



THE CONFEDERATION OF CANADIAN UNIONS LA CONFÉDÉRATION DES SYNDICATS CANADIENS

January 24, 2018

Premier John Horgan
PO Box 9041
Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E1

Re: Minimum Wage Increase in British Columbia

Dear Premier,

On behalf of the Confederation of Canadian Unions (CCU), the largest affiliation of independent unions in the country, I am urging you to follow through on your May 2017 campaign promise and raise the minimum wage to \$15.

Since the early 1970s, the CCU has advocated for increases in the minimum wage and the establishment of a living wage for all working Canadians.

The CCU provided a very good review of your party's 2017 election platform for our 15,000-plus members to read on our website (<http://www.ccu-csc.ca/politics/british-columbia-election-2017/>). The platform specifically hails the City of Seattle, where "the \$15/hour minimum is the law, restaurants are thriving and the economy has strengthened. That's because people earning minimum wage are spending it on essentials, putting money right back into their local economy," as it states.

The question is: what is the NDP government of BC waiting for? The provinces of Ontario and Alberta recently increased their minimum wages, and have promised to do so again to \$15 an hour within the next 12 months.

The economy of BC – and North America – is strong, and businesses both big and small are enjoying a profit boom. Now's the time to move on this issue and ensure the half million workers in the province earning less than \$15 per hour – 81% of whom are 20 years of age or older – that they won't be left behind. After 16 years of Liberal neglect, minimum wage and low income workers in BC have waited long enough.

Going back well over a century, the business community has always claimed that massive layoffs, closures and economic disaster would be caused by any effort to improve the conditions of working people, whether it was abolishing child labour, the right to strike, establishing the forty hour workweek, health and safety standards, guaranteeing women equal pay with men, or employment equity.

And as we know, these doom and gloom scenarios were utterly unfounded.

The vast majority of research illustrates that responsible increases in the minimum wage have minimal effect on unemployment rates, but a big impact on the lives of low income workers. That's because they have a

positive effect on consumption, since minimum wage earners spend more of their disposable income into the local economy.

Businesses don't create jobs when wages are lower. They create jobs when they have customers at their front door, and the single best way of doing this is ensuring that modest-income and working class consumers have more money in their pocket to spend.

Increases in the minimum wage will also have a positive effect on fighting the staggering levels of economic and income inequality, which are a threat to both economic stability and your party's proud and long-standing commitment to social justice.

The BC NDP made a vitally important promise during the last provincial election, one that helped you get elected. I believe that the sooner you follow through on it, the greater the chance that other provinces throughout Canada will follow your lead in soon establishing a living wage as well.

Once again, on behalf of independent unions throughout Canada, I urge you to fulfill your 2017 election promise and raise the minimum wage to \$15.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'K. Johnson', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Kelly Johnson
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