



The B.C. Conservatives are Today's Free Enterprise Champions



Chris Gardner
ICBA President

August 28 saw an unprecedented moment in provincial politics, when the Conservative and BC United parties agreed to move forward under the Conservative brand. There's now a simple and stark choice between the

common-sense change offered by John Rustad and the B.C. Conservatives or four more years of dysfunctional, damaging policies from David Eby and the NDP.

In a recent poll conducted for ICBA, 76 per cent of British Columbians agreed that

"everything feels broken in B.C. right now". It's a shocking number, and a sentiment I hear voiced again and again as I visit communities across the province to meet with contractors, small businesses and their workers.

Health care is collapsing, with regular emergency room closures, 1 million British Columbians without a family doctor, and patients being sent to the United States for cancer treatment. Once-vibrant downtowns are now defined by homelessness, open drug use, and random acts of violence.

Our economy's ability to create private sector jobs has been crippled by crushing levels of government hiring and taxation, along with the endless growth of needless

regulation and red tape. And homes and infrastructure are not getting built with anything near the speed that current needs demand.

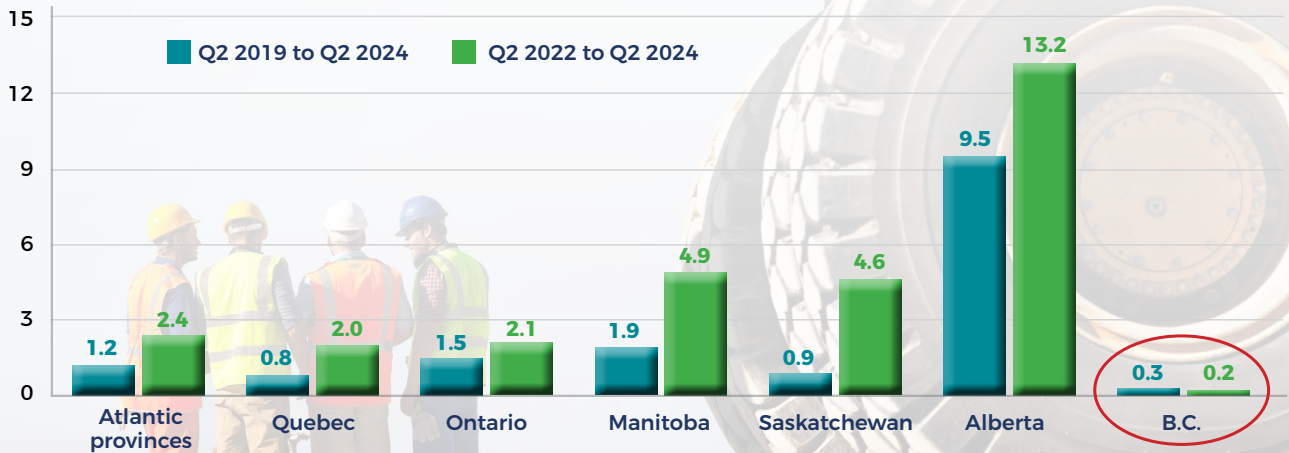
The B.C. Conservatives will address challenges that the NDP have either ignored, made worse, or are incapable of solving. After all, if the eye-watering expansion of government was the answer, B.C. would be a leader by every measure. Instead, we find ourselves at the bottom of the pack in North America.

We can turn that around in this election – and begin to realize our potential – by embracing the fresh thinking and new ideas offered by John Rustad and the B.C. Conservatives on October 19.

Private Sector Job Growth Weakest in Canada, Weakest Ever in B.C.

One of the most meaningful measures of economic strength is the extent to which businesses and entrepreneurs invest in growth and job creation, and B.C.'s performance has never been so bad. In the rest of Canada, private sector job creation typically outstrips public sector job creation – often by significant margins – and the ratio has improved. Precisely the opposite is true in B.C.

