



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

The Honourable Judith Guichon, OBC

Lieutenant-Governor

at the

Opening of the Third Session,

Forty-first Parliament

of the

Province of British Columbia

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We gather in the people's house, on the territories of the Lekwungen speaking peoples, the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations.

IN MEMORIAM

As we open this new session of the Legislature, we recognize the wisdom, talent and passion of British Columbians we have lost this year.

We remember former Premier Dave Barrett, whose many contributions to public life are still enjoyed by British Columbians today, including the Agricultural Land Reserve and public auto insurance. His actions to help working people were as bold and as memorable as his words in this Legislature. We are grateful to have known him.

We recognize former MLA Rafe Mair and Kitimat Mayor Ray Brady for their longstanding service to their communities.

We honour Abbotsford Police Constable John Davidson, who was killed in the line of duty.

We remember the innocent who were taken from us too soon, including 15-year-old Alfred Wong of Coquitlam, whose young life was cut short when he was struck by a stray bullet.

Jordan McIlDoon of Maple Ridge was one of four Canadians killed in a mass shooting in Las Vegas in October 2017. Our best wishes go out to Sheldon Mack of Victoria, who was injured in this same senseless attack.

British Columbia lost tremendous talent in Jack Boudreau, Nancy Richler and Donnelly Rhodes.

We hold space in our hearts for people who went to work and never came home, including Wayne Hornquist, Lloyd Smith, Jason Podloski, Belle Bourroughs, Roland Gaudet, Jacob Galeazzi, Clement Reti and Kalwinder Thind.

We lost First Nations leaders like Andy Chelsea, Elmer Derrick, Leonard George, Dr. Simon Lucas, and Stanley Thomas. We remember world-renowned artist Tony Hunt Sr. and his son, Tony Hunt Jr.

Tomorrow, on the streets of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, in the territory of the Coast Salish, thousands will march to remember and honour the women and girls who have gone missing or were murdered. We stand with you in heart and spirit.

Finally, we remember the 1,422 British Columbians lost to overdoses in 2017. May they live on in the memories of their loving friends and family.

WORKING FOR YOU

The story of British Columbia is the story of our people.

It is in the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples, in the hopes and dreams of newcomers, the ingenuity of our workers, and the charity of our neighbours.

The story of British Columbia this past year is one of strength, resilience and community.

We are grateful to every person who offered compassion and support to Interior residents displaced by wildfires and floods.

We are inspired by the communities, front-line workers and first responders working around the clock to save lives in the overdose crisis.

We are optimistic that banning big money and putting people at the centre of our politics has reinvigorated our democracy. To that end, B.C. will hold a referendum this year to give people a voice in how they vote and make politics work for people again.

British Columbians work hard every day to build a better life for themselves and their families. They deserve a government that's working for them.

Together with the Green Party Caucus, your government is taking action to fix the problems and help people reach their full potential.

British Columbians have made their priorities clear. After years of rising living costs and stagnant wages, they expect government to make life more affordable.

British Columbians want better public services, like quality health care for patients and a world-class education system that sets up our children for success.

And British Columbians expect to share in the economic prosperity B.C. enjoys.

The priorities of British Columbians are the priorities of this government.

By making life more affordable, fixing the services people count on, and making sure B.C.'s economy is sustainable and working for everyone, government can make life better.

This session, B.C. will move in a new direction, with new investments in people and new opportunities for the future.

Government will take steps to address the challenges facing families today and put people first, regardless of who they are or where they live.

ACTION ON AFFORDABILITY

Government's first and most urgent priority is to make life more affordable.

Too many British Columbians are working paycheque to paycheque. Many cannot pay the bills without going further into debt. They are anxious and uncertain about the future, because no matter how hard they work, they cannot seem to get ahead.

When life is unaffordable, there is less opportunity. When someone works two or three jobs to make ends meet, the chance to get a basic education, or train for a better career is further out of reach.

Or when people pay more for housing, child care and other essentials, there is less available for the things that enrich our lives.

