BC SOLUTIONS

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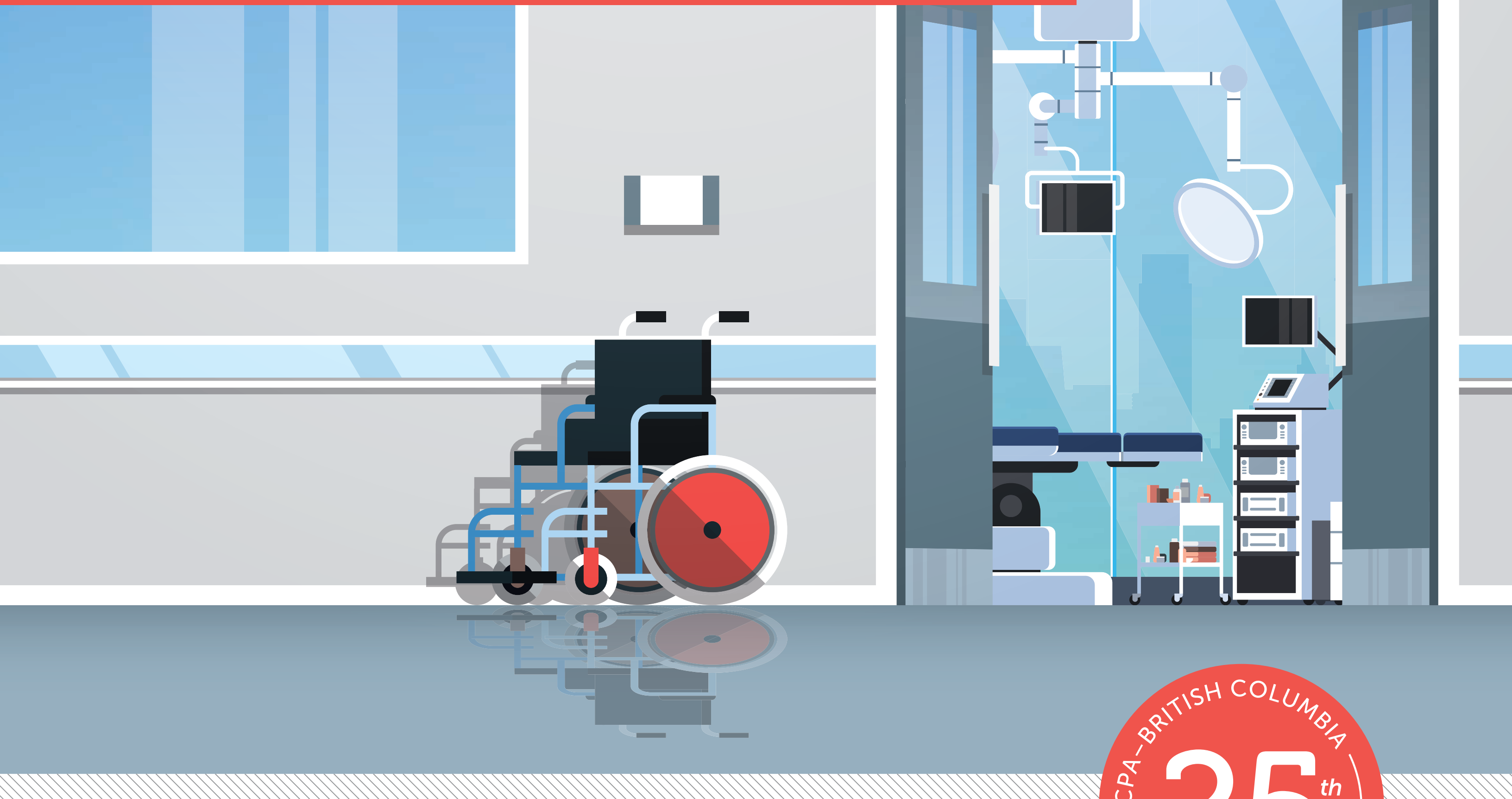

CCPA–BRITISH COLUMBIA 25th ANNIVERSARY

The rise of public contracts to corporate clinics in BC

BY ANDREW LONGHURST

Private surgeries and medical imaging are big business in BC. Over the last two decades, this for-profit sector has benefited from increased outsourcing of publicly funded procedures and unlawful patient extra-billing.

Importantly, the BC government has made positive recent moves to enhance access to MRIs and reduce surgical waitlists in public hospitals. But the numbers show a troubling continued reliance on outsourcing to for-profit clinics, especially for surgical procedures.