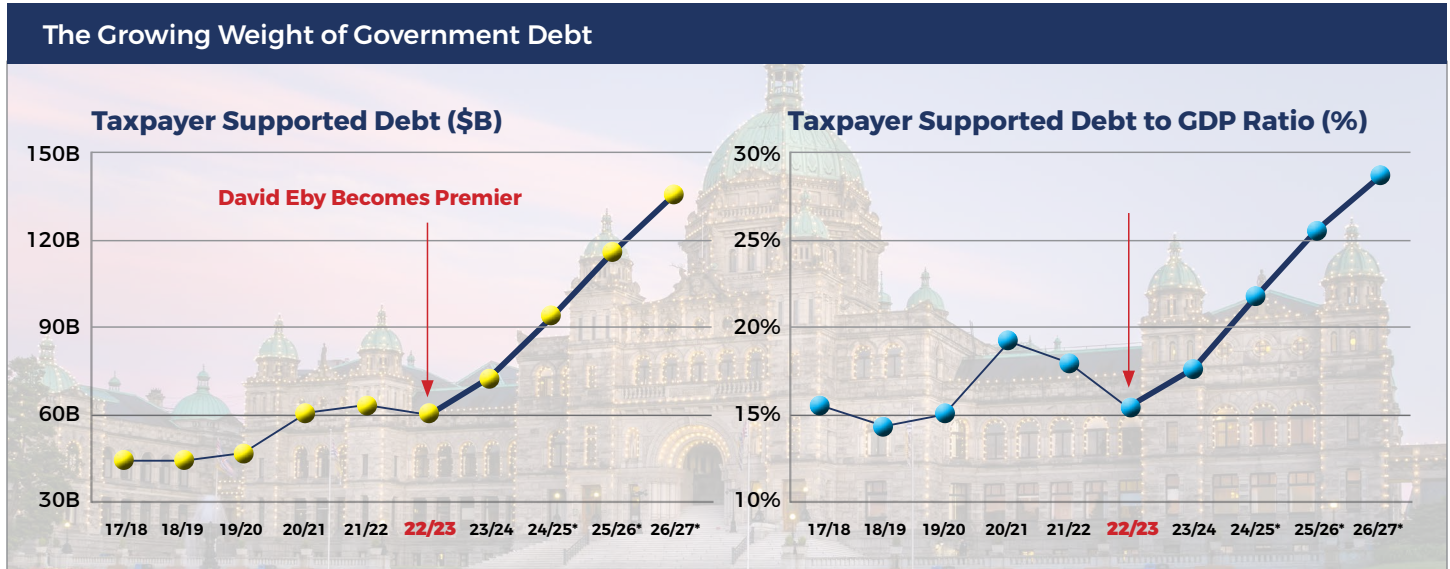
Employees Hired in Private Sector for Every Public Sector Hire



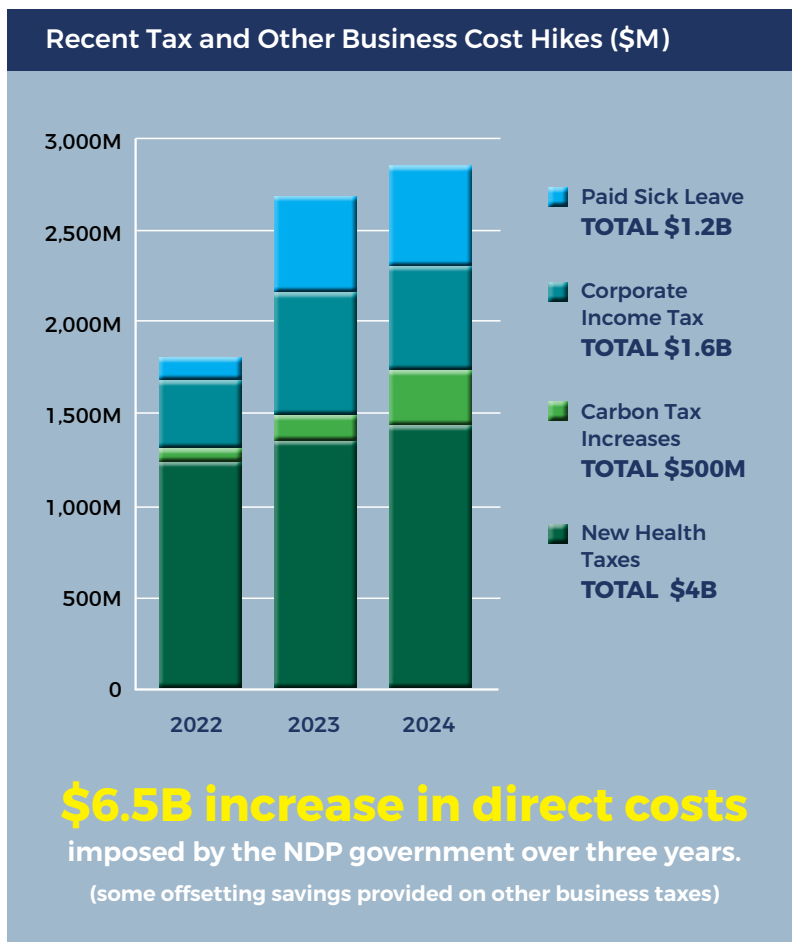
Source: Business Council of BC based on StatsCan data

