

Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

2025/26 – 2027/28 Service Plan

March 2025



For more information on the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship contact:

PO BOX 9367

STN PROV GOVT BC

V8W 9M3

778-974-5507

Or visit our website at

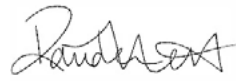
www2.gov.bc.ca/wlrs

Published by the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

Minister's Accountability Statement



The Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship 2025/26 – 2027/28 Service Plan was prepared under my direction in accordance with the Budget Transparency and Accountability Act. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randene Neill".

Honourable Randene Neill
Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship
March 4, 2025

Table of Contents

Minister's Accountability Statement	3
Strategic Direction.....	5
Purpose of the Ministry	5
Economic Statement.....	5
Financial Summary.....	16
Appendix A: Public Sector Organizations	17

Strategic Direction

In 2025/26, the Government of British Columbia will continue to prioritize delivering the services and infrastructure needed for people to build good lives in strong communities.

To support this objective, Government will focus on growing the economy, responding to the threat of tariffs, creating good paying jobs, improving affordability, strengthening health care and education, and making communities safer.

Government will also continue deepening relationships with Indigenous Peoples while advancing implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan.

This 2025/26 service plan outlines how the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship will support the government's priorities and selected action items identified in the Minister's January 2025 [Mandate Letter](#).

Purpose of the Ministry

The [Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship](#) (the ministry) works with other natural resource sector ministries to achieve British Columbia's goals of reconciliation, economic development, and environmental sustainability.

The ministry is directly responsible for the effective development of water, land and marine use policy and planning as well as biodiversity and ecosystem health, species-at-risk policy and program management and developing a new vision for water, land and resource management with First Nations. The ministry is responsible for the administration of water, lands, fish and wildlife while also directing work across natural resource ministries to develop solutions to sector-wide challenges in permitting, policy, data and technology and improving the management of cumulative effects. The ministry is the lead on flood, drought, landslide and dams and dikes.

To do this work the ministry is accountable for all or key parts of the [Creston Valley Wildlife Act](#), [Dike Maintenance Act](#), [Drainage Ditch and Dike Act](#), [Environment and Land Use Act](#), [Flathead Watershed Area Conservation Act](#), [Forest and Range Practices Act](#), [Land Act](#), [Land Title Act](#), [Libby Dam Reservoir Act](#), [Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing Act](#), [Ministry of Environment Act](#), [Ministry of Forests and Range Act](#), [Muskwa-Kechika Management Area Act](#), [Skagit Environmental Enhancement Act](#), [Water Protection Act](#), [Water Sustainability Act](#), [Water Users' Communities Act](#), [Water Utility Act](#) and [Wildlife Act](#).

Economic Statement

B.C.'s economy experienced moderate growth last year amid relatively high interest rates, persistent price pressures and ongoing global economic uncertainty. The labour market ended the year on a positive note, supported by high immigration and strong population growth. Inflation in B.C. continued to moderate as the price growth of goods eased, while inflation for

services remained elevated. Consumer spending and home sales activity were weaker for most of 2024 in the wake of still elevated interest rates and high prices. Subdued global demand and lower prices for key commodities led to a decline in the value of the province's merchandise exports in 2024. Meanwhile, B.C. homebuilding activity remained relatively strong following record high housing starts in 2023.

The Economic Forecast Council (EFC) estimates that B.C. real GDP rose by 1.2 per cent in 2024. In the near-term, the EFC expects B.C.'s economy to grow by 1.8 per cent in 2025 and 1.9 per cent in 2026, in line with the national average. For Canada, the EFC estimates growth of 1.4 per cent in 2024 and projects national real GDP growth of 1.8 per cent in 2025 and 1.9 per cent in 2026. These projections do not fully include the impact of the evolving U.S. tariff situation.

Restrictive global trade policies, particularly potential U.S. tariffs, pose a risk to the outlook and there is uncertainty over the degree and timing of impacts on B.C.'s economy, and among the province's trading partners. Other risks include lower population growth due to changes to federal immigration policy, as well as the potential for renewed price pressures leading to interest rates remaining elevated for longer, weaker global demand, and commodity market volatility.

