



BC Chamber of Commerce

Know what's on BC's mind.

# *Big Thinking for Small Business*

A three-part plan for **economic recovery**

This document is a summary of The BC Chamber of Commerce's Economic Recovery Submission to the BC Provincial Government. The full submission can be found [here](#).



## Message from the Chair



We are facing one of the most challenging economic crises in a century. Our network of chambers and boards of trade have pointed to inclusivity and innovation serving as the foundation for our provincial economic strategy for recovery and revitalization. We know now is not the time to be timid in our thinking. We must look to bold recommendations and solutions designed to build a globally competitive province that will not only sustain us today, but help us thrive long-term. Our chamber network—and the 36,000 members it represents—also recognize the direct connection between economic health and community health. Our collective plan for recovery encourages the active participation of all British Columbians. The spirit of collaboration is what has allowed businesses and government to successfully tackle the health crisis, and we believe this same spirit will see us through this economic one.

—— Aleece Laird, BC Chamber of Commerce Board Chair



## Small businesses want to compete – *and bring back good jobs.*

The small business contribution to BC's economy is too big to ignore.

Small businesses are tech innovators. They are award-winning exporters. They are your favorite local restaurant. They are also the vast supply chain that surrounds and supports big business.

***Feedback through our BCMindReader.com platform tells us that entrepreneurs are having a slow and fragile recovery so far. Almost two thirds (65%) of the BC business community is depending on government programs to stay afloat, and only three out of ten (28%) expect to return to normal operations when those supports end.***

Small business recovery hinges on 'a BC-built-to-compete' framework. Our members want to create a prosperous BC that delivers improved affordability and services, as well as long-term economic strength and sustainability.

We're asking government to advance core economic fundamentals and promote long-term growth in every region, sector, and community of BC—even if it means spending beyond the \$1.5 billion currently earmarked for economic recovery.

Let's act quickly, and with smart policy.

# Let's Compete

*BC's tax system must support recovery and growth for business – and generate revenue for government.*



## Say “yes” to a competitive tax system that supports recovery and growth

It's time for our province to embrace a made-in-BC value-added tax and to mitigate the impacts of the Employers' Health Tax (EHT). Entrepreneurs want healthy workers, and are willing to pay their fair share, but we must sensibly lower costs for business to encourage investment and innovation, drive productivity, and create good paying jobs.

[Click a policy position to learn more.](#)

PST rebates

Employers' Health Tax

Value-added-tax

## Embrace municipal tax and regulatory changes to unleash small business growth

Even before the pandemic, unsustainably high property tax bills threatened the viability of many small businesses. Today, with the impacts of COVID-19, these taxes could sink them permanently. Let's find a workable solution to the “highest-and-best-use” property assessment challenge, and, encourage small business growth with more intermunicipal mobile business licenses.

[Click a policy position to learn more.](#)



Property tax gap

Mobile business licence

Property assessment process



## Amplify our trade gateway opportunity

As Canada's biggest trade gateway, we have a responsibility to invest to create immense opportunities for people and communities. The proposed Roberts Bank Terminal 2 will support over 12,000 person-years of direct, indirect, and induced employment—totalling \$1 billion in wages during construction. It's also time to enhance Canada's Asia Pacific Gateway initiative. [Click a policy position to learn more.](#)

Keep ports connected

Industrial lands

Asia Pacific Gateway



## Invest in resource projects to ensure a foundation for growth

Urban and rural prosperity in BC is connected. Big projects that support (and are supported by) small businesses are a non-negotiable for a fulsome recovery. Streamlining regulations to unleash private capital will get more environmentally responsible, well-regulated, and safe projects built.

[Click a policy position to learn more.](#)

Support LNG

Address under harvest

Support energy sector

Mining investment opportunities

Resources for prosperity

Timber supply

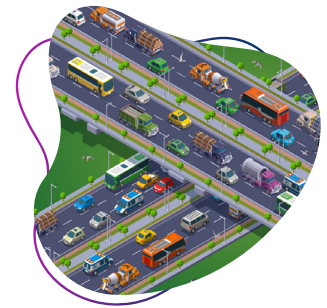
Forest industry

Softwood lumber agreement

## Transportation infrastructure keeps supply chains and people moving

We can't afford to have people or shipping containers in gridlock anymore. All regions in B.C. have quality, shovel-worthy projects ready to go. Let's say "yes" to a Massey Tunnel replacement and enhancing transportation infrastructure in the north, the interior, and on Vancouver Island.