These private businesses are flourishing, however, in part because the BC government has continued to award them contracts to provide services while not holding them legally accountable for unlawful billing practices that are prohibited under the Canada Health Act and the BC Medicare Protection Act.

Outsourcing refers to when a government contracts with private, for-profit companies to deliver publicly funded services. Unlawful extra-billing occurs when clinics charge people privately for services already provided in the public system, allowing wealthier patients to jump the queue. In a recent report, co-published with the BC Health Coalition, I analyzed public

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financial documents and materials obtained through Freedom of Information requests. The materials revealed:

- More than $393 million in public funds was paid to private surgical and medical imaging clinics over the six-year period from 2015 to 2020 for contracted procedures.
- Annual payments rose 57 per cent from $47.9 million in 2015 to $75.4 million in 2020.
- In 2019 and 2020, payments to private imaging clinics declined as the province increased public sector capacity—a very positive shift—but payments to private surgical clinics continued to increase.
- Over the six-year period, the largest annual increase (21 per cent) in outsourcing occurred in 2017, the year following the previous BC Liberal government's plan to increase surgical privatization.
- False Creek Healthcare Centre, acquired by a Toronto private investment firm in 2019, received $12.2 million in health authority contracts between 2015 and 2020 despite having been audited by the BC government and found to have engaged in unlawful extra-billing.
- Kamloops Surgical Centre received $15.4 million in health authority payments between 2015 and 2020, also despite having been audited and found to have engaged in unlawful extra-billing.

> These private businesses are flourishing in part because the BC government has continued to award them contracts to provide services while not holding them legally accountable for unlawful billing practices

It is concerning to see substantial health authority payments going to private clinics known to have engaged in extra-billing. Instead of tackling unlawful extra-billing head on, the province's strategy has been to increase outsourcing to private surgical clinics but make those contracts subject to compliance with provincial and federal law. In other words, BC is using one form of privatization (outsourcing or contracting out) as a "carrot" to curb another (two-tier health care where those who can afford it pay privately).

That strategy is reflected in correspondence between the owners of False Creek Healthcare Centre and the Deputy Minister of Health, which I obtained through a Freedom of Information request. In an email exchange, the corporate representative expresses his appreciation that the provincial government will provide "long-term, volume guaranteed contracts which will enable us to make an informed decision on the long term sustainability of this business model."

> Funneling public dollars to for-profit corporations contributes to workforce shortages in our public hospitals and also comes at a steeper price—a profit margin, capital costs and often higher labour costs are always built into the per-unit cost charged to governments.

The pandemic has put extraordinary pressure on public health care across the country, as surgeries were canceled en masse to free up hospital capacity to deal with patients suffering from severe cases of COVID-19. One of the ways BC tackled the resulting backlog in surgeries was to increase surgical outsourcing to private clinics and increasing public capacity. While this strategy was successful in reducing wait lists in the short term, funnelling public dollars to for-profit corporations contributes to workforce shortages in our public hospitals and also comes at a steeper price—a profit margin, capital costs (private sector capital assets that the public pays for but will never own) and often higher labour costs (to attract staff from the public sector) are always built into the per-unit cost charged to governments by private clinics.

Instead, BC can address wait times more efficiently within the public health care system by further increasing public surgical and diagnostic capacity (the recent acquisition of several private MRI and surgical clinics by the government are positive steps in this direction), scaling up successful strategies like centralized waiting lists and pre-screening by teams of health care professionals and reducing the need for hospital care with more emphasis on primary and community-based care (especially for seniors).

The provincial government has made some important progress in these areas, but it needs to put a stop to unlawful extra-billing and ramp down its reliance on for-profit clinics over the coming years.

Andrew Longhurst is a health policy researcher and research associate with the CCPA–BC. His report, which was co-published with the BC Health Coalition, is available at policyalternatives.ca/corporate-medicine.

Note: Following the release of this report, the health minister responded. You can read Andrew's further comments at policynote.ca/corporate-medicine.

Marjorie Griffin Cohen: 2022 Gideon Rosenbluth Memorial Lecture

Marjorie Griffin Cohen gave the 2022 Gideon Rosenbluth Memorial Lecture on September 14, 2022. You can watch a recording of her lecture, titled "Handle With Care: Growth through the care economy benefits people and the climate" at policynote.ca/rosenbluth-2022. The following is CCPA–BC's Associate Director Emira Mears' conversation with Marjorie about the role of caregiving in sustainable economic growth, and her long-standing involvement with the CCPA–BC.