Performance Planning

The Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship is accountable for integrated land and natural resource management, including objective setting for land and marine environments, effectively managing cumulative effects, and advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, environmental sustainability, and economic growth.

Goal 1: First Nations and the provincial government are partners in effective stewardship of water, land and natural resources

The ministry will work with First Nations to build a vision for co-management on the land base that embraces and reflects First Nations, public, industry and stakeholder interests, shared decision-making, and builds an approach for co-management of land and natural resources that will ensure effective management now and in the future.

Objective 1.1: Strengthen Partnerships and Advance Engagement with First Nations in the Stewardship of B.C.'s Natural Resource Values.

The ministry will develop a path forward with First Nations through partnerships and engagement, which includes engagement with sector industries, stakeholders and communities, continued development of sector strategies and plans, the alignment of natural resource sector laws and the development of tools and supports.

Key Strategies

- Co-develop with First Nations, the options for policies, programs, legislation, decision-making models, and agreements that advance a co-managed water, land, and resource management system in a manner consistent with the Declaration Act.
- Work with First Nations to co-develop a vision for stewardship, including natural resources co-management and shared decision-making to protect environmental and cultural values and to provide for a balance of economic opportunities.
- Continue working with First Nations to co-develop an integrated approach that supports Indigenous stewardship and guardian activities, including training and expanding the Collaborative Indigenous Stewardship Framework.
- Support the B.C.-First Nations Water Table as an enduring mechanism for leadership on watershed governance, and water policy and legislation.
- Work strategically with First Nation political and technical organizations such as the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) and Alliance of BC Modern Treaty Nations, to advance initiatives in a manner consistent with the Declaration Act, including the Tripartite Framework Agreement on Nature Conservation.
- Continue collaboration with the First Nations-B.C. Wildlife Stewardship and Habitat Conservation Forum to support the implementation of the [Together for Wildlife \(T4W\) Strategy](#), and related programs and initiatives, to advance wildlife stewardship in partnerships with First Nations.
- Advance existing and new policy, plans, legislation and business processes under the Cumulative Effects Framework that better position the province and First Nations, working together, to manage the cumulative impacts of industrial development and ensure British Columbia's lands and waters are managed sustainably for generations to come.
- Implement the [Guardians and Stewardship Training Initiative](#) to support and enhance capacity of First Nations to partner with B.C. in stewardship.

Objective 1.2: Advance and modernize Land Use Planning (LUP) for sustainable natural resource management.

Land use planning sets the strategic direction to guide sustainable resource stewardship, including current priority on critical metal and mineral development, and management of provincial public land and waters that meet economic, environmental, social, and cultural objectives. Modernized land use planning is led by the B.C. government in partnership with First Nations and includes the engagement of communities, local governments, industry, and other parties. Land use planning, in this manner, will help to achieve our provincial commitment to protect 30% of lands and waters by 2030 and creates economic growth and opportunity in regions.

Key Strategies

- Continue to modernize and advance development of the land use planning program and policies in partnership with First Nations that ensures a transparent process that engages and involves local government, industry, and the public. Key policies to be advanced include providing guidance on how to integrate climate change in a land use planning process, and guidance on understanding a co-governance approach in planning as well as seek opportunities to optimize the positive economic benefits of conservation efforts.
- The ministry will continue to partner with First Nations to develop modern plans that set long term land use objectives and direction for stewardship, advance reconciliation, co-management and shared decision making with First Nations, and create increased predictability for economic activities.
- Coordinate land use planning priorities with other land and water stewardship initiatives, to maximize data, information, and opportunities to identify strategic direction that is responsive to climate change, species-at-risk management, wildfires, floods, and drought.

Objective 1.3: Achieve meaningful and tangible reconciliation through the transfer of agreed-upon land

Over 95% of British Columbia's land is provincial Crown land, much of it subject to inherent Aboriginal rights and title, which limits its full economic potential. Returning land to First Nations – whether through treaties or agreements – is essential for fostering economic opportunities, cultural preservation, and self-determination, all of which improve community well-being. This objective is central to advancing reconciliation, as land ownership lays the foundation for lasting partnerships and shared prosperity.

