



SOUNDING BOARD



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Business Association Letter: Concerns on Scope of Bill 12

POLICY | A letter to Premier Eby and Attorney General Sharma

The letter below was sent by GVBOT, along with other organisations, on March 28, 2024.

On behalf of the signatory business associations and our collective membership, we are writing to express our shared concerns about the breadth of the recent Bill 12, the Public Health Accountability and Cost Recovery Act (the “Bill”).

The intention to safeguard the physical and mental health and wellbeing of British Columbians is laudable and an objective we support. We are writing today to emphasize that the parameters in Bill 12 must be clear and appropriately delineated so as not to inadvertently expose a wider spectrum of businesses to legal risk. The current draft does not achieve this and has been advanced without sufficient engagement.

Our concerns arise from the potential ramifications of the Bill’s expansive interpretation, as summarized in several articles from B.C.’s legal community, including

analyses from McCarthy Tétrault¹, Aird Berlis², and others. Our members have reacted swiftly to the proposed law as well, raising significant concerns as we scramble to understand the legal implications of such a broadly scoped bill. Given the uncertainty and broad scope, we urge the government to take the time to work with interested parties to ensure appropriate guardrails are in place and that there are no unintended consequences.

Some of the concerns include:

- If enacted, the law appears to apply to any product, good, service or by-product (product and/or service), which we understand can create liability for almost any business operating in or connected to B.C.
- Similarly, the Bill appears to apply not only to a product or service that may cause or may contribute to disease, injury, or illness but also to any product/service that contrib-

utes to even the risk of disease, injury, or illness without clear criteria for determining these risks or costs.

- Further, Bill 12 expands the type and scope for costs the government to “other expenditures by the government, made directly or through one or more agents, other intermediate bodies or education authorities, for programs, services, benefits or similar matters associated with disease, injury or illness” creating significant risks to all sectors of the economy.

- The use of a certificate from a minister of the federal or provincial government as proof of expenditures without conclusive proof of actual risk or harm is alarming and without precedent.

The potential consequences of these points could be significant. An expanded scope of liability, along with the related expanded le-

gal and insurance costs due to the broad nature of the Bill are significant concerns for B.C. businesses. These costs come amidst economic uncertainty, low growth, and a rapidly rising population. B.C.’s economy is slowing, as demonstrated by a year-over-year decrease in retail sales per January 2024 data. Inevitably, these costs, associated with increased liability and uncertainty, are paid by consumers and businesses.

Specifically, the government’s communications and media reports have focused on “social media companies” and “algorithms” as reasons why this legislation is being introduced. While the signatories to this letter may have different views individually, a thorough discussion and consultation on the rules governing online behaviour and commerce to ensure our laws are up to date for our digital age would seem appropriate. Presumably this would also entail consultation to

ensure the desired outcomes would be achieved in any new initiative.

As opposed to a targeted approach, this legislation is written in the broadest possible fashion. The result is that there is a real risk that this legislation could cause some to consider alternatives to investing in B.C., raise costs, or, at worst, relocate existing B.C.-based operations. In our view, it is critical that there be a thorough discussion and airing of views on the broad scope of this law prior to its passage.

As such, we request the government pause the advancement of the Bill and instead work with stakeholders to refine the intent, purpose, and language of the proposed law.

In conclusion, it is important to once again stress that we support the government’s stated objectives, which include protecting British Columbians. We look forward to collaborating and finding a path forward. ^{SB}

GOVERNORS’ & GALA RIX AWARDS

— April 22, 2024 —

INDIVIDUAL TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE

One-to-one with Joshua Myers

SPOTLIGHT | Our newest initiative - the Community Spotlight Series

One to One with Joshua Myers

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
BC CENTRE FOR ABILITY



Joshua Myers is the Executive Director of the BC Centre for Ability (BCCFA). Under the leadership of Joshua Myers, the BC Centre for Ability designs and delivers community-based programs for persons with disabilities. They are on a quest to foster inclusive communities where every person thrives at all stages of life. Based in Vancouver but serving nearly 5,000 people across B.C. each year, they offer a wide range of programs to support people with disabilities to achieve personal goals and be meaningfully included in all aspects of life.

Can you tell us about the mission and goals of the BC Centre for Ability?

Our mission is to lead in the design and delivery of community-based services for persons with disabilities. As one of the province's largest disability-serving agencies, and host to the largest child development centre in B.C., we feel it is our duty to be at the forefront of service design and delivery to ensure that British Columbians are able to access the best services possible.

What inspired you to pursue a career in the non-profit sector, particularly in disability support and advocacy?

My professional background is as a Social Worker and I began working with adults with disabilities in residential services during my undergraduate degree. Through my Masters I spent a lot of time at rehabilitation centres, intensive care, and neurology units specifically with people with brain injuries.

