



February 22, 2023

Shannon Salter
Deputy Minister to the Premier
PO BOX 9041 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC V8W9E1

Re. Stable public sector employment critical for capital's economy

Dear Deputy Minister,

Thank you for recognising one of the greatest challenges facing employers as you work for the people of our province and the health and viability of the public sector workforce. We can tell you that helping employers find and keep workers continues to be one of the top advocacy priorities for the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce and our community partners at the Downtown Victoria Business Association, Destination Greater Victoria, Hotels Association of Greater Victoria and the BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association.

It's a complex problem that affects many layers of our economy. Affordable housing and child-care as well as a sound regional transportation strategy are key to making regional economies such as Greater Victoria's more resilient and sustainable. Your government is beginning to make real progress on finding solutions.

With that in mind, on behalf of Greater Victoria employers and business community, we urge you to consider the potentially catastrophic domino effect that changing the nature of public sector work could have on the economy of our provincial capital. The proposal by the BC Public Service to disrupt its hiring practices will further reduce the number of workers in downtown Victoria and in our region as a whole.

This decision has been made without consideration to the economic ecosystem that Greater Victoria has supported for decades. These workplace practices were needed during the pandemic, but employers, including the federal government, are returning to the higher productivity and long-term benefits of having employees back in a well-designed workspace experience provided by downtown offices.



We urge you to please take the time to consider the full implications this proposal would have on the stability of BC's capital city. Many family-supporting businesses have been built on providing service to government workers.

The public sector is a cornerstone of our economy and helps Greater Victoria support a world-class tourism and hospitality industry and a vibrant city centre that is a source of pride for the province as among the highest-rated downtown experiences in the world.

Sincerely,

Bruce Williams
CEO,
Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce

Ian Tostenson
President and CEO,
British Columbia Restaurant and Food Services
Association

Paul Nursey
CEO,
Destination Greater Victoria

Jeff Bray
CEO,
Downtown Victoria Business Association

Bill Lewis
Chair,
Hotel Association of Greater Victoria

CC: Hon. Grace Lore, Hon. John Horgan, Hon. Rob Fleming, Hon. Mitzi Dean, Hon. Lana Popham, MLA Adam Olsen