



July 18, 2017

Honourable Shane Simpson  
Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, British Columbia V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Simpson:

Congratulations on your new appointment as Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction.

It has never been more important for new leadership that works for ordinary people, not just those at the top.

It is your job to deliver that leadership in your ministry.

Our government made three key commitments to British Columbians.

Our first commitment is to make life more affordable. Too many families were left behind for too long by the previous government. They are counting on you to do your part to make their lives easier.

Our second commitment is to deliver the services that people count on. Together, we can ensure that children get access to the quality public education they need to succeed, that families can get timely medical attention, and that our senior citizens are able to live their final years with dignity.

These and other government services touch the lives of British Columbians every day. It is your job as minister to work within your budget to deliver quality services that are available and effective.

Our third key commitment is to build a strong, sustainable, innovative economy that works for everyone, not just the wealthy and the well-connected. Together, we are going to tackle poverty and inequality, create good-paying jobs in every corner of the province, and ensure people from every background have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

These three commitments along with your specific ministerial objectives should guide your work and shape your priorities from day to day. I expect you to work with the skilled professionals in the public service to deliver on this mandate.

As you are aware, we have set up a *Confidence and Supply Agreement* with the B.C. Green caucus. This

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agreement is critical to the success of our government. Accordingly, the principles of “good faith and no surprises” set out in that document should also guide your work going forward.

As minister, you are responsible for ensuring members of the B.C. Green caucus are appropriately consulted on major policy issues, budgets, legislation and other matters as outlined in our agreement. This consultation should be coordinated through the Confidence and Supply Agreement Secretariat in the Premier’s Office. The secretariat is charged with ensuring that members of the B.C. Green caucus are provided access to key documents and officials as set out in the agreement. This consultation and information sharing will occur in accordance with protocols established jointly by government and the B.C. Green caucus, and in accordance with relevant legislation.

British Columbians expect our government to work together to advance the public good. That means seeking out, fostering, and advancing good ideas regardless of which side of the house they come from.

Our government put forward a progressive vision for a Better B.C. that has won broad support with all members of the legislature. There is consensus on the need to address many pressing issues such as reducing health-care wait times, addressing overcrowded and under-supported classrooms, taking action on climate change, tackling the opioid crisis, and delivering safe, quality, affordable child care for all. As one of my ministers, I expect you to build on and expand that consensus to help us better deliver new leadership for British Columbians.

As part of our commitment to true, lasting reconciliation with First Nations in British Columbia our government will be fully adopting and implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. As minister, you are responsible for moving forward on the calls to action and reviewing policies, programs, and legislation to determine how to bring the principles of the declaration into action in British Columbia.

In your role as Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction I expect that you will make substantive progress on the following priorities:

- As a first step, immediately raise all income assistance and disability rates by \$100 per month.
- Encourage and support assistance recipients as they re-enter the workforce by allowing them to keep an additional \$200 a month in earnings exemptions.
- Further support those on disability assistance by fully restoring the BC Bus Pass program.
- Develop a basic-income pilot to test whether giving people a basic income is an effective way to reduce poverty, improve health, housing and employment.
- Design and implement a province-wide poverty-reduction strategy with legislated targets and timelines.
- Work in partnership to develop a homelessness action plan to reduce the homeless population through

permanent housing and services. As part of the plan, conduct a province-wide homelessness count.

All members of Cabinet are expected to review, understand and act according to the *Members Conflict of Interest Act* and to conduct themselves with the highest level of integrity. Remember, as a minister of the Crown, the way you conduct yourself will reflect not only on yourself, but on your Cabinet colleagues and our government as a whole.

I look forward to working with you in the coming weeks and months ahead.

It will take dedication, hard work, and a real commitment to working for people to make it happen, but I know you're up to the challenge.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Horgan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Horgan  
Premier