with local governments to reduce wildfire risk and better prepare and support communities for future wildfires.
- Plant more trees for a healthy industry and province and continue to make significant investments in forest health, wildfire protection, silviculture, and revitalizing our forests.
- Protect and create jobs by fighting for a fair deal for B.C. wood products in softwood lumber negotiations with the United States.
- Champion innovation in our forestry sector that aligns with CleanBC objectives and improves sector efficiency.

- With support from the Parliamentary Secretary for Environment, lead work with neighbouring jurisdictions to cooperatively develop and invest in new strategies aimed at better protecting our shared wildlife and habitat corridors, including work to implement the Together for Wildlife Strategy.
- Assume responsibility for the Columbia Basin Trust and Columbia Power Corporation, and lead negotiations regarding the Columbia River Treaty.

To assist you in meeting the commitments we have made to British Columbians, you are assigned a Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Development. You will work closely together and ensure your Parliamentary Secretary receives appropriate support to deliver on the following priorities, outlined in the mandate letter issued to them:

- Support the Minister of Citizens' Services to deliver high-speed connectivity throughout the province with a goal of connecting all regions to the high-speed network.
- Work with the Minister of Labour to guide the establishment of a new Worker Training and Job Opportunity Office to maximize the impact of our economic recovery plan for workers and communities during COVID-19 and beyond – with a focus on retraining workers, supporting resource communities facing job loss, developing higher value goods, and accessing new global markets and opportunities for B.C. products.
- Continue stakeholder engagement in hard-hit forest sector communities needing to diversify their local economies.

Our work as a government must continually evolve to meet the changing needs of people in this province. Issues not contemplated in 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. Your ministry's priorities must reflect our government's overall strategic plan as determined by cabinet.

All cabinet members are expected to review, understand, and act according to the *Members' Conflict of Interest Act* and conduct themselves with the highest level of integrity. As a minister of the Crown, your conduct will reflect not only on you but on cabinet and our government. You are responsible for providing strong, professional and ethical leadership within cabinet and your ministry. 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. You must ensure your minister's office meets the highest standards for integrity and provides a respectful and rewarding environment for all staff.

My commitment to all British Columbians is to do my level best to make sure people's lives are better, safer and more affordable. I believe the challenges we face can and will be overcome by

working together. By way of this letter, I am expressing my faith that people can expect the same commitment from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John J. Horgan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John Horgan
Premier