We cannot build a better future if British Columbians can't afford to be part of that future.

Our challenge is to increase the opportunities available to people, and give them relief and a life they can afford.

Government's first steps to make life more affordable are already making a difference.

By cutting Medical Services Premiums in half, government has put up to \$900 a year back into the pockets of thousands of hard-working people.

By removing unfair bridge tolls on the Port Mann and Golden Ears bridges, daily commuters are saving up to \$1,500 a year.

By cutting student-loan interest by two-and-a-half per cent, graduates can get out of debt more quickly and on the path to their chosen career.

By making Adult Basic Education and English Language Learning tuition-free, tens of thousands of British Columbians can prepare for a degree and upgrade their skills for work.

To keep hydro rates affordable, government has asked the BC Utilities Commission to freeze hydro rates for the next year.

Years of apparent neglect and inaction have led to big problems at B.C.'s public auto insurer. This government has rejected the double-digit increase in rates for drivers, and has taken decisive action to keep rates down.

In the months and years ahead, government will do even more to make life more affordable and create opportunity for people.

SOLUTIONS FOR HOUSING

The single, greatest challenge to affordability in British Columbia is housing.

Home is at the heart of belonging—to a neighbourhood, a community, a province or country. Home is the place to hang our hat, to raise a family, to feel safe and secure.

When people can't find an affordable home, that safety and security is taken away. We become uncertain about the future and our place in it.

This is how far too many families in British Columbia live today.

Renters are afraid of eviction or unexpected rent increases that will force them to relocate when prices are sky high and vacancies hover at record lows.

Young families wait longer to have children, or give up their dreams of home ownership because they cannot afford to pay for both. And some will make the difficult choice to move away from their family, friends and communities to fulfill those dreams.

Businesses cannot grow when the skilled workers they need are shut out by the high cost of housing. Even when wages are competitive, long commutes and limited housing options prevent teachers, technology experts, nurses and construction workers from making B.C. home.

And seniors cannot find the secure, accessible, affordable homes they need. So they stay in their family homes when they would like to downsize, or they struggle each month to afford both rent and food.

We are called to action on housing by the people of B.C. who need our help.

We know government cannot solve the problem on its own, but we also know that it must be a part of the solution.

Fixing this problem will take new ideas. It will take commitment, and it will take working together—governments, business, non-profits and communities—to make a change.

Your government will embrace this challenge with energy and determination, and make a difference in the lives of the people who call B.C. home.

Government's comprehensive housing strategy addresses demand, supply and security.

TAKING ACTION ON THE HIGH COST OF HOUSING

Government's first step must be to address demand and stabilize B.C.'s out-of-control real estate and rental market.

Safe, decent housing is a right that is under threat by speculators, domestic and foreign, who seek windfall profits at the expense of people who work, live and pay taxes in B.C.

We see the results of speculation in all parts of our province—distorted markets, sky-high prices and empty homes. Too many British Columbians are paying the price.

Your government believes that people seeking to profit from B.C.'s real estate must also contribute to housing solutions. Budget 2018 will put forward new measures to address the effect of speculation on real estate prices.

As recently announced by this government, we are working with online hospitality and accommodation providers to make sure short-term and vacation rentals pay their fair share.

And government will introduce legislation to crack down on tax fraud, tax evasion and money laundering in B.C.'s real estate market.

BUILDING HOMES PEOPLE NEED

If we are to take meaningful steps to solve the crisis in housing affordability, governments must also build the homes people need.

In the last six months, we have seen what can be accomplished when governments work together.

Communities, from Surrey to Terrace to Kamloops, have been working with the Province to build 2,000 new modular homes for homeless British Columbians.

Seventeen hundred new affordable rental units were approved for construction last year.

Starting this year, government will begin to make the largest investment in affordable housing in B.C.'s history, including social housing, student housing, seniors housing, Indigenous housing and affordable rentals for middle-income families.

Government will enact reforms to bring down barriers to affordable housing, and will work with partners to get them built.

