

Dear Constituents,

As Dr. Henry has said, 'the last stretch of a marathon is the hardest'. This is true this week especially as we see the case numbers increase here in North Island. But if you are making your shops short, limiting your social contacts, and washing your hands, you are one of those who are already part of the solution. Everyone has a part to play, from the teenage grocery clerk serving the public, to the senior who learns new technologies for reaching out, to the parent who finds new ways to engage their kids in exercise; we all have different ways of accomplishing the same goal. And with more vaccines being administered this week, we are getting so very close to quelling this thing for good. As spring session in the legislature begins on Monday, we are working hard to make sure that BC's pandemic recovery includes everyone!

#### Funding for Community Infrastructure Projects

This week, we announced funding for three new projects in Courtenay-Comox that will create jobs now and help build our community for the long-term. Comox will receive \$1 million towards an expanded marine services building. Black Creek Community Association will receive nearly \$400,000 to build a covered Community Gathering Structure for this busy community centre to use year-round. And, K'omoks Economic Development Corporation will receive over \$485,000 to expand the Puntledge RV Campground for 18 RV sites with full hookups. These projects are a part of the Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program (CERIP), a \$100 million one-time infrastructure grant program, which focuses on supporting community economic resilience, tourism, heritage, and urban and rural economic development projects.

These shovel-ready projects will help restart our economy, prepare for a safer return to normal and create local jobs. More info can be found:

<https://www.comoxvalleyrecord.com/news/numerous-comox-valley-projects-get-cerip-grants/>

#### Work Experience Opportunities Grants expanded

Our government's Work Experience Opportunity grants have been effective in helping people access paid work. In this third intake, eligibility criteria have been expanded in three areas: 1) Organizations can increase the number of participants

to whom they provide work experience from 5 to 10; 2) Private-sector businesses, social enterprises, and non-profit organizations can apply; 3) Any person qualified to receive income assistance or disability assistance, as well as Indigenous peoples on Reserve qualified to receive federal assistance, can now be considered as a participant. For the first two intakes, only people with disabilities or persistent multiple barriers to employment were considered eligible participants. Under the new eligibility criteria, applications will be accepted until midnight, March 8, 2021. For more info: <https://www.workbc.ca/Employment-Services/Work-Experience-Opportunities-Grant.aspx>

#### BC Liquor discounts for hospitality permanent

This week we made the change to allow restaurants and bars to buy liquor at wholesale prices permanent, providing stability to the sector and the people who work in it. This change is welcome news to pubs and restaurants weathering the pandemic, and it keeps people employed, while providing better options to customers that were previously unaffordable. See here for the details:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021PSSG0014-000308>

#### Getting British Columbians Outdoors

The Discover Camping reservation service will be opening March 8, 2021. B.C. residents get first dibs and will be able to reserve a campsite at provincial parks online up to two months in advance of their planned arrival date. We are excited that so many residents have become interested in exploring our beautiful province! For more info: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021ENV0015-000315> or to prepare to book: <https://www.discovercamping.ca>

#### BC Recovery Grant

For those who are waiting for their recovery grant, they can now learn about the status of their application by calling: 1.833.882.0020. We thank everyone for their patience as the office works through the over 250,000 applications currently in the cue.

Spring session at the Legislature begins on Monday, March 1<sup>st</sup>. I look forward to a legislative session that moves BC forward to recover from the COVID19 pandemic stronger than ever.

My constituency office is available by phone or email. Monday to Thursday 10am-4pm, and Fridays by appointment only. You can reach us at 250.703.2410 or [Ronna-Rae.Leonard.MLA@leg.bc.ca](mailto:Ronna-Rae.Leonard.MLA@leg.bc.ca) if you have any questions or need assistance with provincial supports.

Sincerely,  
Ronna-Rae Leonard  
MLA Courtenay-Comox

**COVID Resources:**

- For medical info, visit [bccdc.ca](http://bccdc.ca) or call 811
- For provincial supports and BC's Restart Plan, visit [gov.bc.ca/covid19](http://gov.bc.ca/covid19) or call 1-888-COVID-19 (1-888-268-4319) or text 604-630-0300
- For employer guidelines on returning to work safely, visit [WorkSafeBC](http://WorkSafeBC)
- Take the self-assessment at [covid19.thrive.health](http://covid19.thrive.health)
- For seniors looking for additional support, or for those looking to support seniors, call 2-1-1 or visit [bc211.ca](http://bc211.ca)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/RonnaRaeLeonard/>

Instagram: @ronnaraeleonard

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYLQfuaKQV-itCluryo2hQg>

Website: <http://ronnaraeleonard.ca/>

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Community Office Hours: Monday to Thursday, 10 am to 4 pm

MY OFFICE REMAINS OPEN TO ASSIST BY PHONE OR EMAIL

[www.ronnaraeleonard.ca](http://www.ronnaraeleonard.ca)



*It is a privilege to live and work on the traditional lands of the K'omoks First Nations.*

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