EM: Making many of the changes needed to truly reinvest in the care economy will take time to show results. Are there a few actions that governments could take that would have an immediate impact?

MGC: First, dealing with labour shortages needs immediate attention, and can begin having a rapid impact by paying low-paid workers much more and improving working conditions. This will encourage those who have left care work to return and will be an incentive to attract new workers. The worker shortage is a wage and conditions of work issue that the market has not sorted out. The second requires rethinking credentials for highly trained workers so those trained elsewhere can qualify to work in Canada quickly. This will require a system of national qualification that can be used across the country.

I need to stress that immediate action is needed to rectify the abysmal situation in long-term care, and the sad state of health care in general. So far there is no plan for either.

EM: Your work as an economist has focused on the intersection of climate change, feminism and the care economy. Can you share how you came to see those issues overlapping?

MGC: I had a long-standing association with an international research group that worked on labour and climate change issues. This group was initiated quite some time ago, when the primary focus was on male labour with the objective of greening the resource, technology, construction and energy sectors. I began my research by looking at gendered emissions in male and female work, and the industries where GHG emissions were the biggest which were in sectors where men dominated. One thing connected to another and it slowly emerged that rethinking how we conceive of a healthy economy and economic growth was essential, and the care economy had simply been ignored in this respect. Because so much of the care work is dominated by women, and is in the public sector, it is a blind spot among economists thinking about economic growth.

EM: In a recent Policy Note article you spoke about changes different levels of government could make that aren't just about increasing funding, but policy interventions like enlarging the Foreign Credential Recognition Program. Are there other strategic policy suggestions beyond increasing budgets that you think could make a real impact?

MGC: There are lots of possibilities. For example, provincial governments are demanding more money for health care from the federal government, but they are adamant about not wanting more national programs or more oversight by Ottawa. This is not a way to move forward. One very recent example of how to get federal money with accountability, but also with provincial flexibility, is to use the model established for getting child care agreements across the country. Each provincial agreement was negotiated separately, but with national goals of expanded access to licensed child care, better pay and training for childhood educators, lowering parents' fees and allowing each jurisdiction to meet their own specific goals. This approach is needed to rapidly develop programs such as dental, pharmaceutical, long-term care and mental health care.

On funding, it is crucial to get Canadian governments, collectively, to restore the proportion of income they used to spend on government services. This has declined since the mid 1990s and governments here now spend below the OECD average on social services. Our governments even spend less than US governments. Of course, generating more money to spend on services requires rethinking how funds are generated and rethinking spending priorities.

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How a massive expansion of public rental homes can literally pay for itself

BY ALEX HEMINGWAY

In the face of a mounting housing crisis, what if BC could massively increase public investment in below-market rental housing—and that upfront investment could literally pay for itself, with no increase to taxpayer-supported debt?

While this might sound too good to be true, it simply follows from the basic logic of rental housing development. When building new rental housing, upfront construction costs are offset by rental income the project generates over time. This is, of course, the premise on which private-sector rental housing developers base their business models. For them, building new housing is not a "cost," but a way to generate substantial profits.

Similarly, when governments or the non-profit sector build rental housing, the investment can be self-sustaining. But there's a key difference: instead of generating profits, these housing projects can operate on a break-even basis, with below-market rents.

How much cheaper can rents be for this type of self-sustaining public rental housing?

For-profit housing developer profits are often estimated at about 15 per cent of costs. Government can also borrow at cheaper interest rates than the private sector and amortize those costs over a longer period of time. With these savings, rents could generally be set 15–20 per cent below rates for new market rentals.

Using additional ways to further reduce rents, which I discuss below, economist Marc Lee estimates that a new wood frame rental building with moderate land costs, built on a public or non-profit basis, could achieve break-even rents of $1,520 for a one-bedroom. These homes would also be protected from the whims of rising market prices.

What pressure would a massive expansion of self-financing public housing construction put on government finances and taxes? Very little. Investing in public housing need not affect the provincial budget balance or redirect tax dollars from other public policy priorities.

Several existing BC Crown corporations already cover capital and operating costs through dedicated income streams. For example, BC Hydro's borrowing is considered "self-supported debt" since servicing costs are covered by a dedicated income stream: payments from electricity it sells. Accounting rules and credit rating agencies consider "self-supported debt" distinct from "taxpayer-supported debt," which is serviced using tax dollars.

