



December 7, 2022

Honourable Sheila Malcolmson  
Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Malcolmson:

Thank you for agreeing to serve as Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. 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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- **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.

Our government has taken a systematic approach to reducing poverty in our province, and we're seeing positive results. Having a plan and implementing it – while allowing time to reassess our work – is the best way to attack poverty, create new opportunities, and increase inclusion.

Poverty makes people sick, alienated, and vulnerable – the exact opposite of what we want for every British Columbian. By working to reduce and eliminate poverty in B.C., we can ensure our province is healthy, inclusive and strong – ready to take on any challenges.

To reduce poverty, we are creating opportunities for people to move from government support programs and back into the workforce. Our province can't waste any human potential; we need everyone working to the full extent of their skills and talents. Sometimes people are blocked from work by barriers that relate to disabilities not being accommodated. Sometimes it's racism. Sometimes it's just that nobody gave that person a fair chance to prove themselves.

Whatever the reason, working with communities, businesses, and government partners to identify, remove, and prevent these barriers will support people and can change lives forever while making our province stronger.

For those unable to work, ensuring that they can live full and dignified lives is the right thing to do, and it's what we would expect for any loved one we knew that was struggling and needed a hand. Whether it's housing, food, or social supports, we will continue to work to ensure every British Columbian has the opportunity to participate in their community, feel valued, and share in the prosperity of our province.

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

- Being responsive to the challenges presented by COVID-19 with supports for vulnerable people.
- Continuing to build on our Government's Poverty Reduction Plan, including the largest-ever permanent increase to income assistance and disability assistance rates and the first-ever increase to the senior's supplement.
- Putting in place comprehensive accessibility legislation in Spring 2021 to open doors to opportunity and participation.
- Establishing a multi-sectoral Period Poverty Task Force to respond to period poverty in B.C.

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

- Update the Poverty Reduction Strategy by March 2024, to continue reducing the number of people, and in particular children, who are experiencing poverty in our province.
- Lead work with support from the Minister of Finance to continue addressing impacts on low-income people caused by cost-of-living increases related to global inflation.
- Given rising costs of food, continue to lead work on food security and dignified access to food in partnership with food producers, grocery stores, food banks, schools, and not-for-profits, with support from the Minister of Agriculture and Food and the Parliamentary Secretary for Community Development and Non-Profits.
- Support the work of the Minister of Housing to better coordinate services to deliver improved outcomes for people living in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, in collaboration with the Ministers of Mental Health and Addictions, Health, and Public Safety and Solicitor General, as well as Indigenous Peoples, external partners, and others.

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

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 underline that extends to the right.

David Eby, KC  
Premier