



Minister Michelle Mungall

May 8, 2020

Minister of Jobs, Economic Development and Competitiveness

Parliament Buildings

Victoria, British Columbia

Dear Minister Mungall:

On behalf of members of the Emerging Economy Task Force, I am adding this letter as an addendum and context setting to our report in light of the unprecedented events brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our engagements and report writing concluded before COVID-19. We believe that the work we undertook, and the findings and recommendations we have submitted remain as relevant today for the conversation about the future as they were at the time of their development.

We concentrated on fundamental pillars that underpin long-term diversification, resiliency and sustainable prosperity to increase quality economic growth for people in British Columbia, resisting the urge to focus on short-term economic cycles. Those pillars are embodied in the strategic priorities included in the report.

The Emerging Economy Task Force developed five strategic priorities and 25 recommendations, many of which align with and build on government's current priorities:

**1. Embracing technology and innovation** – It is clear that COVID-19 has inspired and accelerated the use of technology, ranging from manufacturers pivoting to produce personal protective equipment to scientific innovations to create anti-virals and vaccines. This pillar will be critical for short-term recovery and longer-term prosperity and supports our recommendation to strengthen the ecosystem for innovation, commercialization and scale-up of companies.

**2. Leveraging B.C.'s green economy**- Central to our report are recommendations to take advantage of growing global demand for green economy and products. The world has seemingly enjoyed clearer skies and significant reductions in GHGs in many countries over the past few weeks. However, climate change remains an existential threat. To address this and to contribute to economic recovery, the recommendations





in this strategic priority parallel the Government of British Columbia's leadership with Clean BC and supports B.C.'s businesses to tackle climate change and contribute to our low carbon future.

**3. Building a highly skilled and adaptable workforce** – Imperative to recovery and needed more than ever are people with ideas, ingenuity, inspiration and imagination to contribute to B.C.'s economic recovery and success. With significant unemployment now and for the foreseeable future, it has been an historical trend that many unemployed return to school to upgrade their skills or to learn a new vocation. Our recommendation to strengthen our education system is now more vital than ever.

**4. Ensuring an effective enabling ecosystem** – A system for the effective and efficient flow of products, people, technology and ideas will enable B.C.'s quality economic growth. As we noted in the report, ensuring the security of B.C.'s current and future food supply is now more paramount than ever.

**5. Demonstrating public sector leadership** – With the advent of COVID-19, governments have proven their ability to a rapid response to the crisis. This same leadership and agility will be needed to navigate future opportunities and address challenges.

The pandemic has challenged our concept of essential workers and which industries are vital to economic prosperity. This may lead to review how we measure growth, well-being and quality of life. Moving beyond GDP and including indicators like work and life balance, education and skills, income and wealth, jobs and earnings, environmental quality and housing, can give us a realistic window into the true state of our province. These broader measures can be used as a blueprint for addressing challenges including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, prosperity, and peace and justice.

Although our report was completed prior to the impacts of COVID-19, an unanticipated, fundamentally significant and historically unprecedented "Black Swan" event, we believe that the recommendations can contribute to the emerging provincial plan for economic recovery and long-term quality economic growth. We know that history has demonstrated that as crises occur, interventions have the potential to reconstruct fundamental approaches to better serve citizens. Let us not lose that opportunity.





Again, thank you for the opportunity to work with so many remarkable people throughout this process, and for a chance to contribute to a vibrant future for people in B.C.

Sincerely,

Kathy Kinloch

Chair, Emerging Economy Task Force