An ambitious public housing investment program could be structured similarly under a Crown corporation. With a credible plan to cover the upfront costs of investment through rental income, the housing investment won't affect taxpayer-supported debt levels.

> A massive expansion of self-financing public housing construction would put very little pressure on government finances and taxes. Investing in public housing need not affect the provincial budget balance or redirect tax dollars from other public policy priorities.

This is not an accounting trick—simply recognition that certain Crown corporations have their own income streams that cover their costs. This is why credit rating agencies, typically conservative institutions, don't balk at the practice.

Imagine that BC built this type of public housing at a rate of 10,000—or even 20,000—new below-market rental homes annually. If upfront land and construction costs are pegged at roughly $500,000 per unit, the hypothetical Crown corporation would borrow $5 billion to $10 billion per year in self-supported debt, backed by the rental income streams created.

This is a feasible level of investment. For perspective, BC Hydro is projected to spend about $4.1 billion this year on capital investment booked as self-supported debt (overwhelmingly related to Site C), backed by expected payments from electricity customers.

Unfortunately, rents have been driven so high in BC that even break-even monthly rents 15–20 per cent below market levels may still be out of reach for many British Columbians. The good news is there are a slew of ways to achieve more deeply affordable rents.

If the cooperation of the municipality can be secured (or is simply required by the province), one way to achieve cheaper rents would be to build rental apartments on lower-priced land currently zoned for low-density detached housing. Because it is zoned for so little housing, this land can be acquired more cheaply than far-too-scarce sites where multi-family housing is allowed.

There is simply no way out of BC's housing crisis without addressing the chronic shortage of homes overall and the shortage of dedicated, non-market rental housing.

If municipalities were willing to waive usual expensive parking requirements on apartment buildings, this could lower costs substantially, allowing for further rent reductions. Government could also help lower costs by contributing land they already own. And they could structure housing projects to cross-subsidize between units in a building, with some homes renting at market rates to help cover the cost of charging lower rents in others.

Finally, another way to achieve more deeply affordable rents is to create a separate stream of operating subsidies or upfront grants for some public housing developments. The self-financing portion of the housing investment would remain separate under the Crown corporation structure (continuing to be designated as self-supported debt), while the grants or subsidies would represent a separate contribution supported by tax revenues to help lower rents. Taxing huge windfalls of the wealthiest landowners would be one good way to raise that revenue.

There is simply no way out of BC's housing crisis without addressing the chronic shortage of homes overall and the shortage of dedicated, non-market rental housing. A swath of research tells us that adding new housing supply really does help, and that public and non-market housing delivers the most affordability bang for the buck, since it creates new units that are immediately more affordable.

The housing crisis sometimes feels beyond our control, but a massive effort to build non-market rental homes is a policy option that's achievable, affordable and waiting at our fingertips.

Alex Hemingway is a senior economist and the public finance analyst at the CCPA–BC.

INTERVIEW WITH MARJORIE GRIFFIN COHEN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

EM: Often care sector jobs are called "good jobs," meaning work that is stable, well-paid, afforded worker protections and contributes to a sustainable society. We hear about the strain of caregiving jobs on workers. What will it take to get to a place where these are "good" jobs?

MGC: Two main issues are dominant here. One is whether governments are willing to plan for labour needs, and the other is the extent of private sector involvement in the delivery of care. Governments must undertake a great deal more labour planning, which requires thinking about appropriate remuneration, education and training opportunities. Population growth with increasingly older people was anticipated decades ago so labour needs can be predicted. And governments need to rethink remuneration priorities within various sectors, as the hierarchies and silos created between different types of work must reflect the significance of jobs that were virtually invisible to the public before the pandemic.

Good care jobs tend to be in the public sector and unionized workplaces. In trying to quickly fix an ailing system the urge to rely on the private sector must be resisted.

EM: You were instrumental in founding the BC office of the CCPA 25 years ago. Can you share why you thought it was important to have an independent, progressive research institute in BC?

MGC: In the early 1990s the media relied heavily on the Fraser Institute for comments on government actions. There was virtually no diversity in opinion and it was clear that another voice, one that was more progressive, was necessary. Early in the tenure of the new NDP government at the time, Ken Novakowski from the BC Teachers' Federation organized a series of economic seminars to examine the direction of the government and I was invited to participate. This is when I first met Gideon Rosenbluth, and these events were the embryo for the beginning of the CCPA in BC.