Key Strategies

- The ministry will continue to work with the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation to expedite the transfer of agreed-upon lands to First Nations through the implementation of land-based reconciliation agreements recognizing the potential benefit of land transfers to enhancing First Nation community and economic development.
- Enhance the efficiency of land-based negotiation and implementation through, impactful legislative, policy, and systems change.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
1.1 Number of Forum partnerships that support trusted integrated resource management	16	18	20	20

Data source: Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

Performance Measure	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
1.2 Land parcels transferred	104	179	222	272

Data source: Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

Goal 2: British Columbia is a global leader in stewarding water, land and resources

The ministry is providing leadership in halting and reversing biodiversity loss and ensuring ecosystem health as part of implementing the recommendations of the Old Growth Strategic Review, implementing Together for Wildlife, and improving species-at-risk recovery. B.C. has committed to the international target of effectively protecting 30% of the province by 2030. Modernized land use planning, undertaken with First Nations, will help to identify areas where environmental values are affirmed through protection and sustainable economic opportunities. The [Conservation Lands Program](#), and regulatory actions taken to prioritize biodiversity and ecosystem values (e.g., establishing Wildlife Management or Wildlife Habitat Areas) will complement both large-scale land use and forest landscape planning. The ministry is also focusing on strengthening research and monitoring efforts to ensure that land and water plans reflect current conditions and consider the changing climate, as well as the effectiveness in supporting habitat and population objectives.

Objective 2.1: Improve stewardship of land and water to enhance wildlife management and biodiversity

Through expertise and partnership, the ministry identifies opportunities to conserve, manage and protect land, water and biodiversity in B.C. to uphold our responsibility to, and preserve opportunities for, future generations of British Columbians. These efforts result in improved habitat for wildlife and fish, while also realizing additional co-benefits including the restoration of forests impacted by wildfire and pests, increased carbon sequestration, outdoor recreation, and sustainable use of fish and wildlife to name a few. Collectively, these outcomes are foundational to long-term community and economic well-being. This objective highlights the

effectiveness of ministry management activity to conserve, maintain and restore wildlife and fish populations and habitat. The ministry will collaborate with internal and external partners to develop and improve relationships, agreements, and strategies that enhance wildlife stewardship and biodiversity outcomes.

Key Strategies

- Ensure the highest environmental standards are met through improved legislation, policies, standards and guidelines, and monitoring.
- Work in partnership with the First Nations Leadership Council and the federal government to implement the Tripartite Framework Agreement on Nature Conservation to achieve substantial progress toward halting and reversing biodiversity loss, increasing landscape resilience to climate change, and safeguarding the long-term health of communities and diversified economies.
- Implement the Together for Wildlife Strategy with the advice of the Minister's Wildlife Advisory Council and the First Nations-B.C. Wildlife Stewardship and Habitat Conservation Forum in partnership with wildlife organizations, First Nations, rural communities, neighbouring jurisdictions, and the public.
- Together with First Nations, key interested parties, other B.C. ministries and program areas, plan and deliver key actions to advance areas for conservation securement, restoration, habitat enhancement, and take actions to stabilize or recover fish and wildlife populations, including species-at-risk.
- Advance strategies and actions that optimize biodiversity and ecosystem health, the positive economic benefits of conservation efforts, and sustainable use opportunities including providing a diversity or world class angling, hunting, trapping, guiding and viewing opportunities.
- Improve communications and share information that inspires British Columbians' connection to nature, and transparently report on progress.
- Connect the systems, tools and people to the transformative work taking place across the natural resource sector and increase the province's ability to manage for cumulative effects through integrated, traditional knowledge, science-based land, aquatic, resource, and geographic data.

Objective 2.2: Improve water stewardship and security

British Columbians depend on healthy watersheds to supply water security for drinking, washing, cooking, growing our food, and recreation. Small businesses and industries rely on water to support economic opportunities and growth. Water is essential for aquatic life and sustaining our fisheries. Importantly, water has vital sustenance, cultural, and spiritual significance for Indigenous Peoples that are enshrined in Indigenous laws. The ministry partners with First Nations and works with other interested parties to develop strategies and policies, plan, set objectives and invest in accessible information and digital services that guide water stewardship.

