



I want to start by thanking everyone who has provided feedback, offered support, and stayed engaged as we gather information about the impacts of COVID-19 to communities, businesses and people.

I continue to brief my Cabinet colleagues frequently and your feedback has helped me paint a fuller picture of the impacts of COVID-19 on the tourism sector. We are considering the needs of your communities at every stage of the planning process for mitigation, relief and eventually, recovery.

We are living through both a health crisis and an economic crisis, and I know people are worried about what the future holds. We have been working around the clock to protect people's health, but we've also announced relief measures for businesses and people.

On March 18, the federal government announced a package for businesses and workers. These measures will offer some relief of the economic stress, but we know more will be needed. On March 23, the provincial government announced the B.C. COVID-19 Action Plan, which builds on the federal government's strategy and represents our first step to provide relief to people and businesses in British Columbia.

The B.C. COVID-19 Action Plan has several measures that will offer some immediate relief to the tourism and hospitality sectors. These include delaying several tax filing and payment deadlines for personal income tax, EHT, PST, MRDT, motor fuel tax, and carbon tax. Businesses will also benefit from government's announced 50% cut in the provincial school property tax rate for commercial properties.

People who have had their income affected by the outbreak will soon be able to apply for the BC Emergency Benefit for Workers for a tax-free one-time payment of \$1,000. That is in addition to the new Canada Emergency Response Benefit. As well, the federal government has introduced a temporary wage subsidy up to 75% and is providing additional business financing support through its Business Credit Availability Program.

For more information about supports for businesses and workers, click [here](#) or visit https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/employment-business-and-economic-development/business-management/small-business/covid-19_small_business_supports.pdf



As the tourism, hospitality and culture sectors are amongst the hardest-hit by this pandemic, we are working on sector-specific supports to help you come back strong in the future. I will be sharing more details about this in the coming weeks.

Tourism is one of the most resilient industries in B.C. I've seen you overcome great challenges like wildfires and floods. Your leadership and your swift response to this unprecedented situation is a sign of your strength and it gives me confidence that, together, we will get through this and welcome the world once again to beautiful B.C.

Take care,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lisa Beare".

Lisa Beare
Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, responsible for Sport