We will enable local governments to plan for affordable rental housing by zoning areas of their communities for that purpose. And working with local governments, we will plan for and build housing near transit corridors.

Through the Province's new Housing Hub—a division of BC Housing—government will reach out to the organizations that have been providing service to our communities for decades, and work with them to build partnerships and homes where they are needed most.

The Housing Hub will partner with faith organizations, non-profits and others who have available land and a continued desire to contribute to the future health of their communities.

SECURITY AND SAFETY FOR RENTERS

In our province, there are more than half-a-million rental households. Faced with near-zero vacancy rates, these British Columbians too often find themselves trapped in housing they cannot afford, or have grown out of, yet cannot afford to leave. Some landlords have exploited the situation, using loopholes to force renters to pay more or leave.

For too long, the rights of renters were neglected. Last year, government took the first steps to help renters by closing fixed-term lease loopholes, ending geographic rent increases, and increasing support to the Residential Tenancy Branch.

This spring, government will introduce stronger protections for renters and owners of manufactured homes, and protections for renters facing eviction due to renovation or demolition.

Government will ease the pressures on students by helping B.C.'s public colleges, institutes and universities build new student housing. As students are able to move closer to where they study, the homes they have been living in will be freed up for others.

Government will continue to support low-income renters by enhancing Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters grants and Rental Assistance Program grants for families, to address the gaps that have grown between these vital supports and the true costs of housing.

Government will consider future measures to make renting more affordable.

Starting this year, your government will begin making the largest investment in retrofits and renovations of social housing in B.C. in more than 20 years. These upgrades will preserve much-needed housing stock, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce home-heating bills for the tens of thousands of people who live in social housing.

SOLUTIONS FOR CHILD CARE

Just as housing has a major impact on the cost of living for B.C. families, so too does the search for quality affordable child care.

These families work extra shifts and often drive miles out of their way to take advantage of the child care they feel lucky to have found, a privilege that can cost tens of thousands of dollars a year per child.

And then there are the thousands of families who do not even get that chance. Instead, they wait months, even years, on waiting lists. Careers are put on pause and family incomes fall because child care is not available for them.

Past governments have not helped parents find the child care they need to move their lives forward—getting an education, taking a new job and making the most of their opportunities.

This year, British Columbia will turn the corner.

While the journey ahead will take time, B.C. is now firmly heading down the path of affordable, quality child care for all.

Safe, affordable, licensed care will become B.C.'s standard, giving parents the peace of mind they need and quality care they can rely on.

We begin this year by making a difference in the cost of child care for tens of thousands of families with the largest investment in child care in B.C. history.

With this investment comes a pledge to work side by side with providers, advocates, communities and parents, with a single purpose in mind—to propel the conversion of unlicensed spaces to licensed, regulated child care, so that more parents can benefit from the savings government is providing.

As we move to make child care more affordable, your government is also moving forward on creating more licensed spaces, more affordably, for more B.C. families. We look forward to continuing our work with the federal government and its child-care plan to enhance access around the province.

While the path forward is focused on licensed care, government is also taking steps to give parents who rely on unlicensed care greater security and peace of mind.

Government will introduce new legislation to give parents vital information about unlawful or problem providers of unlicensed child care. These new rules will give families the information they need to make sure they are making the best and safest choice for their child.

Finally, beginning this year, government will dramatically increase training of early childhood educators, and we will invest in recruiting and retaining the dedicated professionals who work with children around the province.

When we invest in quality child care, everyone benefits. Children get the best start and the opportunity to succeed. Parents can go back to work, earning more money to pay the bills and save for the future. Employers benefit from the talent of tens of thousands of skilled people—many of them women—coming back into the workforce.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE

Action on child care and housing will go a long way to address the crisis in affordability. If our province is to realize its full potential, we must secure economic opportunity for every British Columbian.

Working families have not benefited equally from the wealth of our province. Instead, regular people have experienced stagnant wages, part-time and unstable work, and fewer opportunities to get ahead.

