



HONOURABLE JODY WILSON-RAYBOULD,
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT *for* VANCOUVER GRANVILLE

March 31st, 2020

Dear Constituents of Vancouver Granville,

In this extraordinary time, my thoughts and prayers go out to everyone as we individually and collectively confront the COVID-19 pandemic. We will get through this together. As a community, we all want everyone across Vancouver Granville and beyond to keep as healthy, well, and safe as possible. For those of you grieving, our hearts are with you, and we will do all we can to support you in these difficult times.

I have heard from so many of you and am inspired by your stories and service to each other. So many of our friends and neighbours are on the front lines of this pandemic, with many from Vancouver Granville — saving lives, caring for the ill, and feeding and sustaining us. Thank you to each and every one of you. I hold up my hands in praise. Your service is known and seen.

By each doing our part — by being resilient in our own lives and doing the work of physical distancing, by staying at home and washing our hands — we are taking individual and collective action that is helping to flatten the curve and ultimately saving lives and alleviating the suffering of many. Here in British Columbia, our Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry, has indicated that there are glimmers of hope emerging. These hopeful signs arise because when we each act as individuals with the same urgency and responsibility, we are exponentially increasing our shared positive impact. I thank and stand with each of you — children, parents, elders, our businesses large and small — for all that you do to ensure our collective response is so powerful that the harms of COVID-19 will ultimately be contained.

In addition to physical distancing and making sure our health needs are met, we need to help sustain our local economy now and into the future. Locally, there is much we can also do to support one another in addition to the important initiatives that are being taken by governments. For example, order take-out from our favourite restaurants or if there are local businesses you regularly visit — a hair or nail salon, a restaurant, local book, clothes and shoe stores, or any small local business that typically may not have a gift card you can buy — consider making them a payment for future services, a local “IOU”. Let our local businesses know they can count us, on customers and economic activity into the future. Please also, if you can afford it, consider making a donation to a local charity or group that is reaching out to help our neighbours at this time, including local food banks. If you have other ideas that will help lay the foundation for our local response and recovery, I would love to hear it.

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With respect to contacting us, our constituency office, while closed to the public, will continue to respond to every inquiry, message, offer of assistance and request of help we receive. To date, the largest number of inquiries we have received have been about getting family members home from abroad. This remains a current primary focus, and we will continue this work around the clock. Please keep writing and reaching out to us if you need help and we will provide whatever assistance we can. Attached to this letter are contact information for our constituency office, key COVID-19 government websites, links to relevant sources for applying for benefits and accessing programs, as well as other resources.

As I write this at the end of March, the COVID-19 situation remains fluid and ever-changing, and even by the time you get this letter, there will continue to be new developments and realities we all must grapple with. That said, and while such change is inevitable, I think it is important for all of us to take stock of some of the remarkable strengths we have demonstrated as individuals, as families, as a community, and as members of our shared and common humanity. We all have a role to play.

It is also at times like these when our institutions of governance and our leadership are tested. There is great importance and comfort in knowing that our governing institutions are working and that our leaders are making urgent and hard decisions to the best of their ability and based on the best available information. Key to our success is that Canadians continue to hold trust in our institutions and leaders — something which we do not see holding in the same way in other places around the globe.

I think we have good reason to have this trust. These are not normal times, and there is no time for politics as usual. Locally, across British Columbia, and throughout Canada we see a rise in the reliance on true experts, and a decrease in partisanship and political gamesmanship. We see an emphasis on concrete and tangible action, and a decrease in empty rhetoric. We see a focus being placed on how we can act unitedly, transparently, and coherently, with less conflict.

As your Member of Parliament, like all MPs across Canada, I will continue to support as well as hold our leaders to account to ensure the government continues to make the best choices for public health above all else.

Finally, as I practice physical distancing, I have found myself thinking about what comes next. When we do come out of this particular moment of crisis, I know ultimately, we will be strengthened. There will inevitably be much reflection on how the pandemic was handled — and not just in Canada but globally — and perhaps this will trigger the long overdue work of challenging assumptions and ways of acting that we take for granted. Perhaps we will come to recognize even more how interconnected we all are locally and globally, and that we must live in ways that reflect our common humanity. Perhaps we will learn to love and care for each other more, and to ensure our institutions and social networks are ever more prepared for what may come next. We will examine how we got here and start building a future that relies more on truth, evidence, and preparedness, and is less preoccupied with personalities and power.

Again, thank you for all that you do — each and every one of you. As we continue to rise to this extraordinary moment, let us continue to support and serve one another. Gilakas’la.

Be well, healthy and safe.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jody". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter being a large, stylized "J".

