

Statement

BC Greens: Pause of Bill 22 the right decision

For immediate release

July 27, 2020

VICTORIA, B.C. – Minister Darcy has announced a pause to the *Mental Health Amendment Act, 2020* (Bill 22). The B.C. Green Caucus believes this pause is in the best interest of the policy and has issued the following statement:

“After a month of intensive work on Bill 22 with stakeholders and the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, the B.C. Green Caucus is reassured to see a pause in the legislative process that will allow for more fulsome consultation with the people who will be disproportionately impacted by this law,” said Adam Olsen, B.C. Green Party interim leader and MLA for Saanich North and the Islands.

Bill 22 allows for the involuntary detainment of youth who have been admitted to an emergency room following a drug overdose. The detainment, referred to as “stabilization care” could be authorized to last two to seven days.

“Our Caucus appreciates the Minister’s commitment to the wellbeing of children and youth, a goal shared by all British Columbians; however, we had significant concerns about the impact of the legislative language as drafted, and the involvement of First Nations in particular,” said MLA Olsen.

“While we recognize stabilization care can be a necessary and appropriate option in certain cases, we were profoundly concerned about the disproportionate harm the policy could have on Indigenous youth.”

In the first legislative session after the passage of the *Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples Act*, this represented an important opportunity to do things differently.

“As currently drafted, we felt unable to support the passage of this legislation,” said MLA Sonia Furstenau, MLA for Cowichan Valley. “Instead, we proposed pausing the legislative process at Second Reading so the Ministry could conduct detailed consultation with stakeholders and address the substantive concerns that have been raised before the bill was passed, either through regulations and clinical guidelines or targeted legislative amendments where needed.”

“When evaluating the challenges facing people who struggle with drug use in BC, involuntary detainment is not what the vast majority need in order to recover and heal,” said MLA Furstenau.

“What they need is culturally appropriate, youth-specific and youth-friendly voluntary detox, intensive case management, day treatment and community residential treatment - accessible and available where they are, when they are ready.”

Background statements:

- [Union of BC Indian Chiefs](#)
- [Representative for Children and Youth](#)

- [Chief Coroner](#)
- [Health Justice](#)

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