A strong economy is where everyone is doing better, where people have the opportunity to apply their skills, are paid fairly and share in the benefits their hard work helped create.

By fighting inequality, creating fair working conditions for people, and growing and diversifying our economy, your government will make sure everyone has a place in B.C.'s bright future.

FIGHTING INEQUALITY

British Columbia is at its strongest when we are all pulling in the same direction. Yet we cannot reach our full strength when some among us are diminished. Your government is taking steps to fight inequality and bring down the barriers holding people back.

The cycle of poverty has divided people from opportunity and hurt thousands of children and families. This year, your government will deliver B.C.'s first-ever Poverty Reduction Strategy.

The strategy will rely on investments across government to make life better for low-income families and the working poor, from the minimum wage to housing and childcare, mental health, legal aid, post-secondary education and skills training. We are all made stronger when we give families a better start.

To erase inequality, we must create a province where everyone is welcome to contribute, no matter their ability, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or political beliefs. This fall, B.C. will continue on the path to renewing the BC Human Rights Commission, because everyone should be made to feel a welcome part of our province's economy, culture and future.

FAIR TREATMENT FOR B.C. WORKERS

An economy that works for everyone treats workers fairly. This year, your government will take steps to help working people who have been waiting for the chance to get ahead.

Ninety-four thousand British Columbians go to work and take home a minimum wage. From young people working their way through post-secondary, to families struggling to make ends meet, and seniors who need money to pay their bills in retirement, B.C.'s lowest-paid workers deserve a raise.

Government will follow through on the Fair Wages Commission's path to a \$15 an hour, with full implementation by June 2021. B.C. will begin with an immediate increase in June 2018, followed by predictable increases over time. This progression will provide certainty to business and hope to minimum-wage earners who are ready to earn a fair wage.

Working people enjoy important rights and protections in the workplace, owing to the hard-fought victories of the labour movement and contracts fairly bargained by unions and businesses. B.C. must ensure workers' rights and protections are fair and in step with those of all Canadians.

Government is taking the first step by reviewing the Province's Labour Code, to support fair laws for workers and business.

Work that is fair must also be safe. Your government is committed to making B.C. the safest place in Canada in which to work, and will provide better protections for workers, stronger compliance and enforcement, and fair and balanced treatment of workers and employers.

Fair treatment for B.C. workers includes creating opportunities for B.C. businesses to bid on government contracts. When the previous government brought in low-bid, large-scale contracts, it often gave big companies the inside track and shut out many small businesses. This year, government will update its procurement policies to give B.C. businesses a chance to compete for, and win, government contracts that create jobs and opportunities in communities throughout our province.

A SUSTAINABLE, DIVERSE ECONOMY

Your government's vision for a fair and inclusive society will be built from the foundation of a healthy, growing economy, and from a clear understanding that we must create wealth in order to share it.

Opportunities for people go hand-in-hand with economic growth. Business success must translate into progress for B.C. families and workers. A vibrant, diverse and growing economy supports the services communities count on.

This is your government's pledge to British Columbians: We will grow our economy, and we will foster prosperity that is sustainable and broadly shared with British Columbians.

By combining fiscal discipline with an absolute belief in fairness and equality, your government will pursue a realistic, innovative and entrepreneurial economic development strategy for every region and every sector of B.C.

Government will take steps to strengthen the natural-resource sectors of our economy, including forestry, mining and energy, while supporting growing sectors, such as agriculture, manufacturing, small business, technology and tourism.

Our forest industry remains B.C.'s single largest exporter, generating thousands of jobs throughout the province. Yet it continues to face tough challenges, from beetle infestations, to trade battles, to the worst wildfire season on record. Your government believes in the future of forestry, and wants to see a strong and sustainable industry for years to come.

B.C. will continue to fight for a fair deal on softwood lumber, and seek new markets for our forest products. And government will revitalize the forest industry's social contract with British Columbians, to ensure that the use of public timber generates good jobs in forest-dependent communities and provides a fair return for the public.

