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# BRITISH COLUMBIA

## WEEKLY UPDATE

Earnscliffe

In this week's update:

- [Top Stories](#)
- [Additional Announcements](#)
- [Upcoming Events](#)
- [Staff Changes](#)



### **B.C.'s unemployment rate sitting at 13.4%, much higher among youth**

On Friday morning, Minister of Finance and Deputy Premier Carole James spoke to the results of the latest Statistics Canada labour force participation survey.

The numbers she highlighted show that B.C. gained 43,300 jobs over the last month. However, with more people on the hunt for work, the unemployment rate still sits at 13.4 per cent province-wide. B.C. has lost more than 353,000 jobs since COVID-19 began.

The joblessness numbers are particularly high among youth, whose unemployment rate has hit 28.9 per cent. This represents more than 115,000 total jobs lost among youth since the beginning of the pandemic-related restrictions. According to Minister James, this is a reflection of those sectors suffering the most damage, which happen to be ones that employ high numbers of youth (e.g. food services, accommodation, wholesale, and retail).

“Those numbers are families, are individuals, are small businesses who have struggled and continue to struggle,” James said.

“It touches the huge number of job losses in this period. But it does show we are starting to show some confidence. Some confidence in the economy. People are seeing there are some opportunities for them.”

Minister James said she and her Cabinet colleagues will continue to assess the impacts before charting the way forward for economic recovery. They are still evaluating the data to better understand what sectors will have short-term impacts and which will be longer-term.

### **Province strengthens commercial rent assistance program**

Now over a month ago, the federal government announced a program called Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA), designed to offer businesses relief on their commercial rent bills. This program was to be carried out in partnership with each province, with the funds being delivered through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

The federal government determined they would offer a 75% reduction in monthly rent for small businesses affected by COVID-19 by providing forgivable loans to landlords, who would then offer a rate cut to their tenants for the months of April, May and June.

However, in the weeks since the initial announcement, there has been frustration on the ground with respect to the program's actual operation. The main frustration among tenants is that landlords are the ones who have to apply. Many landlords have little incentive to do so, especially if they feel they can recoup full rental fees by holding off on applying for the program.

Earlier this week, the provincial government made an announcement which may quell much of this frustration among the small business community.

B.C. will now protect any commercial tenant from being evicted over nonpayment of rent under the COVID-19 pandemic if the landlord hasn't applied for the federal rent supplement. This is designed to stop landlords from using a lack of federal support as an excuse to evict commercial tenants during this time.

"We heard from small businesses that they need us to help fill a gap that has left some of them unable to get the support they need," James said in a release.

"Preventing landlords who are eligible for (the federal program) from evicting tenants can encourage landlords to apply for the program and give some temporary relief to businesses who have been hardest hit by the pandemic," she said.

### **Province releases new COVID-19 modelling; warning again about potential second wave**

On Thursday afternoon, Dr. Bonnie Henry and Minister of Health Adrian Dix released the latest round of epidemiological modelling on COVID-19 in B.C., which can be found [here](#).

Dr. Henry is warning once again that, despite an easing in some restrictions across the province, if British Columbians stop practicing social distancing and return to normal, pre-COVID levels of social interaction, the number of cases in the province could surge into a second wave.

Dr. Henry said a sudden surge in cases would likely happen if we return to more than 70 per cent of normal physical contact with others. According to the data, we are sitting at about 50 per cent right now.

The province is optimistic that if behaviour continues at this level – about 50 per cent of normal activity – confirmed cases could disappear by July. The data also suggests B.C. could move to the next phase of the *Restart Plan* by mid-June, just a few short weeks away.

"So far, we are doing okay. The other thing that protects us is having safe contacts. If this continues over the next week and a half [or] two weeks, we will really be in good shape to move to the next phase," Dr. Henry said.

"I'm very hopeful that end of June into July, we'll be able to take those vacations that we need," Dr. Henry told reporters.

The province presented a number of new data points, including more specific information on where people have tested positive for the virus. They also presented data showing the origins of each case, showing that the vast majority of cases in B.C. originated in Europe and Eastern Canada.

Friday afternoon's COVID-19 update showed only one new test positive case in the province over the last 24 hours. This is the lowest one day since March 6, 2020.



## Additional Announcements

- [Order extended to enable use of technologies during COVID-19](#)
- [Four-unit housing project coming to Queen Charlotte](#)
- [Additional funding provided for Buy BC E-Commerce applications](#)
- [Minister's statement on May Labour Force Survey results](#)
- [Additional \\$250,000 committed to Youth Futures Education Fund \(YFEF\)](#)
- [Closed hospitality businesses permitted to sell liquor stock during pandemic](#)
- [Joint statement on province of B.C.'s COVID-19 response, latest updates](#)
- [One new and two improved schools coming to Surrey, White Rock](#)
- [Province signs First Nations Children and Youth in Care Protocol](#)
- [New Chairwoman for Advisory Council on Indigenous Women](#)
- [Province highlights some organizations for AccessAbility Week](#)
- [joint statement on province of B.C.'s COVID-19 response, latest updates](#)
- [Fibre internet arrives in Keremeos](#)
- [Province and Golden supply community with new bulk water station](#)
- [Province purchases Paul's Motor Inn in Victoria to provide temporary accommodation](#)
- [Joint statement on province of B.C.'s COVID-19 response, latest updates](#)
- [Nearly 60,000 students return on first day of in-class instruction](#)
- [Family court rules modernized through Order in Council](#)
- [Minister's statement on BC Provincial Nominee Program Audit Report](#)
- [Emergency Management BC to assist local governments affected by spring flooding](#)
- [Local governments to develop poverty reduction action plans](#)
- [Joint statement on B.C.'s COVID-19 response, latest updates](#)
- [B.C., Xeni Gwet'in continue working together on long-term management of title lands](#)
- [B.C. strengthens federal commercial rent program](#)
- [British Columbians to share ideas virtually for Budget 2021](#)
- [Supporting the music industry during COVID-19](#)
- [Minimum wage increase takes effect](#)
- [Innovative tech reduces avalanche risk on Highway 37A](#)
- [Joint statement on B.C. Seniors' Week](#)
- [Reflecting on a decade of successes for youth in care](#)
- [Joint statement on B.C.'s COVID-19 response, latest updates](#)
- [Child care providers on remote Haida Gwaii share experience](#)
- [Third anniversary of CASA](#)
- [Joint statement on province of B.C.'s COVID-19 response, latest updates](#)
- [Minister's statement on Delta Hospice Society](#)



## Upcoming Events

**Monday, June 8 – SBOT Presents: COVID-19: Relief, Restart and Recovery for Surrey and BC with Finance Minister Carole James**

11:00 – 11:45 am

**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

**Friday, June 12 – GVBOT Presents B.C's Restart Plan: Working with B.C. business on the road to economic recovery with keynote by Hon. Carole James**

12:00 – 12:40 pm

*Hear from the Finance Minister about the phased approach to restart and recovery in our province and participate in a Q&A.*

**Thursday, June 18 – Iron Chef with Rob Fleming and Lana Popham**

7:00 – 9:00 pm

**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 Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources

- **Fazil Mihar** is appointed as a Deputy Minister, replacing retiring Deputy Minister Dave Nikolejsin.
  - **Mihar** is the former Deputy Minister of Jobs, Economic Development and Competitiveness.

**Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Competitiveness**

- **Christine Kennedy** is appointed as a Deputy Minister, replacing outgoing Deputy Minister Fazil Mihar.
  - **Kennedy** is a former Associate Deputy Minister to the Premier.