[Click a policy position to learn more.](#)



### Regional policy recommendations:

Lower Mainland:

Massey tunnel

Get BC business moving

Okanagan:

Transportation infrastructure

North:

Improve highways

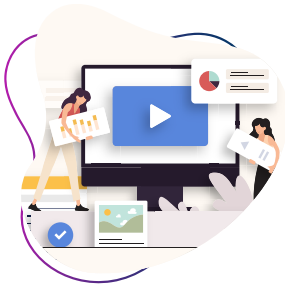
Safe roadways

Vancouver Island:

Restore rail

# 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.*



## Incentivize – and accelerate – investments in tech and innovation

Whether it's bringing better broadband connectivity to the north to unlock small business potential or developing an aerospace innovation cluster outside the Lower Mainland, we have a strong, international reputation for innovation and highly educated workers. Let's leverage that brand. [Click a policy position to learn more.](#)

Broadband

Ridesharing

Agricultural production

Agri-tech

Counter cyber crime

Aerospace innovation cluster

## Transition to a lower-carbon economy to support the environment and create jobs

From Ballard Power and Innergex Renewable Energy to Westport Innovation and HTEC Corp.–BC has a strong foundation when it comes to innovative leaders supporting the environment and jobs. Ensuring government environmental programs and incentives are more accessible to small business (through CleanBC, for example) allows us to build on this foundation. [Click a policy position to learn more.](#)



Private sector renewables

Transportation innovation

Small business incentives



## Focus on emerging economies as an emerging opportunity – Tourism and Cannabis

Tourism was hardest hit by the pandemic and will be among the slowest sectors to recover and its \$6.9 billion annual contribution to our GDP can't be ignored. Small business tourism operators are asking for a working capital recovery grant, support for adaptation, and for BC-focussed supply chains. BC's legal cannabis sector is also poised to grow if we can pull back the right regulations. Let's cut the red tape that plagues legal cannabis to create a prosperous industry that provides safe products for consumers. [Click a policy position to learn more.](#)

Cannabis

TIABC submission



*When our members were asked which sectors will become 'more important' or 'less important' for BC's economy in the coming decade – 85% ranked 'clean energy/clean technology' as the most important*

# Let's Be Inclusive

*Recovery must include systemic changes that advance economic reconciliation and create equitable opportunities for all British Columbians.*



## Prioritize Indigenous Economic Reconciliation

Indigenous economic reconciliation is inextricably linked to deeper, lasting reconciliation – and Indigenous communities in BC are leading with some of Canada's most impressive proposals and active projects. Let's support more Indigenous projects and back the recommendation of the First Nations Major Projects Coalition to have government fund a 'Revolving Loan Facility' to support increased First Nations participation in resource projects. [Click a policy position to learn more.](#)

First Nations Major Project Coalition

## Get British Columbians back to work—it's what business and workers want

COVID-19 has upended the labour market—and women, minorities, and youth are the hardest hit. We need a reskilling, upskilling, and skills training approach that serves workers eager to stay employable in a rapidly shifting economy where businesses are evolving in real time. [Click a policy position to learn more.](#)



Youth entrepreneurship

Manufacturing

BC's tech sector

Women and minorities in the labour market



## Housing affordability supports inclusive growth

Demand for housing will continue to balloon in the years to come – so let's support supply. Progressive housing solutions will address some of our most acute workforce challenges. Long permitting times and uncertain zoning processes need to go. Property transfer tax reform will help too. Municipalities can also do better in how they design Community Amenity Contributions. [Click a policy position to learn more.](#)

Community Amenity Contributions

Property transfer tax reform

Zoning

Sustainable rental housing

Permit timelines

Accelerate development

Progressive housing solutions



**61% of BC businesses agree the provincial and federal governments should not introduce any additional demand-side measures to solve the housing issue.<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> The BC Chamber of Commerce Collective Perspective Survey Report, [www.bcchamber.org/sites/default/files/BC%20Chamber%20CP%202018%20FINAL.pdf](http://www.bcchamber.org/sites/default/files/BC%20Chamber%20CP%202018%20FINAL.pdf), page 33

## Rethink childcare to ensure workforce equity

The pandemic has revealed the critical importance of affordable, dependable childcare to a thriving economy. Women—often the primary caregivers of children—have been traditionally held back from economic opportunities due to lack of childcare. [Click a policy position to learn more.](#)



Early childhood education

Childcare: access and quality



## Look to rural and remote development to strengthen communities and the economy

B.C. owes much of its prosperity to our strong rural economies. These same communities appreciate more than others the importance of a balanced approach, because their natural ecosystems support their economic ones. By mobilizing rural investment capital non-urban communities can continue their out-sized contribution to BC's GDP. These communities also deserve to have traditional community funding strategies reviewed.

[Click a policy position to learn more.](#)

Rural investment

Species-at-risk

Rural community funding

Recreational fishing

## Improve accessibility to promote equity

Without *adequate* accessibility we can't have *adequate* economic inclusion. Our network resoundingly supports a system that allows full community and economic participation for all British Columbians. Starting with clear, sensible, universal building codes is a positive first step. [Click a policy position to learn more.](#)



Universal building codes



## Expand health care to advance productivity and innovation

The collective health of British Columbians has a significant impact on economic performance and the health care system. Adequate, accessible healthcare must be available no matter where one lives in the province. The Province must enhance Medivac and 911 service in remote and rural areas. In addition, putting a new economic lens on BC health care will help drive the right technological advancements. [Click a policy position to learn more.](#)

Medi-vac

911 Service

Healthcare: A new lens