The 21st-century forest industry is a high-tech industry. Government will work to maintain and enhance the competitiveness of our traditional sectors, while diversifying the industry with increases in manufactured wood. By encouraging the development of new products and processes, your government will work with industry, First Nations, workers and communities to make forestry even stronger, and maximize the value B.C. gets out of each log.

B.C. continues to help people and communities affected by wildfires as we move from recovery to renewal and resiliency. The wildfires certainly tested British Columbians, but it also showed our courage and strength. Government is working quickly to make sure we get the most value out of affected timber, in co-operation with communities, industry and First Nations. And government has launched an independent review of last year's destructive fires and spring floods to make sure we learn the lessons of the past, and invest in prevention to keep communities safe.

Your government will promote innovation in every region of the province, because everyone deserves to benefit from, and share in the wealth created by, the 21st-century economy.

Government has named B.C.'s first Innovation Commissioner—an initiative of the BC Green Caucus—to be an advocate across Canada and internationally for B.C.'s booming tech sector. This spring, government will launch the Emerging Economy Task Force, which will develop made-in-B.C. solutions, and look at how government can encourage innovative and sustainable industries to drive economic growth.

Starting this year, government will create 2,900 new tech-related spaces at colleges and universities throughout B.C., including the first full software engineering program in the Interior, and the first full engineering degree in Northern B.C. This is the first major investment in tech programing at post-secondary institutions in over 10 years. With these new spaces, tech companies can hire homegrown B.C. talent, bringing jobs and opportunity to every region.

We must ensure rural and remote communities are a part of B.C.'s bright economic future. Too many of our rural communities have not benefited from the province's sustained economic growth. Instead, they face higher unemployment and more limited opportunities than other regions of B.C.

It is time to renew our commitment to rural B.C. and its place in our province's economy. People living in Vernon or Vanderhoof should have the same opportunities as those who live in Vancouver.

Government recently announced a federal-provincial funding agreement that will connect 154 remote coastal and Indigenous communities with high-speed internet. This investment will strengthen local economies, connect businesses with the world, and give more rural communities the opportunity to grow, diversify and compete. This is but one example of what we can accomplish when we work together.

British Columbia is a vast province. Though our regions are diverse with differences in geography, we are brought together in the belief that every person and every community should have the opportunity to succeed. Your government is engaging communities around the province to create a rural development strategy.

RECONCILIATION

The rights and needs of Indigenous Peoples in British Columbia have been set aside for far too long. This government understands the enormous responsibility it has to Indigenous Peoples in the wake of inaction by government after government.

We know that true and lasting reconciliation will take time. If it is to be meaningful, it will require deep transformation.

This year, government will begin developing a cross-ministry framework to meet our commitments to the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the Tsilhqot'in decision.

Indigenous Peoples, be they title-holding First Nations, Métis, Inuit, or those living on- or off-reserve, must be involved in the decisions, programs and policies that affect them.

As government and Indigenous Peoples work in partnership toward reconciliation, we will need the resources of a strong economy, as well as the willingness to work side by side to build trust, and set a path forward for all British Columbians.

We must close the socio-economic gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, and invest in the capacity building that is critical for self-determination.

This year, government will invest in new measures to support Indigenous Peoples, languages and culture.

SERVICES FOR PEOPLE

When government uses its resources to deliver public services, it provides for everyone what most of us could not afford ourselves: better health care, quality education, public safety, roads and bridges, and help for people in need.

Quality public services are the foundation of a province and an economy that is working for people. Government will continue to make smart investments in public services to make sure they are available, reliable and affordable for everyone.

HEALTH CARE

Too many people do not have access to the health care they need. Overcrowded hospitals, long waits for surgeries, and the endless search for a family doctor have become the norm. It is time B.C. delivered on health care for every community.

Getting people faster, better health care is the key to getting well and staying healthy. Government will bring together family doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners and other health-care professionals to offer team-based care that improves access to health care for patients while reducing pressure on emergency rooms.