The Only Thing Growing – Government and Taxes

Premier David Eby has launched B.C. on a path of ever-expanding government and “historically large debt accumulation”, and at a time of higher borrowing costs. The bill is already coming due for business and British Columbians, and our credit rating is weakening under the strain.



Source: Ministry of Finance *Estimate/plan as per First Quarterly Report, September 2024



Source: Counting the Costs: Assessing Economic Challenges for Business in B.C.; Greater Vancouver Board of Trade; May 2023

Government Procurement: Cost Escalation and Delays

- Site C Clean Energy Project**
\$8.8B → \$16B
4 Years Late
- Cowichan District Hospital**
\$890M → \$1.45B
3 Years Late
- Massey Tunnel Replacement**
\$2.6B → \$4.2B
10 Years Late
- Surrey-Langley Skytrain**
\$4B → \$6B
Stand by: shovels aren't in the ground yet

Sources: Media coverage and government materials

The NDP:

Favoured Friends and Failing Climate Policy

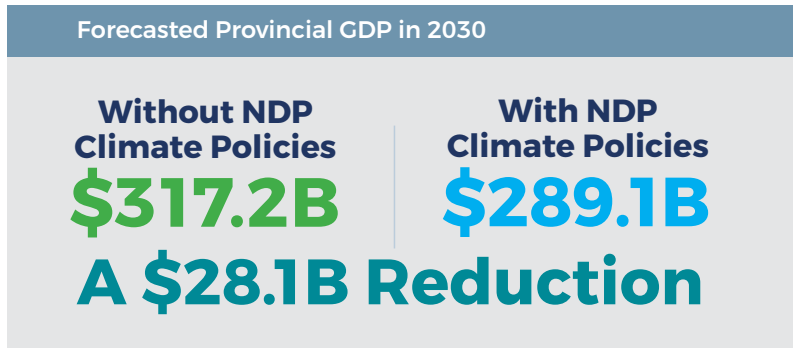
| Tilting the Playing Field Against Entrepreneurs, Contractors and Workers | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| WorkSafeBC | The Labour Code |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Imposed cost-hiking amendments in 2020, beyond the scope of the consultation conducted, and including fast-tracking presumption of viral illness as a workplace injury. ✗ “A manifestly flawed policy measure with no scientific or medical evidence to support it”, as the business community put it. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Stripped the right to a secret ballot from workers making the important decision on whether or not to join a union. ✗ Reversed an important Labour Relations Board ruling on picket lines, even while the 2024 Labour Code review was still underway. |