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould, P.C., Q.C., M.P.
Member of Parliament
Vancouver Granville

Attachment; Important Information about COVID-19

Attachment-Important Information about COVID-19

Key Government Websites

[BC Centre for Disease Control, COVID-19](#)

[Government of Canada, COVID-19](#)

[City of Vancouver, COVID-19](#)

[BC-COVID 19 Provincial Support and Information](#)

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Emergency Measures

For up to date information on emergency measures in BC, please visit:

[BC Government, Ministerial Orders](#)

[BC Government, COVID-19 Essential Services](#)

[Government of Canada, COVID-19 Emergency Response Act](#)

Employment

For additional information regarding employment standards & measures BC, please visit:

[WorkSafeBC, COVID-19](#)

[BC Government, COVID-19 Leave](#)

[Government of Canada, COVID-19 Employee Illness and Leave](#)

[Government of Canada, Workplace and Employment](#)

Health

For up to date information on COVID-19, please visit:

[BC Centre for Disease Control, COVID-19](#)

[Government of Canada, COVID-19](#)

COVID-19 Federal Supports & Programs

Financial Support for Individuals & Families:

- [Employment Insurance \(EI\)](#), employment Insurance (EI) provides regular benefits to individuals who lose their jobs through no fault of their own (for example, due to shortage of work, seasonal or mass lay-offs) and are available for and able to work, but can't find employment.
- [Employment Insurance \(EI\) Sickness Benefits](#), provide eligible individuals with up to 15 weeks of financial assistance if you cannot work for medical reasons. One week waiting period waived and no medical certificate required.
- [Canada Emergency Response Benefit \(CERB\)](#), a taxable benefit of \$2000 a month (for up to four months) for workers who have lost their income and do not qualify for EI.

The Canada Emergency Response Benefit will be accessible through a secure web portal starting in early April. Applicants will also be able to apply via an automated telephone line or via a toll-free number.

Financial Support for Businesses:

- [Work Sharing Programs](#), designed to help employers and employees avoid layoffs when there is a temporary reduction in the normal level of business activity that is beyond the control of the employer.
- [Supplementary Unemployment Benefit Plans](#), a plan that allows employers to increase their employees' weekly earnings when they are unemployed due to a temporary stoppage of work, training, illness, injury or quarantine.
- [Wage Subsidies for Businesses](#), eligible businesses can receive up to 75% wage subsidy, for up to 3 months, retroactive to March 15, 2020. This will help businesses to keep and return workers to the payroll. More details on eligibility criteria will start with the impact of COVID-19 on sales, and will be shared before the end of March.
- [Business Credit Availability Program \(BCAP\)](#), a plan to become available in mid-April that will provide more than \$10 billion of additional support to small and medium-sized businesses. Speak with your financial institution, or [click here to learn more](#).
 - [Canada Emergency Business Account](#): will provide loans of up to \$40,000 for small businesses and not-for-profit, interest-free for one year. To become available in mid-April.
 - [Loan Guarantee](#): operating credit and cash flow term loans of up to \$6.25 million for small and medium-sized companies that require greater help to meet their operational cash flow requirements. To become available in mid-April.
 - [Co-Lending Program](#): a co-lending program available to small and medium sized businesses in order to help them meet their operational cash flow requirements. Eligible businesses may obtain incremental credit amounts of up to \$6.25 million through the program, which will be risk-shared at 80 per cent between the Business Development Bank of Canada and the financial institutions. To become available in mid-April.
- [Deferral of Sales Tax Remittance and Customs Duty Payments](#), The Government is deferring Goods and Services Tax/Harmonized Sales Tax (GST/HST) remittances and customs duty payments to June 30, 2020.
- [Deferral of Customs Duty and Sales Tax for Importers](#), payment deadlines for statements of accounts for March, April, and May are being deferred to June 30, 2020.

- [Publishing and news sectors](#), new Independent Advisory Board on Eligibility for Journalism Tax Measures is in place, and journalism organizations that meet the criteria for the (QCJO) designation are eligible for [additional funding](#).
- [Tourism businesses in national parks and historic sites](#), to help mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on Canada's tourism industry, Parks Canada will work with tourism operators in national parks, historic sites, and marine conservation areas to defer payments on commercial leases and licences of occupation without interest until September 1, 2020.

Support for Farmers:

- [Farmers and Agri-Food sector](#), increasing credit available for farmers and the agri-food sector through the [\\$5 billion Farm Credit Canada loan program](#).
- Seafood sector, seafood growers, shellfish farmers, and processors, will have access to the [\\$5 billion Farm Credit Canada loan program](#).

Support for Renters & Homeowners:

- [Mortgages \(CMHC-insured\)](#), the CMHC and other mortgage insurers will be applying new measures to help homeowners who may experience financial difficulty. CMHC will permit lenders to allow payment deferral beginning immediately. Check with your lender for additional information.
- [Mortgages \(non-CMHC\)](#), Canadians who are impacted by COVID-19 and experiencing financial hardship as a result should contact their financial institution regarding flexibility for a mortgage deferral.

Supports for Students:

- [Canada Student Loans](#), effective March 30 a six-month interest-free moratorium on the repayment of Canada Student Loans was put in place for all student loan borrowers. No payment will be required and interest will not accrue during this time. Students do not need to apply for the repayment pause.