Important principles were established when the CCPA's BC Office began. One was that the organization is community-based with major research activities that are community-directed. The other was that research would not be commissioned and paid for by organizations, even supporting organizations, to ensure that research findings were independent from any specific group.

It is especially important to have the CCPA–BC as an independent voice whatever party is in government. This independence gives its findings legitimacy in the media and wider community.

The next steps for affordable child care

BY LYNELL ANDERSON & ERIC SWANSON

Canada is at a game-changing moment when it comes to child care. Historic federal funding agreements with the provinces and territories now support a vision for high-quality, accessible child care across the country.

Affordability is a top priority with governments committing significant funds to reduce average child care fees by 50 per cent by the end of this year.

BC's experience with child care fee reductions to date shows those funds absolutely must have effective safeguards. Otherwise, publicly subsidized fee reductions can be quickly swallowed by large fee increases charged by some operators, and families will be no further ahead.

Rising fees in BC

BC introduced its first Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI) in 2018 and since then 93 per cent of eligible licensed, full-day programs have been receiving a monthly rebate of up to $350 per child. The idea was that programs then pass this on to families that would pay up to $350 less per month.

However, data from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' annual surveys of child care fees in large Canadian cities show these intended savings are being eroded. In BC since 2018, fees in infant/toddler centres have increased faster than inflation: by an average of approximately 4 per cent per year in Vancouver, 7–8 per cent annually in Surrey and Burnaby, and by an eye-watering 20 per cent a year in Richmond.

The figure charts these annual increases in the median fees of infant/toddler child care centres over time. The chart shows the predicted drop-in fees attributed to the introduction of the CCFRI, but then an upwards trend in all four cities thereafter. The figure also reflects the introduction of 2,500 $10aDay spaces province-wide—a small proportion of overall spaces, which are shown to contrast their relative affordability and stability.

In Vancouver, Surrey and Burnaby this trend of rising fees means the value of the $350 rebate for families is being eroded, although it's important to note that median 2021 fees in these three cities are still lower than they were pre-rebate.

> Clearly, stronger accountability mechanisms must be added with particular attention to for-profit centres with high fees.

In Richmond (orange line) the story, however, is more drastic. Here, the benefit of the $350 rebate was eliminated in the span of a year, with fees continuing to climb until, in 2021, they ended up $220 *higher* than before the rebate program took effect.

The story is similar for families with older children (three- to five-year-olds) in child care centres. Fee increases mean that the $100 provincial rebate for this age group has essentially disappeared in Vancouver and Burnaby. Median fees are now $50 per month higher in Surrey and a whopping $300 a month higher in Richmond.

What's going on here?

First, rebates have not increased since they were introduced so some fee increases are expected to cover inflation and other cost pressures. Yet CCPA reports show that fee increases have outpaced inflation, significantly in some BC cities, despite the provincial government's attempts to moderate them under CCFRI.

So if not broad-based inflation, then what?

For-profit sector is driving fee increases

A closer look at the data reveals a stark contrast between non-profit and for-profit centre fees. It's clear that the for-profit sector is driving fee increases.

In 2018, median fees for children aged three to five in Richmond centres, for example, were $975 per month. By 2021, after accounting for the rebate, median fees were $1,275, an increase of 15 per cent a year on average.

However, the 2021 median fees were $897 in non-profit centres and $1,340—or 49 per cent higher—in for-profit centres which are the majority in Richmond.

This finding also applies to the other four BC cities surveyed, where fees at for-profit centres range from almost 30 per cent to over 80 per cent higher than those at non-profit centres.