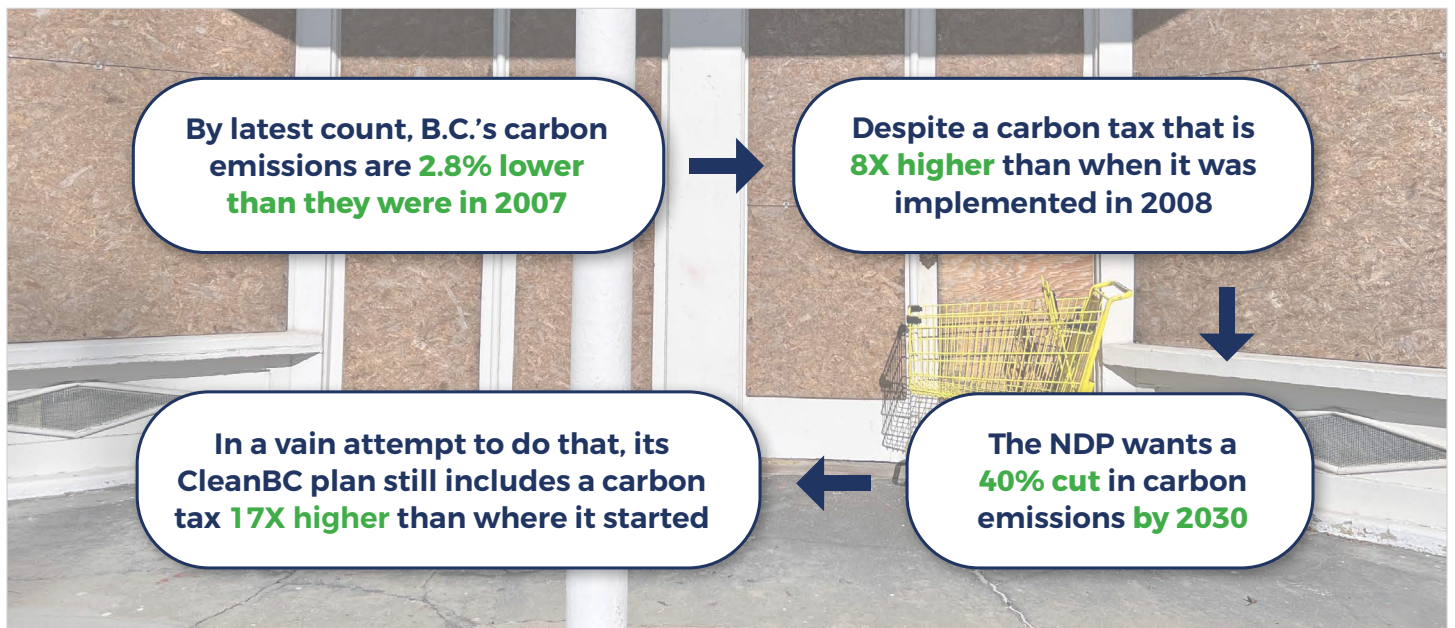
Sources: Media Coverage, employer briefs

A Climate of Economic Contraction

The NDP's own analysis shows that its failing climate and energy policies will badly hurt our economy and living standards. B.C.'s carbon tax has climbed steeply and it is currently scheduled to soar, while delivering a tiny fraction of targeted emission reductions.









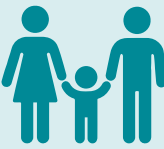

Source: Provincial Forecast of Greenhouse Gas Emissions, B.C. Government, www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/climate-change/data/provincial-forecast



Source: B.C. Ministry of the Environment 1990-2021 Provincial Inventory

The B.C. Conservative Vision for B.C.

While a full party platform had yet to be released at the time this publication was prepared, the B.C. Conservative Party had made campaign commitments across many important policy areas. Collectively, they represent a common-sense vision with the potential to unlock so much more economic and human potential in B.C.

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| <p>Budgets & Taxes</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Smaller, less intrusive, more efficient government to afford the greatest amount of freedom with the least amount of taxation” • Work towards ending the “immorality” of unbalanced budgets • End “taxes on every day life” like new shopping bag fees  |
| <p>Economy</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamline regulations and champion small and medium business • Prevent public sector “cannibalization” of private sector job growth • End the deeply flawed “community benefits agreement” procurement model • Restore the democratic right to a secret ballot in union votes  |
| <p>Energy</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dramatically expand natural gas production and LNG exports, to support global coal phaseout • Eliminate the carbon tax and ensure more refined fuel products get to the B.C. market  |
| <p>Health, Homes & Other Policy</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient wait-time guarantee and greater support for frontline health care staff • Get housing prices under control by promoting new housing supply • Re-allocate post-secondary funding to incentivize training in essential fields like skilled trades training • Help parents directly with daycare costs, and incentivize private sector to create new spaces  |



The BC CONSTRUCTION MONITOR is an ICBA publication providing ahead-of-the-curve information and statistics on the B.C. construction industry and issues relevant to it.



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