

This week marked the start of the 42nd Parliament in BC. It is a short, two week session, to make sure we can deliver more relief to people and businesses, as we contend with a strong second wave of COVID19 and before we are all able to be inoculated with the hoped-for vaccines.

BC Recovery Benefit

The first order of business in session was to ensure that we support British Columbians who have been most effected by the COVID-19 pandemic. So, on Tuesday our government announced that applications for the COVID-19 Recovery Benefit will be opening on December 18. This benefit will be \$1,000 for families with a household income of less than \$125,000, and \$500 for individuals who earn less than \$62,000. There will also sliding rate benefits for families with incomes up to \$175,000 and individuals with a net income of \$87,500. Approximately 3.7 million British Columbians will benefit from this funding, and many will be able to receive it before the end of the year. Click the link for more info on how to apply:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/economic-recovery/recovery-benefit>

Keeping tourism Strong

In efforts to keep our Tourism industry in BC strong the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport has announced \$53 million in supports until we can travel again. Among other things, this funding will support tourism-dependent municipalities with their tourism infrastructure, create jobs and attract new businesses, and support local tourism experiences, infrastructure and services. This will help local governments, not-for-profits and First Nations bring back visitors to communities when it is safe to do so. For more information and how your organization may be involved in these opportunities click on the link:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020TACS0064-002020>

Commitment to Diversity - Human Rights day – Anti-racism

This week we also celebrated Human Rights Day and I'm proud to be a part of a team that makes tangible efforts to combating racism in our province. New Democrat MLA Raj Chouhan (Burnaby-Edmonds) made history having been elected as Speaker. Raj is the first South Asian person to serve as Speaker in any federal or provincial legislature in Canada, and the first Punjabi person to hold the role in North America. This week we also announced that \$1.9 million is being provided from B.C.'s economic recovery plan, Stronger BC to combat racism. Together we are ensuring that the recovery in our province includes everyone.

Housing Report

An expert panel on the Future of Housing Supply and Affordability has released their initial report. The consultations with multiple stakeholders, experts, and the public have been constructive and transparent amongst all those involved. This is the work being done in order to make constructive recommendations to all levels of government. To read the What We Heard report, visit: www.engage.gov.bc.ca/housingaffordability

Vaccines

And of course, we are beginning to see the horizon with the announcements this week of vaccines. Health Minister Adrian Dix and Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry announced that the first COVID-19 vaccine doses will arrive in B.C. next week. The Pfizer, then Moderna, will be delivered initially in two Lower Mainland sites next week before expanding to nine sites by January 2021. Everyone in B.C. will have the opportunity to get the vaccine by the end of 2021, free of charge. Learn more about this exciting announcement here:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/vaccines>

My constituency office is available by phone or email. You can reach us at 250.703.2410 or 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 or call 811
- For provincial supports and BC's Restart Plan, visit 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
- Take the self-assessment at covid19.thrive.health
- For seniors looking for additional support, or for those looking to support seniors, call 2-1-1 or visit bc211.ca

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

Instagram: @ronnaraeleonard

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

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MY OFFICE REMAINS OPEN TO ASSIST BY PHONE OR EMAIL

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

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