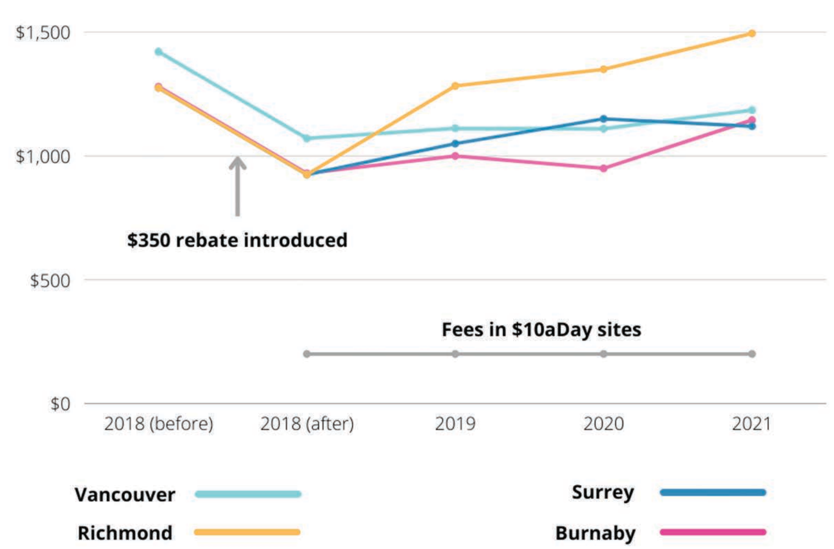
The way forward

BC confirms it will use the existing CCFRI funding program to achieve the 50-per-cent fee reduction later this year. Clearly, stronger accountability mechanisms must be added with particular attention to for-profit centres with high fees. The community-led Roadmap to $10aDay recommendations include caps on fees and fee increases, establishing fair educator wages, public posting of fees and enhanced financial reporting.

The real solution, however, can be found in BC's parallel and growing system of $10aDay child care, where fees are firmly capped and publicly funded programs can be held accountable to ensure that additional funding is used to increase quality and equitable access. Fortunately, a system of $10aDay fees is also the long-term vision of Canada's national child care system.

When it comes to making child care more affordable, BC and Canada are on the right track, but if we don't learn from BC's recent experience with CCFRI we risk costly mistakes that erode benefits for both families and the public purse.

MONTHLY FEES IN INFANT/TODDLER CENTRES



SOURCE: CCPA annual surveys for 2018*, 2019, 2020 and 2021 by David Macdonald and Martha Friendly, CCPA's National Office. * In 2018, infant/toddler fees were reported separately in the fee survey. They are averaged in this analysis in order to be more consistent with remaining years, which reported a combined infant/toddler rate.

Lynell Anderson, CPA, CGA, is a public policy researcher with the $10aDay Child Care for BC campaign. Eric Swanson is a principal of Third Space Planning, a policy and planning consultancy focused on child care, housing and climate change.

Reconciliation in action? West Moberly First Nations and Site C

BY BEN PARFITT

In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission defined the word *reconciliation* as a process of "establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country."

The Commission, which was to inform Canadians about what happened to Indigenous peoples in residential schools, said that in order for true reconciliation to happen "there has to be awareness of the past, an acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes and action to change behaviour."

By that definition, the June announcement by the BC and federal governments, BC Hydro and the West Moberly First Nations of an agreement to end the First Nations' efforts before the courts to halt the controversial Site C hydroelectric project strikes a discordant note.

Both provincial cabinet ministers announcing the deal called what had unfolded as reconciliation in action.

"I want to acknowledge the good faith, commitment and hard work of West Moberly First Nations in coming together with BC Hydro, the Government of Canada and the Province in the spirit of reconciliation to negotiate these important agreements," said Energy Minister Bruce Ralston.

"Today's agreements with West Moberly First Nations are an example of our shared commitment to pursue negotiations over litigation as the primary forum for achieving reconciliation and renewed Crown-Indigenous relationships," echoed Indigenous Affairs Minister Murray Rankin.

> West Moberly First Nation Chief Roland Willson told me he did not accept that what had been announced came even remotely close to reconciliation.

Such assertions, however, are undermined by current and previous provincial governments.

Since April 2010, when then-premier Gordon Campbell jetted to Hudson's Hope to unveil the plan to build a third major hydroelectric dam on the Peace River, the province has painted First Nation opponents of the culturally and ecologically ruinous project into a corner. Subsequent actions cemented the provincial government as the aggressor in the so-called "reconciliation" process.

Actions include:

- Starting work in 2015 knowing that West Moberly objected to the project because of impacts on its treaty-protected rights.
- Doling out undisclosed lucrative Site C construction-related contracts to other First Nations, pitting First Nation against First Nation.
- Committing to continuing the project despite mounting evidence of sobering geotechnical challenges that have pushed costs from the originally estimated $6 billion to $16 billion and counting.
- Aggressively fighting West Moberly and other First Nations in court.

