
BRITISH COLUMBIA

WEEKLY UPDATE

The logo for Earnscliffe, featuring the company name in a serif font with a white swoosh above the 'e'.

In this week's update:

- **Top Stories**
- **Additional Announcements**
- **Upcoming Events**
- **Staff Changes**



The next COVID-19 update from Dr. Bonnie Henry will be on Saturday, May 16, 2020 at 1:00 PM PDT.

WorkSafeBC releases industry-specific guidelines and resources for safe reopening of businesses

With B.C. set to move into Phase 2 of the *Restart Plan* on Monday, the provincial government has released WorkSafeBC's guidelines to support a safe reopening of businesses.

WorkSafeBC has developed industry-specific guidelines and resources for the following sectors: restaurants, cafes and pubs; salons and personal services; museums, art galleries and libraries, real estate; education; health services; retail; in-person counselling; parks and outdoor spaces; and office space. WorkSafeBC's industry-specific guidelines and resources can be found [here](#).

Business in all sectors are required to use these guidelines and resources to develop their COVID-19 safety plans. And further, those businesses presently under health orders (such as restaurants, pubs, salons and personal services) will not be able to open until those orders are lifted or modified, even if they have the appropriate plans in place.

Wet'suwet'en, B.C., Canada sign Memorandum of Understanding

Hereditary chiefs of the Wet'suwet'en Nation have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the provincial and federal governments. The MOU can be found [here](#).

Effective immediately upon signing, the MOU commits Canada and B.C. to recognize that rights and title are held by house groups within the Wet'suwet'en Nation, "under their system of governance." This system of governance is rooted in the feast hall and organized around a clan and house system.

With a signed MOU, negotiations will now begin on how to transfer jurisdiction over to the Wet'suwet'en on priority issues, including land-use planning and revenue sharing; child and family wellness; resources; and wildlife and fish.

The MOU signed with the hereditary chiefs has caused strife with the elected chiefs, who publicly oppose the agreement. On Wednesday, Premier Horgan told reporters "the Wet'suwet'en have to figure this out themselves. How they govern themselves is up to them — that's been a tenet of how we proceeded as a government." The MOU signed allows for the nation to come to a consensus through its traditional process.

The document makes no mention of the Coastal GasLink pipeline, the construction of which was the impetus for the MOU discussions in the first place. In a [backgrounder](#) released by the Office of the Wet'suwet'en on the MOU, they state "nothing in this agreement restricts the court actions and protests relating to CGL from proceeding."

Province provides update on ICBC's finances; no rebate to drivers yet

Attorney General David Eby and ICBC CEO Nicolas Jimenez gave an update on the public insurer's finances on Thursday.

Many have been calling on ICBC to provide a rebate to drivers, as crashes have been down substantially since the beginning of COVID-19 due to fewer cars being on the road. Eby said a rebate will not happen – at least not yet.

"The message is at this stage, we don't know what the year-end will look like. We will be waiting to year-end before making any decisions about what to do with any surplus because we are not 100-per-cent sure there will be a surplus."

According to a [report](#) released Thursday, just over 100,000 British Columbians have cancelled their ICBC policies since the start of the pandemic. Another 57,000 customers have lowered their insurance rate class.

Eby said the insurer has saved an estimated \$158 million due to fewer crashes because of the pandemic, but seen a \$283 million drop in revenues due to the decrease in written premiums. The insurer has also seen a significant decrease in the value of its investment portfolio. While the severity of this downturn cannot yet be confirmed, Eby and Jimenez pointed to early indications showing the impact could exceed \$1 billion this fiscal year.

BC business community backs Premier Horgan's call for national sick-pay program

Premier Horgan has been calling on the federal government to institute a national sick-pay program to help combat COVID-19, pointing to Superior Poultry Processors in Coquitlam where fear of not getting paid while sick contributed to a COVID-19 outbreak that grew to more than 50 cases.

Horgan reiterated that it's unfair to force the costs of sick pay onto businesses, many of whom are already struggling financially. Premier Horgan believes Ottawa should be funding the initiative as

a public safety measure through its EI program, saying “this is not just a local B.C. problem, it is a national problem.”

Earlier this week, more than 20 organizations from the business communities in B.C., Alberta, and the Atlantic provinces co-wrote a letter to Prime Minister Trudeau expressing their support for Premier Horgan’s request.

Signatories from B.C. include the boards of trade from Greater Vancouver and Surrey, the Business Council of BC, BC Council of Forest Industries, BC Maritime Employers Association, and the Urban Development Institute.

“In these circumstances, we believe senior governments should shoulder any costs associated with time away from work (i.e. sick pay) associated with the current pandemic,” the [letter](#) reads.

