

February 22, 2022

## BACKGROUND 3

### **Building a stronger economy for everyone**

Budget 2022 helps make sure people throughout B.C. are poised to benefit from a growing economy, today and into the future by investing in an inclusive, sustainable and innovative economy that works for everyone.

#### **Meaningful reconciliation**

Budget 2022 provides \$12 million over three years to create a new Declaration Act Secretariat that will guide and assist government to meet its obligation to ensure legislation is consistent with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and is developed in consultation and co-operation with Indigenous Peoples.

Responding to the needs of Indigenous people and communities, Budget 2022 also includes:

- Funding to continue creating up to 15 First Nations Primary Care Centres throughout the province, in partnership with the First Nations Health Authority.
- Supporting Aboriginal Head Start, which provides culturally-based inclusive child care, early learning and family bonding opportunities for Indigenous children.
- Funding for Indigenous-led emergency management priorities in First Nations communities.
- Increased access to justice for Indigenous people through a virtual Indigenous Justice Centre.
- Connecting First Nations communities to high-speed internet.
- Expanding the Indigenous Forest Bioeconomy Program to include a new Accelerator Program, which will help Indigenous partners commercialize and scale-up innovative forest-based products.

## **Supporting B.C.'s Economic Plan**

Budget 2022 provides \$50 million to support implementation of the Stronger BC Economic Plan: A Plan For Today, A Vision for Tomorrow, with investments to grow B.C.'s life sciences, manufacturing and agricultural sectors, continue our commitment to Environmental, Social and Governance values, and support reconciliation through economic development.

It also includes funding for an integrated marketplace to speed the adoption of made-in-B.C. clean technologies and to establish a world-leading standard for environmental, social and governance reporting. In addition, B.C.'s Economic Plan includes Future Ready, a comprehensive plan to close the skills and labour gap in B.C. to meet the challenge of filling more than one million job openings over the next 10 years.

## **Building the labour force now**

Budget 2022 supports the development of a strong, skilled workforce, by:

- Expanding training for health-care assistants to address critical staffing shortages in the long-term care, assisted living and home care sectors with \$25 million in 2022-23. This builds on \$75 million invested in Budget 2021 and will allow the Province to hire more than 5,000 new health-care assistants by 2022-23.
- Delivering community benefits and training the next generation of skilled workers, increasing opportunities for under-represented groups, and expanding the construction workforce through Community Benefits Agreements for key government capital projects.
- Meeting the growing demand for adult education with an additional \$21 million over the next three years for the Graduated Adult Program, and continuing the Province's commitment since 2017 to provide tuition-free adult literacy programs.
- Investing \$21 million to certify more skilled trades personnel as journeypersons or apprentices, by expanding training seats and other services to help workers in 10 electrical, mechanical and automotive trades to become certified.

## **Connecting Communities**

Budget 2022 invests more than \$289 million in new funding as part of a five-year plan to connect more than 280 First Nations, rural and remote communities to high-speed internet, improving access to digital health-care services and educational opportunities and opening doors for people in these communities to work remotely and access digital markets. This funding will significantly accelerate the Province's commitment to close the digital divide and will also help rural, forest-dependent communities and workers transitioning to new diversified economic opportunities under the Old Growth Strategy.

## **Building more affordable homes**

Budget 2022 continues the implementation of the Homes for BC 10-year housing plan with a goal of delivering 114,000 affordable homes in British Columbia, with an additional \$166 million over the fiscal plan. This brings the annual level of housing investments to over \$1.2 billion by 2024-25.

This funding provides \$100 million in 2022-23 to non-profit housing providers to accelerate the construction of mixed-income housing through the Community Housing Fund. It also adds additional resources for the HousingHub at BC Housing to keep up with growing demand for the \$2 billion in low-cost financing announced in Budget 2021.

### **Investing in growing sectors**

Nearly \$200 million has been provided this year in grants to Genome BC and Michael Smith Health Research BC, creating new scientific discoveries and economic opportunities for a growing life sciences sector that now includes more than 2,000 companies and employs 18,000 people in B.C.

Budget 2022 delivers \$18 million to support the continued growth of the mining sector through the Regulatory Excellence in Mining strategy, after 2021 saw more than \$600 million in mining exploration. This is a 50% increase over the previous year and the highest level in a decade, with growing demand around the world for the minerals that will play a key role in B.C.'s low-carbon future.

### **Supporting sectors through pandemic recovery**

Budget 2022 earmarks \$25 million in funding to support the tourism sector's continuing recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional funding is also being provided this year to support non-profit organizations affected by the pandemic; the recovery of the arts, culture and music sectors through the Arts Impacts and Amplify BC programs; and additional tourism supports including funding to support the safe restart of fairs, festivals and events.

### **Supporting workers and communities through the transition in forestry**

Budget 2022 provides \$185 million over the fiscal plan to support forestry workers and communities affected by old-growth logging deferrals. This includes connecting workers with short-term employment opportunities and providing education and skills training for community members. It also includes funding for partnerships with businesses and communities to help them transition to create jobs through diversified economies and infrastructure projects. Funding will also support the Bridging to Retirement program, which will provide up to \$75,000 to eligible forestry workers and contractors 55 years or older to transition to retirement.

### **Sustainable land, water and resource management**

Budget 2022 provides more than \$44 million in new funding to create a new Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship, and support government's goals of stimulating economic activity, environmental sustainability and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. The ministry will have a leadership role working with Indigenous governments and organizations to develop a new vision and new policies for land, water and resource management to bring government's natural resource policy framework in line with the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.

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