This and more weighed heavily on Chief Roland Willson, who has been elected repeatedly to lead the West Moberly First Nations. He said this in June:

> *The Site C project has had major impacts on our community, and the flooding and operation of this dam will have effects that will be felt for generations to come. The decision to settle this part of the court case was taken with a heavy heart and with serious considerations of the best interests of our community. Our focus now turns towards efforts to heal what remains of our land, to heal our people, and to protect our way of life in the face of all the resource development in Treaty No. 8 territory.*

After the announcement, Willson told me he did not accept that what had been announced came even remotely close to reconciliation:

> *Reconciliation starts with avoiding deliberate, unnecessary impacts to First Nations communities, not ignoring them. As everyone knows, Site C is not needed. To say reconciliation is working would be not developing Site C and working with us to identify better options, not ignore everything we say.*

PHOTO: GARTH LENZ

Healing what remains of West Moberly's once bountiful lands was severely compromised by decades of industrial developments long before Site C's construction began. These included the W.A.C. Bennett and Peace Canyon dams; old-growth logging that ruined traplines and compromised fishing and hunting; and natural gas developments including illegally built dams, huge pits filled with toxic wastewater, thousands of fracked gas wells, pipeline corridors and seismic lines. These developments brought local caribou populations to the brink of extinction and have made it harder for Treaty 8 members to hunt moose.

If and when the grotesquely over-budget Site C project is completed and actually withstands the pressure from all the water it is to impound, it will permanently destroy 5,500 hectares of land within West Moberly's traditional territory.

The province was anxious to achieve the reconciliation agreement because a precedent-setting Supreme Court of BC ruling in June 2021 found the government failed to consider how cumulative impacts infringed on the treaty rights of Blueberry River First Nations' members.

Cumulative impacts, particularly relating to hydroelectric dams, had promised to feature in a civil claim filed by West Moberly in 2018 that the BC Supreme Court ruled must be dealt with before BC Hydro could fill the Site C reservoir. The province was anxious not to see that trial proceed to court which the reconciliation agreement ensures.

Under the agreement, which Willson reiterates was not what he and others hoped for when they first opposed the project, BC Hydro and the province will provide West Moberly undisclosed financial benefits, contracting opportunities and a transfer of provincial Crown lands and will work with the Nation to jointly develop "land management measures" over provincial Crown lands in its traditional territory. In exchange, the Nation has agreed to end its claims against the Site C project. The deal is only a "partial" settlement of West Moberly's civil claims, Willson said, with the full outcome to be determined with BC Hydro, the provincial and federal governments.

If and when the grotesquely over-budget Site C project is completed and actually withstands the pressure from all the water it is to impound, it will permanently destroy 5,500 hectares of land within West Moberly's traditional territory.

And hopefully, when that day comes, the settlement will be so large that maybe, just maybe, it prompts future provincial governments to reconcile with First Nations before megaprojects like the Site C dam are approved, not after the fact.

Ben Parfitt is the CCPA–BC's resource policy analyst.

Anticlimactic and anti-climate: BC's oil and gas royalty review

BY MARC LEE

The BC government's oil and gas royalty review is both anticlimactic and anti-climate. After extensive public engagement the report is surprisingly brief and the regime remains committed to growing oil and gas production.

PHOTO: JON LYALL / SHUTTERSTOCK

The good news is that a more streamlined regime will focus more clearly on the "economic rent"—that is, the value of the resource less costs of extraction—arising from exploitation of oil and gas resources as we called for in the submission we made to the royalty review. Also, the government will end the most egregious fossil fuel subsidies, which we also called for.

The catch is that these rules only apply for wells drilled after September 1, 2022. New wells drilled this summer still qualify, providing an incentive to drill now to accumulate credits to reduce future royalties.

> Nothing in the royalty announcement suggests any serious challenge to the oil and gas sector's prospects for growth, which is consistent with the BC government's continued support for LNG exports.

Even though new credits will not be created after September, there are about $4 billion in outstanding credits that oil and gas companies can continue to use. After September 2026, remaining credits can be transferred to a new "land-healing and emissions-reduction pool." Details are limited about how this pool would work.

The likely outcome is continued public subsidies, but now towards clean-up activities that should be a condition of drilling the well in the first place. This scheme resembles the federal government's $1.7 billion subsidy for orphaned and abandoned well clean-up included in its COVID economic response plan.

Nothing in the royalty announcement suggests any serious challenge to the oil and gas sector's prospects for growth, which is consistent with the BC government's continued support for liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports.

All of this is bad news for climate action.

While BC is taking some modest steps to reduce carbon emissions from transportation and buildings through its CleanBC plan, the government has taken a very light touch with industry. Targets have been set for the oil and gas industry to reduce emissions from fossil fuel production, but there are no plans showing how those targets will be reached.

