



February 25, 2022

Roly Russell, MLA
Parliamentary Secretary for Rural and Regional Development
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, British Columbia V8V 1X4

Dear Parliamentary Secretary Russell:

Thank you for agreeing to serve British Columbians as Parliamentary Secretary for Rural and Regional Development, supporting the Minister of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation.

In this past year, your work has contributed to this government's efforts to support British Columbians as they face the impacts of COVID-19. People throughout the province continue to work together to stay safe and rebuild their lives and communities from the effects of the pandemic. Our government remains committed to getting through the pandemic and its after effects by building on this resilience and focusing on what matters most to people.

British Columbians voted for a government focused on their priorities: 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 –with support of your Minister and 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.

As you continue your work as Parliamentary Secretary, you will also continue to assist your Minister in carrying out your Minister's duties. You will represent the Minister at public events as needed, deliver speeches on behalf of the Minister, and act as a spokesperson for the government's position. You will continue your work of reaching out to stakeholders, businesses, civil society, and individuals across BC to better understand their perspectives and bring their views to your Minister.

I expect you to continue your support for your Minister and make progress on the following items:

- Lead the work of Rural and Regional Development with local governments and First Nations to support and promote regional diversified economies.
- Provide the regional perspective to the work of the Ministry with a focus on implementing supports for rural, remote and First Nations communities when needed.
- 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 establish a 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 BC products.

Your Minister is ultimately responsible and accountable for your ministry and its mandate; thus, all key decisions will be made by your Minister. Your role is to understand your Minister's policy goals, develop a deep understanding of the issues, participate in consultations with key stakeholders, Indigenous peoples, and the broader public, in order to give your best advice to the public service as it develops options for a decision by your Minister.

You will collaborate with your Minister, ministry, and the Premier's Office to develop a workplan to guide your efforts, including detail on how the professional public service will support your work.

All 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 Parliamentary Secretary, your conduct will reflect not only on you, but on your Minister and our government.

You are accountable for providing strong, professional, and ethical leadership. I expect you to establish a positive, respectful, and collaborative working relationship with your Minister, your Minister's staff and the public servants who provide the professional, non-partisan advice fundamental to delivering on our government's priorities.

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 fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John Horgan
Premier