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SUMMER 2019

North Vancouver Constituent Update



Thinking forward for our economy

As we shift into the summer season, our economic forecast is looking bright. Jobs numbers recently published are extremely positive: total jobs created since our Liberal Government took office in 2015 is over 1 million. Unemployment has declined to some of the lowest levels ever seen. Wage growth is also up – meaning Canadians are, on average, seeing higher take-home pay. No government can take full credit for the performance of an economy. It is pretty clear, though, that this government's commitment to investing in infrastructure, focusing on key economic sectors and strengthening the position of middle-class Canadians has played a significant role in ensuring that Canada continues to enjoy a robust economic outlook.

Our government also came to power on a further commitment: to bring forward an economic strategy shifting the focus from a traditional emphasis on natural resources onto advancements in technology, to assure Canada's continued prosperity and competitiveness globally. Our government has a strategy focused on tech areas in which Canada either has, or can reasonably develop, a comparative advantage. The government's clean tech strategy – which I had the privilege to play a role in developing – is part of this. So, too, is the sectoral approach incorporated in the 'supercluster' initiatives. We have key digital technologies, a Canada-wide initiative based here in Vancouver, an oceans-related cluster based in Atlantic Canada, and a future-oriented agricultural initiative based in the prairies, among others.



Economic strategy is an area of particular interest to me. Before entering politics, I spent more than two decades in leadership positions with companies dedicated to the development of green technologies, and prior to that, with a global strategy consulting firm. We are beginning to see the fruits of this government's



economic approach, not only in the strong economic figures of the past four years, but also in signs associated with the development of key sectors of the 'new economy.' Across Canada, and in BC via the development of companies such as Stemcell, and green tech firms such as General Fusion and Carbon Engineering, this sector is taking off. It is also increasingly evident right here in North Vancouver.

This spring, I was pleased to announce a \$3 million investment in technology for North Vancouver-based Ecoation Innovative Solutions. Ecoation is an AI company based in North Vancouver, producing pest management and yield-monitoring technologies used to increase yields and reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides in greenhouse food production. Ecoation plans to double its local employee base in 2019. In May, I attended the Zen Maker Lab Innovation Fund launch. This North Vancouver-based \$24M fund will focus on investing locally to grow globally competitive technology companies. The founders of Zen – all experienced tech leaders – are focused on identifying and supporting local tech companies doing remarkable things in areas such as clean tech, the Internet of Things, robotics, food tech, 3D printing, VR, wearable tech and related sectors.

Canada's economy has been, and is strong. However, we need to keep thinking forward, to ensure that our country remains prosperous and competitive as the world evolves, addressing the challenges of climate change and the accelerating pace of technological change. Our government is delivering both a robust and effective short-term economic strategy, and a longer-term approach that will ensure Canada's prosperity for the future.

A response to North Shore housing challenges

While Metro Vancouver's real estate market has softened over the past year, housing values remain astronomical; the cost and availability of rental accommodation remains a daunting challenge for many. Nearly half of all households in the City of North Vancouver are renters: 44% are spending more than a third of their income on rent and utilities – 23% are spending more than half what they earn each month to put a roof over their heads. Renters are often vulnerable to rent increases, evictions, and at least temporary homelessness.

I spent time with the North Shore Homelessness Task Force in May, getting a handle on the complexity of factors that lead some of our community members to be without secure housing. It is sobering to learn that so many people in our community find themselves homeless at some point in their lives. One significant factor is availability. The apartment vacancy rate in the City is below 1% – it's only slightly better in the District at 1.7%. Too few new rental units have been built in recent decades. North Vancouver desperately needs more secure rental housing.

In 2017, our government launched the Rental Construction Financing Initiative – a program that provides low-cost loans to construct new rental housing for modest and middle-income Canadians. Budget 2019 provides an additional \$10 billion in financing over nine years through this program – an increase that will support 42,500 new units across Canada, particularly targeting areas of low rental supply like North Vancouver.

