



**B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union**  
A Component of NUPGE (CLC)

November 8, 2020

***Via email: don.wright@gov.bc.ca***

Don Wright  
Deputy Minister to the Premier  
Head of the Public Service  
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9E1

Dear Deputy Minister Wright,

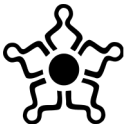
I am writing to follow up on our conversation of November 8<sup>th</sup> out of continued concern for BCGEU members who work for the Public Service Agency across our province and specifically those in the Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health regions.

As we discussed, COVID infections have been increasing steadily over the last number of weeks and are surging in the Fraser and Vancouver Coastal health regions new-case records set four times in the past week. Epidemiology is increasingly pointing to workplaces – including lunchrooms and other communal spaces – as a transmission site for new infections. I am attaching a briefing note prepared by our union's Occupational Health and Safety department that includes a review of recent evidence as well as recommendations for the PSA to strengthen workplace safety measures based on what is now known about how the SARS-CoV-2 virus spreads.

In light of the evolving evidence and the regional restrictions announced by the Provincial Health Officer on Saturday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, I am grateful that the PSA is suspending the return to office plan and supporting remote work for non-essential workers in the Fraser and Vancouver Coastal health regions for the duration of the order. I look forward to working with you to monitor the situation over the next two weeks.

And while I understand that a mandatory mask order would be a complex undertaking for the PSA I want to take this opportunity to re-iterate the BCGEU's position and urge you to consider setting a positive example for employers across the province by taking a proactive approach and making non-medical masks mandatory in all common areas of public service worksites province-wide with preference for three-layer masks as recommended in Health Canada's updated guidance this week.

On behalf of the more than 30,000 BCGEU members who work in the public service, I appreciate the level of communication and collaboration that have characterized our union-employer relationship throughout the pandemic as we work to protect the health and safety of public service workers and clients. As always,



our union is ready to meet with representatives from the BC Public Service Agency as workplace safety protocols are re-examined.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Smith  
President

AD/sg  
MoveUP