Long waits for surgeries frustrate patients and prolong their pain. Government is taking action to reduce surgical wait times, and get people help faster.

After a lifetime of hard work, seniors deserve respect and quality care. Yet eighty-five per cent of seniors care homes do not meet the minimum number of hours of care per day. Many seniors are left alone without a helping hand or the care they need.

Government will give our seniors caring support and help them live in dignity. Government will increase the time caregivers spend with seniors, provide more supports to family members caring for elderly loved ones, and train more people to meet future demands for care.

As we invest in health care for the present, we must also plan for the future. Government is moving forward with new hospitals and revitalized facilities for rural and remote communities, as well as growing communities in the Lower Mainland.

EDUCATION

Education is the great equalizer. From young students eager to learn, to adults training to earn the skills they need to join the workforce, an investment in education is an investment in our future.

For too long, B.C. students learned in overcrowded classrooms. By fully funding class size and composition requirements, more than 3,500 new teachers, librarians and counsellors are in B.C. schools, helping students learn in smaller classes with more individual attention.

In many growing communities, students are forced to learn in portables, instead of a real classroom. Government is helping fast-growing communities and crowded school districts to build new schools, to get kids out of portables and into a better learning environment.

In the past, promises to upgrade or replace unsafe schools were not followed through. Government is making up for lost time by accelerating the repair or replacement of 50 B.C. schools. Thirteen seismic projects in nine B.C. communities have already been announced, putting thousands of kids on the fast track to safer schools and giving parents peace of mind.

School fundraising drives for education essentials put growing pressure on families already feeling the affordability crunch. This year, government will establish a new playground capital fund to ease the pressure on parents and advisory councils who have been forced to fundraise for these community assets.

For many years, school districts were forced to close neighbourhood schools or cut vital student programs to balance budgets. These cuts have hit northern and rural communities hard, forcing many students to bus longer distances, farther from home to school. To fix the problems, government will review school funding to protect education in rural and northern communities and better support students with special needs.

PUBLIC SAFETY

We all want communities that are strong, secure and resilient. British Columbia is taking action to keep people safe.

As British Columbia works toward the federal timeline for legalization of non-medical cannabis in the summer of 2018, government will introduce legislation and policy to ensure safe implementation of non-medical cannabis. As we move forward, B.C. is committed to protecting our youth, promoting health and safety, keeping the criminal element out of cannabis and keeping our roads safe.

This spring, government will set out the rules for retail sale of cannabis, establish places of use, limits for possession and personal cultivation, and set penalties for drug-impaired driving. Government will soon launch a public education campaign to ensure that the public knows the rules for using cannabis before the law comes into force.

Government will continue to invest in police officers and specialized units to tackle gang and gun violence. Government has committed to ongoing funding for successful community programs like the Surrey WRAP program, to keep at-risk youth out of gang life.

And government is making new investments in transition housing for women and children fleeing violence. This is the first significant investment in transition housing in B.C. in nearly 20 years.

BUILDING B.C. THROUGH INFRASTRUCTURE

The communities we live in, roads we drive on, hospitals for patients and schools for our kids all depend on a sustained investment in public infrastructure. Government is making smart investments to grow B.C. and create opportunities for people.

The Pattullo Bridge is a critical piece of transportation infrastructure for Lower Mainland drivers. But in less than five years, the bridge will no longer be in use because it will no longer be safe. That is why government is moving quickly to replace the Pattullo Bridge, to keep commuters safe and keep people moving.

When government builds new schools, hospitals and roads for people, those projects should also generate benefits and opportunity for B.C. workers. Government will make sure infrastructure projects deliver lasting benefits for people and communities in the form of good jobs, skills training and apprenticeships.

Safe, secure and reliable transportation options are critical to get British Columbians moving in rural and remote regions. Government is mindful that a reduction in long-haul bus service could leave people and communities stranded. Government is committed to working with communities to make sure people have long-haul transportation options to get where they need to go.

