



B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union
A component of NUPGE (CLC)

March 04, 2015

Hon. Michelle Stilwell, MLA
Minister of Social Development and Social innovation
PO BOX 9058, STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Stilwell,

On behalf of the 67,000 members of the BC Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU) please accept my best wishes on your appointment as Minister for Social Development and Social Inclusion. I know that budget estimates have come very quickly after your recent appointment.

I would like to first of all commend the government for its new investment in CLBC over the next three years. The BCGEU has consistently called for a robust, multi-year funding plan that is need driven and designed to provide individuals with developmental disabilities and their families with authentic choices on a continuum of services. The 2015 budget is a step in the right direction.

However, we remain very concerned about a number of outstanding issues that warrant your attention.

The increase in funding of \$69 million for services, though welcome, does also not appear to fully address the current and anticipated wait lists for services. We believe that CLBC is underestimating the anticipated demand for services over the next three years. Given that the public's confidence in CLBC to deliver needed services in a timely and appropriate manner has been shaken in the last few years, we feel strongly that an independent public review and audit of the crown corporation's budget, expenditures and service delivery model is necessary.

Lastly, the BCGEU continues to call for the establishment of an independent public advocate for people with disabilities that is accountable to the legislature modelled on the Representative for Children and Youth. This recommendation has been endorsed by a number of stakeholders, including the BC Community Living Action Group (BC CLAG). There is no provision for such an important oversight mechanism in the budget or mention of it in the throne speech.



As you may know, the BCGEU represents about 400 workers at Community Living BC and approximately 6,500 workers in community-based agencies providing frontline services throughout the province. We have also long been a strong and thoughtful advocate for the community living sector. We would like to reiterate our commitment to working with you and others to meet the needs of our province's individuals with developmental disabilities and their families, just as our members work every day to provide supports and services in the community.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Stephanie Smith
BCGEU President

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cc: Hon. Jenny Kwan, MLA, Opposition critic for CLBC