



Jan. 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Hon. Harry Bains  
B.C. Minister of Labour  
[LBR.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:LBR.Minister@gov.bc.ca)

Hon. Josie Osborne  
MLA Mid Island-Pacific Rim  
[Josie.Osborne.MLA@leg.bc.ca](mailto:Josie.Osborne.MLA@leg.bc.ca)

RE: Sick pay leave in B.C.

Dear Ministers Bains and Osborne,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the board of directors and 325 members of the Tofino-Long Beach Chamber of Commerce to provide comment on a recent proposal from the B.C. Federation of Labour to extend employer-paid sick leave from five to 15 days. We had members reach out to us to ask us to add our small Chamber's voice to this discussion, due to the stress that small businesses are already facing.

The Tofino Chamber therefore joins the B.C. Chamber of Commerce and many others to urge the provincial government to maintain the current five days of paid sick leave for employees.

The proposal from the B.C. Federation of Labour comes at a time when businesses and non-profit organizations are facing rising inflation and severe staff shortages. To retain staff, many businesses pay the necessary employee tax and other contributions, as well as various other benefits. Adding to the number of sick days would be a further burden to already struggling small businesses and organizations. If organizations require proof of illness, extending this program would also put an additional burden on our struggling healthcare system.

We recognize that paid sick leave, introduced in B.C. during the COVID-19 pandemic, is an important program to ease the financial burden on workers who may need time to recover from illness at home. We feel this support for workers is important and should also remain in place to curb the transmission of communicable diseases.

However, increasing this benefit would represent an undue burden on businesses that are also still regaining their footing following the pandemic, in addition to dealing with many other challenges. In Tofino, the acute housing shortage continues to greatly affect the ability of businesses to operate at full capacity.

We would welcome a review of the paid sick-leave program to date to assess its effectiveness and would urge you to consult with business organizations before making any changes to it. Like many others, we want to keep the workforce in B.C. healthy and functioning and allow small businesses and non-profits to continue to make great contributions to the province.

Many thanks for your attention and we would welcome your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura McDonald". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Laura McDonald, president  
Tofino-Long Beach Chamber of Commerce

District of Tofino mayor and council  
Gord Johns, MP Courtenay-Alberni