GREATER LANGLEY
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

August 28, 2020

MLA Rich Coleman and MLA Mary Polak
Via Email: rich.coleman.mla@leg.bc.ca mary.polak.mla@leg.bc.ca

Re: COVID-19 and A Bold Plan for BC's Recovery

Dear Rich and Mary,

Thank you to both you and all our elected officials for your ongoing efforts to counter the health, social and economic impacts that is the COVID-19 pandemic facing our community and our province

On behalf of the Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce - representing 989 businesses, of every size and from every sector – I want you to know our Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce is committed to working with the BC government to protect the health of all British Columbians while we continue to build on the bold and immediate fiscal solutions the government put forward to safeguard Langley and our economy and the viability of our members.

Businesses and governments must act quickly and decisively. Our Chamber of Commerce takes our responsibility of speaking for 'all business in our community' very seriously. As a member of the BC Chamber network, our organization knows it will certainly take an "all-of-BC" approach to navigate our way out of crisis and along the road to recovery.

Our lens on recovery is designed around 'a BC built to compete' framework, with the goal of creating a prosperous BC – and by extension prosperous regions – that will deliver improved affordability and services that British Columbians rely on, as well as long-term economic strength and sustainability.

Further, being part of the BC Chamber network, Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce feeds into the BCMindreader.com COVID-19 Business Impact Survey that has provided invaluable insight in real time on the dire impact this pandemic is having on our members' day-to-day operations. While we know our business members can rise to the economic challenge that is COVID-19, we also know from our BCMindReader.com platform that entrepreneurs are having a slow and fragile recovery so far. Almost two thirds (68%) of the Langley business community is currently using some form of government backing to stay afloat and only 3-in-10 (24%) expect to return to normal operations when those supports expire.

Of course, the Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce is always actively listening to our members on what they think would best support them in the next phase of stimulus. That is why we are writing to voice our support for the BC Chamber's economic recovery plan entitled *Big Thinking for Small Business: A Three-Part Plan for Economic Recovery.*

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This BC Chamber network submission speaks to building a competitive BC that will support all sizes of businesses – but we have put a special focus on small businesses. Building on the 2018 Small Business Task Force "Small Business Speaks" report, three themes rose to the top for our 36,000 members: Competitiveness, Innovation and Inclusivity.

We have applied these three themes to our recovery submission.

1. **Let's Compete**
   From solid tax fundamentals to the right infrastructure investments, BC must support recovery and growth for business – and this, in turn, will generate revenue for government. We need a tax system geared to compete and that means a serious conversation around a made-in-BC value added tax.

   An economy geared to compete is more than the right balance of taxes, it's the right investments in transportation and trade-enabling infrastructure to move goods and people efficiently and support the economic foundation that is our natural resource wealth.

2. **Let's Innovate**
   Economic diversification is essential. Our approach to recovery needs to focus on creating good jobs in every sector, while also addressing issues related to climate change.

3. **Let's Be Inclusive**
   Recovery must include systemic changes that advance economic reconciliation and create equitable opportunities for all British Columbians.

We hope you find these further actions helpful in planning your next steps in support of members here in Langley. Thank you again for your bold leadership and the opportunity to engage with you in this ongoing dialogue on how we rise to the challenge that is COVID-19 – *together*.

Sincerely,

Colleen Clark

Colleen Clark, ACE
CEO

CC:
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