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# BRITISH COLUMBIA

## WEEKLY UPDATE

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Earnscliffe

Friday, May 29, 2020

In this week's update:

- **Top Stories**
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### **Significant labour shortage facing agricultural sector in B.C. prompts release of new job 'connector'**

The agricultural sector in B.C. is facing significant labour shortages due to a difficulty getting temporary foreign workers into the country during the pandemic. According to the province, the sector is 6,000 to 8,000 workers short of typical employment levels.

"We do know farmers and producers are scaling back some of their production to reflect the labour available to them," Agriculture Minister Lana Popham said. "We do see some adjustments coming from the agriculture industry. As we come to the bounty of our season, we will see a deficit in our labour."

In response to these shortages, on Thursday, Minister Popham launched [the B.C. Farm, Fish and Food Job Connector](#) – an online resource designed to connect people with jobs in B.C.'s agricultural sector, providing farmers, seafood businesses and food processors with "a one-stop shop to support their hiring and planning needs".

Jobs listed on the site include food and beverage processing, farm workers, crop and seafood harvesters, large machinery operators, along with positions in flour mills, bakeries, breweries and distilleries. More than 600 jobs are currently posted on the site.

**Legislature to return June 22; only some MLAs to attend in person**

The Legislature will reconvene on Monday, June 22. Some MLAs will return to Victoria and attend in person, and others will join virtually from their home constituencies.

“Some will be here in person, some will be beaming in with technology, but at the end of the day debate will take place, votes will be cast, and democracy will be well served,” Horgan said.

The government must still pass the budget, first presented in February, and also debate estimates for each ministry. This process had only just begun before the Legislature was suspended due to COVID-19.

### **Prime Minister Trudeau announces national sick-pay program, credits Premier Horgan's advocacy**

On Monday, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced the launch of a national sick-pay program. Prime Minister Trudeau acknowledged the persistent advocacy of Premier John Horgan, who has been lobbying the federal government on the issue for the last several weeks.

“The issue of paid sick leave is one that was first brought up a number of weeks ago on our first ministers call by Premier Horgan of British Columbia, who pointed out, quite rightly, when the fall comes and the flu season starts up we don’t want people who develop a sniffle to suddenly worry that they shouldn’t really go into work but they can’t afford to not go into work,” said Trudeau.

On Tuesday, Premier Horgan issued a [joint statement](#) alongside Premier Brian Pallister (Manitoba) and Premier Sandy Silver (Yukon) expressing support for the proposed federal sick-pay program.

Prime Minister Trudeau provided few details on how the program would actually work, saying the “mechanisms are challenging” but that he plans to work with the premiers to develop the plan.

### **ICYMI: Andrew Weaver has Twitter feud with former caucus mates**

Last weekend, Twitter saw a feud between former BC Green Party leader, and now Independent MLA, Andrew Weaver and his former colleagues.

Weaver posted multiple comments on [Twitter](#) criticizing MLA Sonia Furstenau, the frontrunner to take over as leader of the BC Green Party.

Weaver accused Furstenau and MLA Adam Olsen of being “afraid to stand up to the BC NDP [with respect] to the LNG development. I was ready to go to election, but in my opinion, they were more interested in re-election than they were about standing up for [BC Green Party] principles,” he tweeted.

Furstenau told Global News she was “very surprised” by the comments.

Weaver left the BC Green Party caucus in January citing family health reasons, but recent events have pundits questioning whether there was more behind his decision to sit as an Independent.



