



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
of BRITISH COLUMBIA
Select Standing Committee on Finance and
Government Services

Budget 2024 Consultation

Template for Public Hearing Participants

The Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services invites British Columbians to share their ideas and priorities for the next provincial budget. The Committee thanks all British Columbians for their continued participation in the annual budget consultation.

Should you wish to provide written information in support of your presentation, you must use this template.

Instructions:

Please provide your comments by filling out this submission form.

You may provide up to **three** recommendations (maximum 50 words each) along with your explanation for each recommendation (maximum 300 words each). Should you include more than three recommendations, additional recommendations will not be considered part of your formal submission and may only be reviewed for informational purposes.

The order of recommendations does not reflect priority.

Please ensure that your recommendations and explanations are captured within the body of the submission. Information provided through links will not be considered to form part of the submission and may only be reviewed for further interest.

If you require assistance or support to make a submission, please contact the Parliamentary Committees Office at 250-356-2933 or 1-877-428-8337 (toll-free in BC).

Please note, submissions are considered public documents and may be posted on the Committee's website and can be made available upon request to interested parties. Please do not include any personal information within the body of your submission. The Parliamentary Committees Office will remove an individual's personal contact information prior to posting or disclosing any submissions.

Additionally, the names of all individuals and organizations who provide input to the Committee are listed in the Committee's final report which is made publicly available at the conclusion of its work.

Contact Information:

First Name*:

Last Name*

Wayne

Stetski

Organization (if the presentation is on behalf of an organization)

Elders Council for Parks in BC

Submission Form

Introduction (100-word limit)

Please provide any general background information relevant to your submission (e.g. the work of your organization or relevant personal experience).

The Elders Council for Parks in BC's mandate is to:

- Recognize the heritage of the regional, provincial and national park systems;
- Build citizen understanding, engagement and support for all public parks; and
- Enable the effective sustainable management, both ecologically and financially, of parks in British Columbia.

The Directors include retired professionals from Federal, Provincial and Regional Parks organizations from around British Columbia.

The province has committed to protecting 30% of British Columbia's land and water by 2030 primarily through indigenous led conservation. Achieving this goal as quickly as possible leads to land-use certainty that is critical to a healthy environment and a healthy economy.

Recommendation 1 (50-word limit)

Request that government triple the land use planning budget annually to \$24,000,000 beginning in 2024 and continue to evolve LUP program policies to clearly identify how government will proceed with getting to 30%. Government goals without adequate resources or well-understood strategies to achieve the goals will create public mistrust.

Recommendation 1 Explanation (300-word limit)

Use this space to provide background information relating to recommendation 1 and to explain why it should be included in the next provincial budget.

Making timely decisions related to land use is critical, and the lack of certainty is holding up the health of our environment, our economy, and our relationship with First Nations.

Beginning in 2018, the BC government provided \$8,000,000 a year for land use planning (LUP) while providing \$25,000,000 a year for forest landscape planning. LUP considers economic objectives as well as conservation objectives. Clarifying which lands are appropriate for forestry and mining and other natural resource economies ensures greater clarity and predictability for industry, and land use

planning done collaboratively with First Nations means permitting and authorizations, if aligned to the plans, can be processed faster and at reduced cost.

There are other benefits such as reducing the risk of federal government species at risk interventions and ensuring that First Nations maintain their rights and title interests without taking the province to court, thus avoiding both confrontation and expensive litigation.

Recommendation 2 (50-word limit)

The \$200,000,000+ Nature Agreement between Canada, BC and BC's First Nation's Leadership Council is due for signing in 2023.

It is critical that the BC government ensures adequate long-term funding in 2024 and beyond to achieve the 30/30 target with full and meaningful participation and engagement of First Nations.

Recommendation 2 Explanation (300-word limit)

Use this space to provide background information relating to recommendation 2 and to explain why it should be included in the next provincial budget.

The federal government is committed to 30/30 and is providing financial incentives to provinces to work with them, and First Nations, in partnership to achieve the goal.

Of critical importance is the signing of the Nature Agreement between Canada, BC and BC's First Nation's Leadership Council in 2023, **followed by secure, adequate funding by BC in 2024 and beyond.**

BC should also match the \$50,000,000 offered by Canada's Old Growth Fund. The federal government set aside funding in budget 2022 to support action on old growth across Canada. It is included as part of the negotiations of the Nature Agreement, and participating in this program can help protect old growth in BC and contribute to reaching 30/30.

On July 2, 2019 British Columbia, Canada, the Lower Similkameen Indian Band and the Osoyoos Indian Band signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work towards establishing a National Park Reserve in the South Okanagan – Similkameen region of British Columbia. **The province should take a leadership role in bringing this important National Park Reserve proposal to a successful conclusion.** It would be an important contribution to reaching 30/30!

Recommendation 3 (50-word limit)

It is recommended that the 2024 budget for BC Parks be increased to a minimum of \$100 million or \$7.14/ha which is still far below funding provided for managing parks in Alberta and for National Parks.

Recommendation 3 Explanation (300-word limit)

Use this space to provide background information relating to recommendation 3 and to explain why it should be included in the next provincial budget.

Parks and protected areas are important for: conservation, recreation, tourism, personal health, fighting against climate change, and fulfilling British Columbia's obligations to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples through the creation of Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCA). They also contribute to preserving our cultural heritage, help BC meet its requirements under Species at Risk legislation, and ensuring healthy fish and wildlife populations for viewing, hunting, fishing and associated outdoor-oriented businesses. The Ecological Reserves component provides small areas for research and study of intact ecosystems, which grow in importance as more of our natural areas are disturbed through human activity.

British Columbians, and visitors to BC, love and appreciate our provincial parks with an estimated 28,000,000 visits in 2022. In 2001, BC Parks budget was \$40.69 million. In 2002 that was reduced to \$31.09 million where it remained for the next 15 years. The budget began to increase annually in 2017/18 (\$39.39 million plus a \$10 million endowment for the Parks Foundation) and in 2022/23 was set at \$58.97 million. The 2023/24 budget is \$69.6 million. There are over 1000 protected areas managed by BC Parks covering over 14 million hectares – 14.4% of the province.

BC Parks is currently funded at around \$5 per hectare. Alberta Parks is funded at \$20/ha and Parks Canada at \$25/ha.

We require your acknowledgement that you have read our [privacy policy](#) (required in order to formally receive your submission).

I have read and agreed to the Privacy Policy of the Parliamentary Committees Office.

We also seek your permission to post your submission on the Committee's website following the release of the Budget 2024 Consultation Report. Please note that we only post submissions on the website where consent has been received; however, any submission may be provided to interested parties upon request as submissions are considered public documents.

I consent to having my submission posted on the Legislative Assembly website.

Upon completion, please save this document with your last name and first name or organization name (if applicable), and email to financecommittee@leg.bc.ca.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services' Budget 2024 Consultation.

To learn more about the consultation and the work of the Committee, visit the [Committee's website](#).