Key Strategies

- Enhance water and watershed security by collaborating with First Nations, the B.C. First Nations Water Table, and other interested parties to finalize the Watershed Security Strategy and initiate actions that support the prioritization of local water issues.
- Lead the collaborative design and implementation of key actions to improve our drinking water protection and drought resilience. Actions will focus on building greater accountability across responsible agencies, defensible surface and groundwater risk assessments, enhanced science and digital services, and evidence-based policies and pathways to solutions.
- Implement a water planning program in collaboration with First Nations, by advancing watershed planning, governance and objective setting that is supported by strong technical assessments and policy development.

Objective 2.3: Advance permitting solutions that increases predictability, transparency and public trust in the permitting regime

Government-issued permits are critical components to advancing government priorities, including a sustainable clean economy, resiliency and strengthen opportunities in the province. The ministry is responsible for water, land, and fish and wildlife permits, all of which support opportunities to gather data and mitigate risks in the management of these resources. This work aligns to strategic work the ministry is leading across priority projects to address provincial priorities such as electrification, housing, connectivity, and positions the ministry to scale these solutions across other priorities, sectors and processes, while maintaining high environmental standards.

Key Strategies

- Continue focus on housing, connectivity and other priority projects such as mining and clean energy to fast-track results while continuing to build scalable policy frameworks and solutions that advance towards substantive, long-term changes for all natural resource authorizations.
- Taking a risk-based approach to reduce land and water application backlogs by developing strategic shifts and systems processes to address low risk authorizations such as restoration and wildfire risk mitigations.
- Reduce permitting backlogs across the natural resource sector through legislative, policy and systems changes.
- Utilize deemed authorizations and delegations to reduce backlog and number of new authorizations requiring decision.
- Utilize professional reliance models more effectively where appropriate through clear standards and effective monitoring, compliance and enforcement.

Objective 2.4: Advance actions that reduce risk and increase community resiliency in response to increasing natural hazards

The Province constantly strives to reduce the risk of natural hazards impacting the lives of British Columbians. With the diverse range of geography and climate in British Columbia, water availability differs throughout the province and varies throughout the seasons. Natural hazards, such as floods, drought or landslides, pose risks to the health of the environment, communities and the economy. There are about 1,900 regulated dams that provide electricity, irrigation and flood control for the people of B.C. Also, failures of dams can be disastrous for people, the environment and property. The ministry works in partnership with the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR), other natural resource ministries, First Nations, and local authorities, to ensure there is a collaborative approach on the actions to mitigate the risk for all British Columbians.

Key Strategies:

- Continue to enhance the province's flood resilience in alignment with the B.C. Flood Strategy, collaborating with partner ministries to effectively support communities in implementing best practices and infrastructure for flood resilience.
- Advance provincially coordinated floodplain mapping by facilitating connections among all orders of government and building upon current investments to provide accessible, standardized flood hazard data for communities to contribute to future flood risk assessments alongside local values and knowledge.
- Accelerate improvement of B.C.'s communication, planning, response and mitigation actions in relation to water scarcity and drought conditions in collaboration with Indigenous Governing Bodies, other levels of government, economic sector organizations and health authorities.
- Work with water users including industry, the agricultural sector, communities, First Nations and the public to strengthen resiliency to drought.
- Strengthen areas of communication, knowledge sharing and education as it pertains to potential hazard risk.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2021/2022 Baseline	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
2.1 Increase the amount of effective area-based conservation of lands, inland waters, and marine areas that contribute to 30% of international conservation target by 2030	19.5%	20%	TBD	TBD	TBD

Data Source: Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

Performance Measure	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
2.2 Complete strategies, agreements, orders, risk assessments and water sustainability plans with First Nations and other watershed interests to improve watershed security and health	N/A	3	3	TBD

Data source: Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, manually compiled

Performance Measure	2022/23 Baseline	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
2.3 Streamline permitting to reduce the backlog of natural resource applications ¹ Note: permitting targets will be set for individual sectors (e.g. housing, mining and clean energy)	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

Data Source: Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

¹New performance measure. The ministry will analyze the baseline data and targets will be available in 2026/27 service plan.