Taxes:

- [Federal income tax](#), the Canada Revenue Agency will allow all businesses to defer, until after August 31, 2020, the payment of any income tax amounts that become owing on or after today and before September 2020.
- [Special Goods and Services Tax credit payment](#), a one-time boost of up to \$600 per eligible couple, \$400 for eligible individuals in May. Benefit is paid out according to your income tax return. No application necessary, eligible recipients will receive this payment automatically.
- [Canada Child Benefit \(CCB\)](#), an extra \$300 per child through the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) for 2019-20. If you are already registered for CCB you will receive this benefit automatically. Otherwise, [apply online](#).
- [Income tax return](#), the filing due date has been deferred to June 1. Payments owed are deferred until after August 31.

- [Registered Retirement Income Funds \(RRIFs\)](#), the required minimum withdrawals from (RRIFs) has been reduced by 25% for 2020. [Learn more here](#).

Resources for Canadians Abroad:

- [Emergency Travel Loan](#), Canadians abroad directly impacted by COVID-19 will have the option of applying for an emergency loan of up to \$5,000 to help secure their timely return to Canada.

Seniors:

- Existing programs continue to be available, including:
 - [Old Age Security \(OAS\)](#)
 - [Guaranteed Income Supplement \(GIS\)](#)
 - [Allowance/Allowance for Survivor](#)

Need information or have a question about financial support from **the** government right now?

For federal supports & programs, call the Canada Revenue Agency at

- [1-800-O-Canada/1-800-622-6232](#) (general inquiries)
- [1-800-959-8281](#) (help with My Account)
- [1-800-387-1193](#) (help with benefits)

COVID-19 Provincial Supports & Programs

Financial Support for Individuals & Families:

- [BC Emergency Benefit for Workers](#), a tax-free \$1,000 payment to British Columbians whose ability to work has been affected by COVID-19, available to those on EI or CERB. More information to come.
- [Disability Assistance](#), disability assistance can help you if you need financial or health support. Existing [Disability Assistance](#) program continues to be available. See a full list of additional supports [here](#). [Eligible seniors are automatically enrolled, but applications can also be submitted online.](#)
- [Income Assistance](#), existing [Income Assistance programs](#) continues to be available for those in need. Additional information available [here](#).

Financial Support for Businesses:

- [Funding for Child Care Centers](#), emergency funding is available for child care providers that stay open and for those that close. Additional information available [here](#).
- [Arts & Culture sector](#), a \$3-million Arts and Culture Resilience Supplement to be administered by the BC Arts Council. Operating and eligible project clients will receive a supplement of up to \$15,000 in early April to help them pay their bills. Additional information available [here](#).

Support for Renters & Homeowners:

- [Freeze on rental rates](#), no rent increases are allowed in BC, effective April 1, no action needed. Contact the [Residential Tenancy Board](#) for more information, or with questions.
- [Rental supplement](#), provided by the Province, the new rental supplement will help households by offering up to \$500 a month towards their rent. Paid directly to landlords. Contact your local MLA for additional information.

Support for Students:

- [BC Student Loans](#), effective March 30, 2020, all British Columbia student loan borrowers will temporarily have their repayments suspended until September 30, 2020.

Housing:

- [BC Hydro](#), bill deferrals, payment plans, as well as [crisis funding is available](#). Call [1-800-BC-HYDRO](#) or [apply online](#).
- [Emergency Housing](#), existing shelters still active and additional emergency options may be available. Call [2-1-1](#) or [search online](#).

Taxes:

- [BC Business Taxes](#), effective immediately, B.C. is extending filing and payment deadlines till September 30th for Employer health tax (EHT), provincial sales tax (PST), municipal and regional district tax, tobacco tax, motor fuel tax, and carbon tax are deferred until after Sept 30. Scheduled April 1 increases to provincial carbon tax and PST are deferred.
- [Delayed PST Budget 2020 Tax Changes](#), eliminating the PST exemption for carbonated beverages that contain sugar, natural sweeteners or artificial sweeteners and the expanded registration requirements for Canadian sellers of goods, along with Canadian and foreign sellers of software and telecommunication services will be delayed until further notice.
- [Delayed Carbon Tax Increase](#), rates will remain at their current levels until further notice.
- [School Tax rates](#) for commercial properties (Classes 4, 5 and 6) will be reduced by 50% for the 2020 tax year.

- [Climate Action Tax Credit](#), a one-time boost of up to \$564 for eligible families of 4 and \$218 for eligible individuals in an enhanced payment in July. Children under 18 years old must be registered for the [CCB](#) to qualify. No other action is needed; benefit is paid out according to your income tax return.

Other Supports:

- [ICBC](#) is offering monthly payment deferrals for up to 90 days with no penalty. [Apply online](#).
- [Emergency Child Care Funding](#), starting in April, child care providers receiving [emergency government funding](#) cannot charge parent fees for any periods of closure or for vacant spaces and must reserve spaces for families. Check with your child care provider to see if they are in this program.
- [BC Transit](#) & [TransLink](#), all Translink busses are now fare-free. Rear only boarding, unless for accessibility purposes.

Need information or have a question about financial support from government right now?

For information about provincial supports & programs, call the Government of British Columbia at:

- Call [1-888-COVID-19](tel:1-888-COVID-19)
- Text: [604-630-0300](tel:604-630-0300)
- or, contact the constituency office of your MLA. The contact information of your local MLA can be found here: www.leg.bc.ca/learn-about-us/members