A lack of investment in transit has left too many families in gridlock. Your government will work with the Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation to realize its vision for expanded rapid transit in the Lower Mainland, which will relieve congestion and get families home faster.

Many British Columbians rely on ferries to travel to and from their communities. Government is undertaking a comprehensive review of B.C.'s coastal ferry service to make sure our ferries are working as efficiently and effectively as possible.

ACTION ON MENTAL HEALTH

B.C. must continue to do everything it can to address the overdose crisis. If today is an average day, we will lose another four people to overdoses. Most of them will die alone. Many of them will be Indigenous.

The overdose crisis is a public health emergency that has touched every community. We have to tackle this crisis with compassion and understanding, and we have to work together to save lives.

If someone is in trouble, we need to be there to help. One of government's first actions was to create a stand-alone Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, to provide a single point of accountability, focus and action.

Since then, government has taken swift action to address the overdose crisis, including a new provincial Overdose Emergency Response Centre and 18 regional Community Action Teams to support B.C.'s hardest-hit communities, expanded availability of naloxone, new overdose prevention sites, expanded access to drug-checking, and vital supports for first responders and volunteers responding to multiple overdoses.

A new public awareness campaign will help reduce the stigma of addiction.

Government is working with Indigenous partners and other sectors to save lives and provide better and more culturally appropriate supports. B.C. is investing \$20 million over three years to support First Nations communities and Indigenous Peoples to address the overdose crisis.

B.C. will continue to give police the tools to fight fentanyl in our neighbourhoods, including more police officers and dedicated anti-trafficking teams.

The overdose crisis is a difficult and complex problem. Communities, front-line workers and first responders are working around the clock to help. Your government is stepping up. We will make progress together.

CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT

As government takes steps toward making life more affordable and our communities more liveable, we must also be climate leaders, protect B.C.'s air, water and land, and preserve our province for future generations.

Once a leader in climate action, B.C. has fallen behind on its climate obligations. The previous government did not achieve its greenhouse gas targets, and ignored the recommendations of its climate leadership team.

It is time to get B.C. back on track. Your government will take steps to meet our climate targets, promote innovation and help families come out ahead through a new climate plan to be developed over the coming months.

B.C.'s new climate solutions and clean growth advisory council will help us find solutions to fight climate change, prepare for climate impacts, and create jobs and opportunity for people in sustainable industries.

Research is underway on ways to address fugitive emissions in the oil and gas sector, and slash burning.

B.C. will continue to support innovative projects that support sustainable growth, reduce climate pollution and help people.

And government will update the price of carbon in B.C. as we move toward the federally mandated \$50 per tonne by 2022. As the price goes up, government will take steps to help families, and ensure emissions-intensive industries remain competitive and protect jobs, while reducing their emissions.

As B.C. develops its abundant natural resources, we must do so in a way that meets our obligations to the environment, First Nations and the public interest. This year, government is taking important steps to restore public trust in B.C.'s environmental stewardship.

This spring, government will work to revitalize B.C.'s environmental assessment process. Government will table terms of reference and engage industry, Indigenous Peoples, and communities in the coming months.

The potential of a diluted bitumen spill in B.C.'s pristine coastal waters poses a significant risk to our economy and our environment.

The people of B.C. expect government to protect our coast and inland waterways from the significant harms an oil spill would cause. Government is considering new protections that would improve our ability to prepare for, and respond to, bitumen spills. Government will consult with industry, local government, the public and First Nations on the path forward.

B.C. will continue to invest in parks and protected areas and hire more conservation officers to preserve our province's pristine natural environment.

IT'S ABOUT PEOPLE

The story of British Columbia is the story of our people. Their potential is our potential. We share in their trials and their triumphs.

By making different choices that put people first, government can transform lives and create a better future for everyone.

We move forward with a full heart, inspired by the people of our province, determined to do everything possible to help them succeed.

Let us aim high, and accept nothing less than our best, to get the results that British Columbians have been waiting for.