The issue of housing supply is complex. Finding effective solutions requires cooperation and collaboration between all levels of government. Budget 2019 provides \$4 million to support the work of a joint Federal/British Columbia Expert Panel to identify and evaluate measures aimed at increasing the supply of housing in high-cost BC communities. North



Shore municipalities are developing innovative approaches to accelerate construction approvals. Budget 2019 aims to provide \$300 million to launch a new Housing Supply Challenge, wherein municipalities will be invited to take part in a merit-based competition to propose new ways to break down barriers that limit the creation of new housing.

Recognizing that part of what makes housing hard to purchase or afford is the harmful housing demand resulting from tax evasion and money laundering (activities which push up the cost of housing and make home ownership less affordable), Budget 2019 includes measures to curb such activity. We've committed \$50 million over five years to create four new dedicated real estate audit teams at the Canada Revenue Agency to monitor transactions in the real estate sector, focusing particularly on British Columbia and Ontario. The package of housing affordability initiatives will address a number of important issues – including ensuring that preferential capital gains treatment for principal residences is available only to those for whom it is intended. In addition, we have joined the Government of BC to jointly launch a working group to improve the monitoring of offshore real estate purchases, and examine issues related to tax fraud and money laundering in BC.

Our government is working hard to ensure that North Shore and Metro Vancouver residents see an increase in secure, more affordable rental housing over the coming months and years, and that we are concurrently working to ensure that the Metro Vancouver housing market better reflects more typical supply-and-demand dynamics.

Citizenship oaths sworn in North Vancouver

Citizenship ceremonies are typically formal, somber affairs that usually take place in downtown Vancouver every Thursday and Friday. However, every once in a while, these celebratory yet serious events take place in outlying communities. On April 30, such an event was hosted at North Vancouver City Hall chambers. My constituency caseworker, Ward Mercer, attended this important ceremony on my behalf – a ceremony focused on welcoming 37 new citizens into our Canadian family.

The ceremony was presided over by Robert Douglas Watt, Lt. Royal Victorian Order recipient and a retired Citizenship judge. Included in the dais party were Mayor Linda Buchanan, a representative of North Shore Multicultural Society, an RCMP officer, the Citizenship Court clerk, and Mr. Mercer.

The national anthem preceded the oath, right hands were raised by all 37 officiates, and they solemnly recited their oaths in both official languages. This drew more than a few tears, as some were overwhelmed with emotion while pledging their allegiance to Canada and then receiving their personal certificate of Canadian citizenship.



We are always pleased and proud to welcome new Canadians to North Vancouver – citizens who will enrich our cultural diversity and enable continued prosperity for our community, our province and our country. Celebrating the achievement of Canadian citizenship with new Canadians in our community is both a pleasure and an honour.

A sustainable future for salmon

In a recent mailer sent to North Vancouverites, I shared a story about the “Salmonids in the Classroom” program at Cleveland Elementary. In March, I was at Cleveland to talk to Grade 2 and Grade 7 students about the salmon fry they were so proudly raising. Then, on April 26th, I joined these students to release their fry into McKay Creek.

“Salmonids in the Classroom” is a program that has been around for decades. This year, there will be 40 in-class incubators in 23 elementary and 6 secondary schools in the North Vancouver School District. It is an important educational tool for demonstrating to young people how ecosystems work, and the challenges that many ecosystems are facing in an era of climate change and unprecedented declines in biodiversity.



FRASER CHINOOK SALMON AT RISK

In BC, it is clear that salmon represent more than just food. Salmon are linked to cultural identity, they are fundamental to Indigenous communities, and they are a significant indicator of environmental health.

Many BC salmon populations, particularly Fraser Chinook, have experienced declines in recent years. Twelve of the Fraser’s thirteen Chinook salmon populations have been identified by scientists as being at significant risk. British Columbians are rightly concerned about the state of wild salmon stocks. I very much share that concern.