Goal 3: B.C. is a global leader in the stewardship of marine and coastal values for environmental protection, economic development and reconciliation

This goal addresses the ministry's role in working with First Nations and partners to ensure sustainable use of our coastal and marine spaces, marine fisheries, and production in the aquaculture sector as part of the B.C. government's broader goals on economic recovery, rural and coastal community growth, and food security. Supporting these efforts requires investing in the conservation and restoration of species and their habitats, infrastructure, and programs addressing healthy fish populations and sustainable harvests.

Objective 3.1: Address fish species declines

Wild Pacific Salmon are iconic in British Columbia due to their importance to our culture, ecology and economy. However, many populations are currently experiencing declines. The ministry is working to integrate provincial programs that address wild salmon and other fish species declines, as well as coastal fisheries economies. Investments are aligning with recommendations from B.C.'s Wild Salmon Advisory Council and other fisheries reviews and work to leverage funds where viable.

Key Strategies

- Work with the federal government, First Nations leadership, and key parties to continue to implement strategies for wild salmon recovery and revitalization in B.C. through tools such as the Trilateral Accord to Address the Decline of Wild Pacific Salmon.
- Explore ways to continue investment in high value projects through funding programs such as the British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF), a contribution program funded jointly by the federal and provincial governments.
- Explore policies to prioritize wild salmon and other fish species recovery in provincial natural resource programs and further integrate wild salmon values within provincial strategies.
- Support the implementation of actions related to wild salmon within the [Coastal Marine Strategy](#).

Objective 3.2: Promote healthy marine ecosystems and coastal communities

The Province released the Coastal Marine Strategy in July 2024. The strategy was co-developed with First Nations in cooperation with the federal government, stakeholders, and coastal communities. The strategy provides the first made-in-B.C. vision for the stewardship and management of coastal marine areas. It outlines a suite of actions and activities for stewarding

marine resources and supporting economic resilience of coastal communities. The Strategy complements the network of Marine Protected Areas in the Northern Shelf Bioregion and continued implementation of the integrated marine plans developed under the Marine Plan Partnership.

Key Strategies

- Advance implementation of priority actions from the Coastal Marine Strategy in collaboration with First Nations, stakeholders, local and federal governments.
- Support the implementation of agreements that advance the Marine Protected Area Network Action Plan with Canada and partner First Nations.
- Continue to work with Marine Plan Partnership First Nations partners to advance shared priorities, update plans, and find efficiencies for implementation.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2021/22 Baseline	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
3.1 Aquatic and riparian habitat restored, enhanced, or open access to through ministry activities	1, 167,160 square meters	5% increase from previous year	7% increase from previous year	TBD	TBD

Data source: Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

Performance Measure	2023/24 Baseline	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
3.2 Coastal Marine Strategy priorities are identified and actioned, including related actions for the Marine Plan Partnership and Marine Protected Area Network Action Plan	Complete co-development of Coastal Marine Strategy with First Nations	Release the final Coastal Marine Strategy publicly	Negotiate governance structures and implementation approach with First Nations	Initiate 6 implementation priorities	TBD

Data source: Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

Financial Summary

(\$000s)	2024/25 Restated Estimates ¹	2025/26 Estimates	2026/27 Plan	2027/28 Plan
Operating Expenses				
Land Use Planning and Cumulative Effects	39,724	39,917	39,917	39,917
Resource Stewardship	37,547	37,761	37,761	37,761
Water, Fisheries and Coast	22,460	22,608	22,608	22,608
Natural Resource Information and Digital Services	29,716	30,134	30,134	30,134
Reconciliation, Lands and Natural Resource Policy	14,874	14,964	14,964	14,964
Permitting Transformation	44,523	44,913	44,913	44,913
Executive and Support Services	30,105	30,521	30,521	30,521
Crown Land Special Account	500	500	500	500
Total	219,449	221,318	221,318	221,318
Capital Expenditures				
Executive and Support Services	3	333	333	333
Total	3	333	333	333
Other Financing Transactions				
Crown Land Administration Disbursements	6,382	6,382	6,382	6,382
Habitat Conservation Trust Disbursements	6,500	6,500	6,500	6,500
Habitat Conservation Trust Receipts	(6,500)	(6,500)	(6,500)	(6,500)
Total Disbursements	12,882	12,882	12,882	12,882
Total Receipts	(6,500)	(6,500)	(6,500)	(6,500)
Total Net Cash Requirements (Source)	6,382	6,382	6,382	6,382

¹ For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2024/25 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2025/26 Estimates.

