

Aug. 19, 2021

John Horgan
Premier of B.C.
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Selina Robinson
B.C. Minister of Finance
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Ravi Kahlon
B.C. Minister of Jobs, Economic Recovery & Innovation
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Harwinder Sandhu
MLA, Vernon-Monashee
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Re: Permanent, paid sick leave

Premier Horgan, Minister Robinson, Minister Kahlon and MLA Sandhu

The Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce appreciates that permanent, paid sick leave will ease the financial burden on B.C. workers who may need to take time off to recover from illness.

However, we would urge your government to recognize the financial investment employers already provide their employees, including:

- Canada Pension Plan
- Employment Insurance
- Employer Health Tax
- WorkSafeBC
- Vacation Pay

On top of those costs, many employers provide their employees and families with extended health benefits while many already voluntarily have paid sick leave. When everything is combined, the total cost can equate to 30 per cent above wages.

Business owners, as well as non-profit and government organizations, want to do right by their employees as a healthy workforce is essential to our community and economy especially as we move towards recovery. Businesses and non-profits understand that they must provide support to their employees to ensure retention and recruitment, but they are also faced with the cumulative

impact of government taxation, employee benefits and the rising cost of living, such as utilities and rent.

Presently, the Government of B.C. will reimburse employers up to \$200 a day through the Employer Reimbursement Program for Covid-19 related paid sick leave wages paid to an employee. Employers can be reimbursed for up to three days of paid leave for each employee.

If a permanent, paid sick leave is to proceed in the province Jan. 1, 2022, the Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce would recommend that the same terms as the Covid Employer Reimbursement Program apply to this new, permanent initiative, and specifically that:

- The Government of B.C. will reimburse employers up to \$200 a day for Made in B.C. permanent, paid sick leave wages paid to an employee. Employers could be reimbursed for up to three days of paid leave for each employee.

Such an initiative would achieve the goal of assisting B.C.'s workforce when they are experiencing illness while recognizing the significant contributions businesses of all sizes, as well as non-profits, make to their employees, community and the province as a whole.

Thank you for your time and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Krystin Kempton, President
Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce

Shirley Bond, Interim Leader of the BC Official Opposition
City of Vernon Mayor and Council
District of Coldstream Mayor and Council
Regional District of North Okanagan Board of Directors
Okanagan Indian Band Chief and Council
B.C. Economic Development Association
Okanagan-Shuswap Chambers of Commerce
BC Chambers Executives Society