To address these declines, there are several areas in which we are making changes:

- 1. Habitat protection** | Our federal government is bringing in a new Fisheries Act to restore protections for fish habitat that were eliminated by the former Conservative government;
- 2. Habitat restoration** | I recently announced the \$142M Salmon Restoration Fund to enable salmon habitat restoration projects in communities across the province. This represents an *historic* investment on the part of the federal and BC governments;
- 3. Improved stock assessment** | DFO recently committed an additional \$107M to improve fish stock assessments, which will contribute to a better-managed fishery;
- 4. Predator concerns** | In partnership with UBC, we are convening a symposium this fall to bring forward relevant science regarding the potential impacts of seals and sea lions.

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

Beyond the initiatives outlined above, thoughtful fisheries management is also a vital component of any comprehensive approach.

Habitat restoration is clearly critical for longer term stock rebuilding efforts, but such efforts take time. In the shorter term, we simply *must* ensure that a sufficient number of Fraser Chinook are getting to their spawning grounds.

That is why, some weeks ago, I announced fisheries measures crafted to protect these endangered stocks. These measures provide for a catch-and-release recreational fishery until the Fraser River stocks have left relevant areas. Similar restrictions will be in place for First Nations food and ceremonial fisheries, and for relevant commercial fisheries.

DIFFICULT DECISIONS

These fisheries decisions were difficult and were taken only after extensive consultations and a thorough review of scientific evidence. The restrictions were mindful of what we had heard from fisheries stakeholders. These measures were, however, underpinned by what the scientific evidence told us is required. I believe very strongly that policy decisions on issues like this should be informed by science. Such decisions should simply not be based solely on political considerations.

While I very much sympathize with concerns that have been vocally expressed by recreational harvesters, I would not be doing the job that Canadians expect of their Minister of Fisheries, and that North Vancouverites expect of their MP, if I were to knowingly allow Fraser Chinook to be put on a path to extinction.

Moving forward, much needs to be done to manage Fraser Chinook in a way that conserves and rebuilds populations. This will be a challenge, and I acknowledge there will be controversy. But it is a path we must follow if we are to ensure sustainability for the future. This is very much the future I was considering while wading into Mackay Creek with the Cleveland Elementary students, parents, teachers and community members to release 196 salmon fry on their journey to the sea.



Community benefits from Canada Summer Jobs program

Summer jobs typically provide more than just spending money for young Canadians. High school, college and university students often save to pay for increasingly expensive post-secondary education. A summer job can mean the difference between continuing one's education or putting it on hold. The Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ) program provides wage subsidies to employers from not-for-profit organizations and small businesses with 50 or fewer full-time employees, and creates quality summer work experiences for young people aged 15 to 30. First and foremost, there must be benefits to participating youth: not just paid employment, but skills acquisition and development to assist young people during their schooling and beyond.

In North Vancouver, the 2019 Canada Summer Jobs program is supporting 98 positions for youth with 77 different local employers – an investment of over \$590,000 in federal funding. While the program itself grades the quality of jobs and provides suggestions for funding allocation, it is up to local MPs to make the final call. Several different types of organizations are the recipients of CSJ funding this year, but my priority has always been to ensure that non-profit social agencies and community organizations are prioritized, creating lasting benefits for youth and for the community. This year, approximately \$400M will be invested nationwide in CJS. It is a program that has my active and ongoing support.



In The Community



Announcing Indigenous Digital Accelerator program funding at Capilano University

Releasing salmon fry with Cleveland Elementary Grade 2s and Grade 7s



With Astra Lund-Phillips in Ottawa for Daughters of the Vote



Honouring the Battle of the Atlantic at Sailor's Point in North Vancouver



Announcing Seaspan Shipyards' contract for 16 new Coast Guard ships to be built in North Vancouver

HAVE A QUESTION?

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