* Further information on program funding and vote recoveries is available in the [Estimates and Supplement to the Estimates](#).

Appendix A: Public Sector Organizations

As of March 2025 the Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship is responsible and accountable for the following organizations:

Association of British Columbia Land Surveyors

Created by legislative authority *Land Surveyors Act*, s. 6 (9), as a self-governing body charged with the responsibility of setting educational requirements, examining for admission, and regulating professional land surveyors to perform legal surveys within British Columbia, Canada. Their mandate, "To protect the public interest and the integrity of the survey systems in BC by regulating and governing the practice of land surveying in the province."

[Association of British Columbia Land Surveyors \(abcls.ca\)](http://abcls.ca)

Creston Valley Wildlife Management Authority (CVWMA)

Created through legislation, *Creston Valley Wildlife Act*, s. 16., the operational board is charged with managing the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area. The CVWMA is currently in place to ensure funding provided by BC Hydro is spent on approved projects and activities. The Board provides oversight to the CVWMA work, ensures the same accountability from delivery partners receiving a portion of the same funding, and holds fiduciary responsibility.

[Home - Creston Valley \(crestonwildlife.ca\)](http://crestonwildlife.ca)

Mackenzie River Basin Board

Established to implement the Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Master Agreement (between the Government of Canada, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon and Northwest Territories), which is non-binding, process focused and publishes State of the Aquatic Ecosystem Report (SOAER) for the Mackenzie River Basin.

[Home • Mackenzie River Basin Board \(mrbb.ca\)](http://mrbb.ca)

Muskwa-Kechika Advisory Board

Created through legislation (*Muskwa-Kechika Management Act* and regulation), the M-KAB provides advice and feedback on emerging Government policies that may impact the M-KMA and on potential management activities in the area. The M-KAB reports out to the Premier and the public annually as well as monitoring activities, including resource development activities.

[Home | Muskwa-Kechika Management Area](#)

Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission

Created through legislation (*Skagit Environmental Enhancement Act*) the Commission administers the Skagit Environmental Endowment Fund. The Commission reviews, selects and funds projects which provide or maintain environmental values and recreational facilities in the Skagit watershed south of Hope, B.C.

[Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission – A transboundary watershed in Washington State, USA and British Columbia, Canada \(skagiteec.org\)](http://skagiteec.org)

Wildlife Advisory Council

Formed in 2020, the mandate is to work together to support the implementation of the Together for Wildlife Strategy, as well as advising Ministers on province-wide wildlife and habitat issues on an ongoing basis.

Appendix B: Minister Mandate Letter



January 16, 2025

Honourable Randene Neill
Minister of Water, Land and
Resource Stewardship
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Neill:

Congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship at a critical time for our province. Serving as a member of the executive council is a privilege and responsibility which I am confident you will fulfill with integrity and a commitment to the people of our province.

British Columbians have trusted us with a mandate to deliver for them in ways that make a tangible difference in their daily lives. They expect us to listen and learn from people of different perspectives – and work together to make things better for everyone.

Specifically, we will tackle the challenges people worry about at the kitchen table:

- **Grow the economy by creating good jobs across British Columbia.** We will collaborate with businesses, workers, and communities to attract investments in both new and traditional sectors as well as emerging sectors of the economy. This approach will bring certainty for business, security for workers, and generate the wealth needed to support the essential services British Columbians rely on.
- **Reduce costs for families** including by helping people access homes they can afford through support for first-time homebuyers, increasing the supply of rental housing stock, and stronger measures to crack down on housing speculation.