Another glaring absence is any sort of revenue-sharing or decision-making with BC First Nations in the Northeast. Surely with the Supreme Court concluding that the provincial government failed utterly to consider the cumulative impacts on the Blueberry River First Nation's treaty-protected rights to hunt, fish and trap within their traditional territory, an unambiguously clear commitment to share royalty revenues on a massive scale with Blueberry River and other First Nations would be part of any meaningful new royalty regime.

While the province's review of oil and gas royalties was most welcome, the new framework is overly obsessed with growth and being competitive with Alberta. While there are some positive changes, it will be many years before those show up in higher royalties to the public sector. More importantly, by ignoring the climate emergency and provincial emissions reduction targets, the review is a missed opportunity to begin a managed wind down of fossil fuel production.

Marc Lee is a senior economist at the CCPA's BC Office.

Staff profile: Rav Kambo

Rav Kambo is the Development and Supporter Engagement Specialist at the CCPA–BC. She joined the BC office in 2018 and is a fantastic part of our team. This interview gives you a chance to get to know her and why she is so committed to her work.—EMIRA MEARS

EM: What drew you to work with non-profit organizations?

RK: When I was thirteen years old, I watched a movie that really impacted me. It was the first time I really saw people living without all the advantages I had. From that day on, I knew that when I grew up I wanted a career helping people. When I started working with non-profits I helped youth in different ways—from being a School-Based Prevention Worker to a Case Manager.

In 2016, I decided to change direction and took on a new challenge in fundraising. Working with the CCPA's BC office has been a dream. Not only do I get to meet our supporters—people who truly care about progressive public policy—but I also get to plan events to connect with our supporters. My work here allows me to still make an impact, but in a different way.

EM: One of your key roles has been around convening community at events for the CCPA–BC. Obviously with COVID that has shifted—what has been the most surprising part of doing online events?

RK: I think what has been more exciting than surprising about moving our events online has been the increased number of people we have been able to reach—people that would probably not have been able to attend if they were in-person gatherings. I remember speaking with a donor who lives in the Interior. He was so moved by Cornel West, he called me to say how thankful he was to be able to attend the event. Because of where they live they don't get to attend our in-person events. Moving forward, it's going to be important for us to keep some type of virtual component to our outreach so that we can continue to connect with our supporters across the province.

> When I talk to our donors one of the first things I hear is how happy they are when they turn on the radio or TV and see our researchers or hear about our work. I want to thank all our supporters and donors for the role they play in that.

EM: Prior to COVID, planning or organizing our annual gala was something you took on every year. Thinking ahead to when it's safe to gather again, what are you most looking forward to when we host our next in-person gala?

RK: Months and months of work go into planning and organizing the gala each year. It is amazing to see how everything comes together on that one day, with the help of my colleagues and volunteers. Being in a room filled with hundreds of like-minded people who really care about creating change and progressive public policy is very inspiring.

EM: What accomplishments are you most proud of that the CCPA–BC was able to achieve during the pandemic?

RK: There are many things that the CCPA–BC has been able to accomplish that I'm proud of. In addition to our virtual events, it has been amazing to see how much our media presence has grown. When I talk to our donors one of the first things I hear is how happy they are when they turn on the radio or TV and see our researchers or hear about our work. I actually want to thank all our supporters and donors for the role they play in that. We wouldn't be able to inform people about viable solutions to many of the issues we are facing without them.

Thank you for helping us meet our goal!

BY RAV KAMBO

This year a group of donors created a $25,000 match fund to help kick start our BC Solutions annual fundraising campaign. We want to thank those donors again for their generosity. And we are excited to announce that we met our goal and were able to double gifts from supporters like you who responded to the campaign. Thank you for helping make this vital annual appeal a success!

Some other highlights from this year's BC Solutions campaign include:

- This year, we brought in more donations through our online and email campaign than we did last year.
- Many people gave to the CCPA's BC office for the first time this year. Several of those new donors first engaged with the CCPA–BC through our memorable event with Cornel West earlier in the year.
- Some donors signed up to give monthly. Support from monthly donors provides stable funding that enables us to focus on our core research and public engagement efforts.

The CCPA–BC truly could not do its work without the support of individual donors, and we so appreciate your support.

When you donate to the CCPA–BC you join an important group of supporters who care about the future of our province. If you would like to donate online, please go to **policyalternatives.ca/bc-give.** Together we are making a positive impact.

BC SOLUTIONS

News and commentary from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' BC Office

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The CCPA–BC is located on unceded Coast Salish territory, including the lands belonging to the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səl̓ílwətaʔɬ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

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