

September 2, 2020

MLA, Jordan Sturdy

West Vancouver – Sea to Sky

Via Email: Jordan.Sturdy.MLA@leg.bc.ca

Re: COVID-19 and A Bold Plan for BC's Recovery

Dear MLA Jordan Sturdy,

Thank you to both you and all our elected officials for your ongoing efforts to respond to the health, social and economic impacts that is the COVID-19 pandemic facing our community and our province.

On behalf of the Whistler Chamber of Commerce representing 730 businesses, of every size and from every sector – I want you to know our Chamber is committed to working with the BC government to protect the health of all British Columbians while we continue to build on the critical fiscal solutions your government put forward to safeguard Whistler and our economy and the viability of our Members.

Businesses and governments must act quickly and decisively. Our Chamber takes our responsibility of speaking for 'all business in our community' very seriously. As a member of the BC Chamber network, our organization knows it will certainly take an "all-of-BC" approach to navigate our way out of crisis and along the road to recovery.

Our lens on recovery is designed around 'a BC built to compete' framework, with the goal of creating a prosperous BC – and by extension prosperous regions – that will deliver improved affordability and services that British Columbians rely on, as well as long-term economic strength and sustainability.

The Whistler Chamber and our Members feed into the BCMindreader.com COVID-19 Business Impact Survey that has provided invaluable insight in real time on the dire impact this pandemic is having on our Members' day-to-day operations. While we know our business Members can rise to the economic challenge that is COVID-19, we also know from our survey platform that entrepreneurs are having a slow and fragile recovery so far. Nearly 90% of the Whistler business community is currently using some form of government backing to stay afloat and only 16% expect to return to normal operations when those supports expire.

Of course, the Chamber is always actively listening to our Members on what they think would best support them in the next phase of stimulus. That is why we are writing to voice our support for the BC Chamber's economic recovery plan entitled *Big Thinking for Small Business: A Three-Part Plan for Economic Recovery*. This BC Chamber network submission speaks to building a competitive BC that will support all sizes of businesses – but we have put a special focus on small businesses. Building on the 2018 Small Business Task

Force “Small Business Speaks” report, three themes rose to the top for the BC Chamber’s 36,000 members: Competitiveness, Innovation and Inclusivity.

The three themes of the BC Chamber’s recovery submission will not only support BC’s economy, there are key areas that address our Members’ and community’s needs:

1. Let’s Compete

Must support recovery and growth for business – and this, in turn, will generate revenue for government.

The right investments in transportation and trade-enabling infrastructure to move goods and people efficiently and support the economic foundation that is our natural resource wealth, balanced with solid tax fundamentals.

2. Let’s Innovate

Economic diversification is essential and we currently operate in a tourism economy. Our approach to recovery needs to focus on support supporting small business tourism operators, creating good jobs in every sector and addressing issues related to climate change. Maintaining our foundation and innovating for new, diverse business in the future is critical to our recovery.

3. Let’s Be Inclusive

Recovery must include systemic changes that advance economic reconciliation and create equitable opportunities for all British Columbians. Whistler has a unique precedent of working with the Squamish and Lil’wat nations as we welcomed the world during the 2010 Winter Olympics. In this time of recovery we need to work together and support recovery for our entire community.

We hope you find these further actions helpful in planning your next steps in support of Members here in Whistler and the Sea to Sky. Thank you again for your bold leadership and the opportunity to engage with you in this ongoing dialogue on how we rise to the challenge that is COVID-19 – *together*.

Sincerely,



Melissa Pace
CEO, Whistler Chamber

CC:

Hon. John Horgan, Premier of BC

Hon. Carole James, Minister of Finance and Deputy Premier

Hon. Mayor Jack Crompton

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