



Richmond
Poverty
Response
Committee

March 24, 2016

Premier Christy Clark
West Annex, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Premier Clark:

Re: Persons With Disabilities (PWD) Bus Pass fee increase

The Richmond Poverty Response Committee (PRC) is writing to urge the BC government to roll back their decision on the Persons With Disabilities (PWD) Bus Pass fee increase.

The Richmond PRC is very disappointed that the Government's recent budget has dramatically increased the fee for the PWD Bus Pass. The 0.08% rise in disability rates is welcomed, but it is mostly cancelled out by the nearly 1500% increase in cost for the Bus Pass.

People with disabilities already deal with significant challenges and are disproportionately represented in people experiencing the effects of poverty. Hiking the Bus Pass fee will force them to choose between paying for food, paying their rent or having access to transit. Implementing this cost increase is both cruel and antithetical to good governance.

For many people with disabilities your government's decision will increase the probability of social isolation. Even those with strong support networks will be negatively affected if they have to rely on others to get them around. Increasing the cost of the Bus Pass places additional burdens on people who are already dealing with far too many burdens. To quote one of our Richmond residents, "the Bus Pass was the one part of PWD that worked perfectly."

The Richmond PRC urges you to reconsider your decision. Increasing PWD rates should not mean clawing it back through the Bus Pass program, particularly when British Columbia projects a strong surplus. Surely a province that boasts of having the highest economic growth in Canada should not build its surplus on the backs of the disabled.

Sincerely,

Deirdre Whalen
Chair, Richmond Poverty Response Committee

cc. Richmond PRC Executive Committee
City of Richmond, Mayor and Council
Richmond Centre for Disability

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