.../2

- **Strengthen health care** by expanding access to family doctors and recruiting and training more health professionals, ensuring that every British Columbian can access the care they need, no matter where they live. We will also increase access to addictions treatment and provide help for people whose struggles require intensive supports.
- **Make our neighbourhoods and communities safer** by working with law enforcement and social agencies to address street disorder, crack down on organized crime, and do all we can to ensure repeat offenders stay behind bars.

Our commitment to take action on climate change remains foundational and will be key to a healthy and prosperous BC for future generations.

Underlying all this work is our partnership with Indigenous peoples. Advancing reconciliation, implementing the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* and working in partnership with First Nations rights-holders to advance shared interests is the responsibility of every Minister.

Over this mandate I expect you to prioritize making progress on the following:

- In order to protect key services that British Columbians rely on, work with the Minister of Finance to review all existing Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship programs and initiatives to ensure our programs remain relevant, are efficient, are responsive to the needs of British Columbians, grow the economy, and protect our land and waters. This is important in the context of current Provincial budget constraints and the priorities of communities in the province.
- Support cross-government work in partnership with First Nations to improve timing and transparency of permitting processes to support sustainable economic growth, housing, and infrastructure while maintaining our world-leading environmental standards.
- Where opportunities are available to reach large-scale agreements on land use and critical metal and mineral development with First Nations in a manner that expedites permits, protects the environment, offers investor security, and increases prosperity for British Columbians, prioritize your Ministry's role in this work to ensure timely implementation.
- Work with communities affected by drought, or expected to face water shortages, to support community-based priority setting between industrial, agricultural, residential, and environmental uses for water. Ensure better coordination between water regulators and local communities in advance of drought to support effective response during an emergency.

- Work with your ministerial colleagues across government to balance land use that advances conservation measures and supports a diversified economic strategy, supporting a wide range of industries, including energy, technology, tourism, and resource development.
- Continue land use planning with First Nations, industry, and local communities.
- Work with the Minister of Mining and Critical Minerals to enable mining exploration and development in British Columbia's northwest in partnership with First Nations in a manner that helps achieve our Provincial commitment to protect 30% of lands and waters by 2030 and creates economic growth and opportunity in the region.
- Work collaboratively to protect critical ecosystems alongside First Nations, communities, workers, industry, organizations, and the public in a way that upholds rights and title claims, and contributes to long term, inclusive economic growth that benefits all British Columbians.
- Continue our work to restore estuaries, inter-tidal zones, and critical salmon spawning habitats.

As you are aware, we have established an accord with the BC Green Caucus that supports our shared commitment to ensuring stable governance focused on delivering progress and tangible outcomes for British Columbians. The commitments in that accord complement the direction in these mandate letters.

As a Cabinet, we will uphold the highest standards of ethics, collaboration, and good conduct in service of the public, and as a Minister of the Crown, you are expected to review, understand, and act according to the *Members' Conflict of Interest Act*. You will establish a collaborative working relationship with your Deputy Minister and the public servants under their direction, who provide the professional, non-partisan advice that is fundamental to delivering on our government's priorities. Your Minister's Office must meet the highest standards for integrity and provide a respectful, rewarding environment for all staff.

The work we have ahead takes place in a profoundly challenging geopolitical environment. Close friends and neighbours to our south are contemplating imposing draconian tariffs on our products that would hurt both Americans and Canadians. Our allies internationally face governmental instability. Hate and racism are on the rise around the world. Artificial intelligence breakthroughs with unclear implications and astonishing potential are announced daily. Global inflation, snarled supply chains, and war are threatening global economic growth and prosperity as well as the transition to a low-carbon economy.


We have an obligation to protect and defend British Columbians, as well as seize opportunities, in these uncertain times.

The good news is that we have everything we need to succeed, and we will succeed. British Columbia's people – our workers, entrepreneurs, business leaders, artists, and innovators – are among the most talented in the world. We are home to world-class educational institutions and public services. Our natural beauty is unmatched, we have internationally envied resources, and we are one of the most diverse places on the planet. Your job is to help us leverage these advantages in perilous times.

Use this mandate letter to guide your work, and do not be afraid to challenge assumptions, or be innovative, bold and aggressive in achieving the goals set out for you and your Ministry by the people of this province.

Thank you for joining me in the work ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Eby", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Eby, KC
Premier