“At a time when many businesses have been hit extremely hard by the economic fallout from the pandemic, it is simply not reasonable for businesses to be expected to cover sick-pay costs for COVID-19 which, at its core, is a global pandemic, and a national and provincial public health emergency.”

Premier Horgan said he used this letter to boost his proposal to Prime Minister Trudeau and his first minister counterparts on a conference call Thursday.

B.C. schools to reopen on part-time, voluntary basis starting June 1

On Friday morning, Minister of Education Rob Fleming announced B.C. K-12 education will resume on a part-time, optional basis starting June 1. Minister Fleming says this gradual return will hopefully pave the way to a return to full-time classes in September 2020.

While individual school districts may take different approaches, each will need to have their return-to-class and safety plans approved by the Ministry before moving to the next phase. These plans will be posted on each district’s website when approved.

The number of students in school each day will be reduced, with most receiving in-class instruction part time. Individual school districts will determine scheduling for classes and transportation arrangements. For kindergarten to Grade 5, this means most students will go to school half time (such as alternating days), while grades 6 to 12 will go to school about one day a week.

Children of essential service workers and students needing additional supports will have the option to attend school full time. Families that decide not to send their children to class may continue learning from home.



Additional Announcements

- [WorkSafeBC guidelines to support safe reopening of business](#)
- [K-12 students to have optional in-class instruction on June 1](#)
- [Province purchases Comfort Inn Hotel in Victoria to turn into affordable housing](#)
- [B.C. Agri-Business program launched to help agriculture, food businesses plan for recovery](#)

- [Minister's statement on hate crimes](#)
- [B.C. COVID-19 response update](#)
- [Joint statement on province of B.C.'s COVID-19 response, latest updates](#)
- [Wet'suwet'en, B.C. and Canada launch path to implement rights and title](#)
- [Impacts of COVID-19 on ICBC report released](#)
- [Government reminder to avoid non-essential travel in the province](#)
- [Invasive Mussel Defence Program launches province-wide](#)
- [B.C. COVID-19 response update](#)
- [Joint statement on province of B.C.'s COVID-19 response, latest updates](#)
- [State of emergency extended to support COVID-19 response](#)
- [Restoration of orphan and inactive wells to support more than 1,200 jobs in B.C.](#)
- [Minister's statement on the death of Ralph McGinn](#)
- [Province partners with Capital Regional District and Capital Region Housing Corporation to bring 70 new affordable homes to Saanich](#)
- [B.C. COVID-19 response update](#)
- [Joint statement on province of B.C.'s COVID-19 response, latest updates](#)
- [Halat First Nation takes ownership of two new commercial properties in North Cowichan with funding from provincial government](#)
- [New BuyBC E-Commerce funding is available](#)
- [Homelessness Community Action Grant, 7-Eleven, and SPARC BC secure 3,500 smartphones to be distributed across B.C.](#)
- [Premier's statement on International Nurses Day](#)
- [B.C. COVID-19 response update](#)
- [Joint statement on province of B.C.'s COVID-19 response, latest updates](#)
- [Former Innovation Commissioner Alan Winter's final report released](#)
- [Emerging Economy Task Force final report released](#)
- [Province invests a total of \\$75 million in northwest economic development](#)
- [May 11 marks 20th anniversary of Nisga'a treaty](#)
- [B.C. COVID-19 response update](#)
- [Joint statement on province of B.C.'s COVID-19 response, latest updates](#)
- [British Columbians urged to prepare for spring flood season](#)
- [British Columbians urged to reduce fire risks at home](#)



Upcoming Events

[Wednesday, May 20 – Surrey Board of Trade Digital Town Hall: A Conversation with the Hon. David Eby, Q.C.](#)

“Minister Eby will discuss the changes to ICBC and comment on the B.C government’s continued efforts to crackdown on money laundering in the province.”

[Friday, May 22 – Saturday, May 23 – BC Chamber of Commerce AGM & Annual Conference with Keynote Addresses by Premier Horgan and the Hon. Carole James](#)

Theme is: Unity & Community – Economic Recovery in a New Network Era

[Friday, May 29 – SBOT Digital Town Hall: A Conversation with the Hon. Selina Robinson](#)

1:00 – 1:45 pm

“How should municipal governments focus their spending post-pandemic? What will the effect be on housing prices and projects? Join us for a discussion with BC’s Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Hon. Selina Robison.”



Staff Changes

James Mack is appointed as Assistant Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy.

- Mack previously served as an Associate Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture.

Jennifer McGuire is appointed as an Assistant Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture.

- McGuire previously served as an Associate Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy.

If you have any questions or require further analysis do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you on behalf of the Earnscliffe B.C. team.



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