## Additional Announcements

- [Changes made to Residential Tenancy Act come into effect Saturday, May 30, 2020](#)
- [New homes available for those displaced by fire in Campbell River](#)
- [Air quality alert subscription service now available by text message](#)
- [May 29 proclaimed Day of the Honey Bee](#)
- [Construction starts on two steel bridges along Highway 16 on Haida Gwaii](#)
- [Joint statement on B.C.'s COVID-19 response, latest updates](#)
- [Government working to support in-person court appearances](#)
- [New online resource for accessing jobs in agricultural sector](#)
- [Province celebrates British Columbians with disabilities](#)
- [Province honours outstanding contributions that combat racism](#)
- [Joint statement on B.C.'s COVID-19 response, latest updates](#)
- [Provincial state of emergency extended in COVID-19 response](#)
- [Second Urgent and Primary Care Centre opens in Surrey](#)
- [BC Coroners Service reports increase in illicit drug toxicity deaths in March, April](#)
- [Harbour Air returning to operations](#)
- [Road resurfacing season underway in Northern B.C.](#)
- [B.C. hazelnut growers encouraged to apply for renewal funding](#)
- [Joint statement on B.C.'s COVID-19 response, latest updates](#)
- [\\$200,000 in funding announced for Downtown Eastside by Canada-BC Workforce Development Agreement](#)
- [Joint statement by the premiers of B.C., Manitoba and Yukon](#)
- [New funding to help sexual assault survivors](#)
- [Dormant well clean-up program nearly fully subscribed on first day](#)
- [Inquest into death of Joceyln Nynah Marsha George postponed](#)
- [Inquest into death of Craig Andrew Ford postponed](#)
- [Joint statement on B.C.'s COVID-19 response, latest updates](#)
- [B.C. grads, students to be celebrated by local artists, performers](#)
- [Province provides \\$10-million grant to be split among 59 Destination Marketing Organizations \(DMOs\)](#)
- [Most campgrounds, recreation sites opening throughout the province](#)
- [Ministry of Education offers free, live coding workshops for kids](#)
- [Joint statement on B.C.'s COVID-19 response, latest updates](#)
- [Premier's statement on Eid Al-Fitr](#)
- [Premier's statement on Komagata Maru anniversary](#)
- [Minister's statement on NAFTA panel decision](#)
- [Joint statement on B.C.'s COVID-19 response, latest updates](#)
- [Celeste Haldane reappointed BC Treaty Chief commissioner](#)



## Upcoming Events

**Tuesday, June 9 – SBOT Presents: A Conversation with the Hon. Michelle Mungall - BC Minister of Jobs, Economic Development, and Competitiveness**

11:00 – 11:45 am

**Friday, June 12 - SBOT Digital Town Hall: A Conversation with the Hon. Anne Kang**

11:00 – 11:45 am

**Saturday, July 25 – New Democrats Got Talent 2020 (Hosted by Surrey-Guildford BC NDP)**

7:00 – 9:30 pm

*Surrey-Guildford BC NDP is excited to host New Democrats Got Talent ~ A Virtual Talent Showcase. New Democrats from across British Columbia will come together for a spectacular evening of talent! The evening will feature 10 New Democrats who will perform for your votes and will be joined by an all-star judging panel.*

**September 22-24 – 2020 UBCM Convention (Virtual)**

*UBCM will share details on the platform for this year's meeting in June, and registration will open in July.*

**Saturday, October 17 – Leading BC's Comeback: Virtual Summit 2020 (BC Liberal Party)**

10:00 am – 1:00 pm

*"Our Virtual Summit on October 17, 2020 is the first event of its kind in BC history – a fully online event, open to all British Columbians and bringing together some of the smartest policy and political minds from our province and beyond.*

*Join Andrew Wilkinson, the BC Liberal team, and fellow British Columbians for this critically important conversation, as we work to build a resilient province with opportunity for all."*



## Staff Changes

### Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

- **Jeffrey Vasey** is appointed as an Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.
  - Vasey is a former Assistant Deputy Minister of the Post-Secondary Policy and Programs and Division Responsible for Learner Support in the Ministry of Advanced Education.

### Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training

- **Nicola Lemmer** is appointed as an Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training.
  - Lemmer is the former Assistant Deputy Minister of the Education Programs Division of the Ministry of Education.

### Ministry of Education

- **Melanie Stewart** is appointed as an Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education.
  - Stewart is a former Assistant Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Finance.

#### **Ministry of Agriculture**

- **Wesley Shoemaker** is appointed as a Deputy Minister, Agri-Tech Land Use Secretariat, Ministry of Agriculture.
  - Shoemaker is the former Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture.

#### **Ministry of Finance**

- **Heather Wood** is appointed as a Deputy Minister, Ministry of Finance, and Secretary to Treasury Board.
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