From there, my career has straddled the health and social services sector but—with the exception of a stint in a corporate support role at a local health authority—my work has always centred around children, youth, and adults with

disabilities. I am passionate about helping people realize their potential, but also helping society understand the construct of disability from a place of strength and possibility rather than limitations.

Much of what is disabling in our world has to do with attitudes, beliefs, biases, and the built environment rather than something inherent within people.

Could you share some success stories or impactful moments from your time as Executive Director of the BC Centre for Ability?

I have been the Executive Director since 2019 and surviving the pandemic notwithstanding, I am really proud of our organizational growth over the last 5 years. We have grown our impact in so many important and innovative ways. We launched B.C.'s first student-led physiotherapy clinic with the University of British Columbia. This clinic provides low barrier access to physiotherapy services to children aged 0-5 who would otherwise be waiting on a waitlist. Students allow us to increase our capacity to serve while also creating an environment that encourages them to pursue pediatrics as a career – and hopefully, eventually with BC Centre for Ability. I am really proud of our new rural and remote outreach therapy team, which is a team of Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, and Speech Language Pathologists who travel the province and provide rural outreach and virtual services to remote and underserved communities across B.C.. Again, providing access to critical services that are otherwise lacking or non-existent in some communities. Finally, I am really proud that we were just named lead agency for Foundry in Burnaby which will provide access to critical primary care, mental health, and substance use services to youth and young adults in that community.

How has the BC Centre for Ability adapted and responded to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic?

Luckily, we had already begun a digital transformation process in 2019 which meant that when we were forced to go digital with some of our services we were able to adapt quite quickly. The other advantage was that we could spend more time supporting the rest of our sector to adjust and adapt, which as an organization we pride ourselves on leading in the sector locally and provincially. We also continued to serve most of our clients in-person, given the work we do, so there was a lot of care and planning around how to maintain our in-person services while keeping everyone safe. We developed practice guidelines and standards for doing our work virtually and from that came a number of research projects focusing on developing best practices for virtual therapy that are now being implemented. We sustained our virtual therapy capability and have added it to how we serve rural and remote British Columbia through our outreach program.

What are some of the most pressing issues facing individuals with disabilities in British Columbia today, and how is your organization addressing them?

One of the more pressing issues for children and youth with disabilities is inclusion in childcare and the school system. Right now, we have so many children waiting to access childcare because of space and personnel challenges to meet the unique needs of kids with disabilities. There are also childcare providers who are not accepting kids with disabilities because of perceived challenges and biases. We also have students with disabilities being excluded in school, either segregated in the school or class-

room, being regularly sent home or not attending school at all.

Our organization works with families to help them understand their rights, supports, and options in childcare facilities and schools. We train hundreds of childcare providers each year in order to facilitate inclusion and increase confidence in supporting children with extra needs within those environments. We provide millions of dollars of funding on behalf of the Government of B.C. to recruit and place early childhood educators in childcare facilities in order to enable access for kids with disabilities and allow for parents to be able to participate in the workforce.

In what ways does the BC Centre for Ability collaborate with other organizations and stakeholders to better serve the community?

We collaborate regularly with other non-profit organizations, health authorities, post-secondary institutions, the business community, corporate sponsors, and governments. Some of the partnerships we're most proud of are in our adult employment programs, where we partner with local businesses, large and small, to help them apply an accessibility and disability inclusion lens to their diversity, equity, and inclusion commitments. Whether that's providing training to leadership and staff, working with HR departments on policies, practices, and inclusive hiring strategies, workplace accommodations, or how to talk to employees about their needs.

Our Coast Capital THRIVE Program is a great partnership with Coast Capital that provides support to post-secondary students with disabilities with the transition to the employment market. This unique program provides individualized job and career coaching to clients, and then we leverage the relationships we have in the business

community to facilitate recruitment and hiring of qualified candidates with disabilities. Canada as a country has one of the highest percentage of people with disabilities who hold post-secondary degrees who also are unemployed or underemployed. Canada also has a significant shortage of skilled workers, and the Coast Capital THRIVE Program aims to solve this issue by linking qualified individuals to employers who are needing talent and who want to diversify their workforce.

What are some upcoming initiatives or projects that the BC Centre for Ability is excited about?

We are really excited about being named lead agency for one of 10 new Foundries across B.C.. Foundry Burnaby will be led with BC Centre for Ability but will be in partnership with Fraser Health, Burnaby Primary Care Network, and a large, diverse group of non-profit partners who will collectively provide comprehensive health, mental health, and social services to youth and young adults in Burnaby.

We know that 75% of youth develop mental health and substance use concerns by the age of 24 and Foundry is removing barriers and increasing access to health and wellness resources for young people ages 12-24 and their families/caregivers across BC. It will take time to develop the service model, find and develop the physical space, and launch the Foundry, but we are excited to begin this work and look forward to working with the community to make this resource a reality for young people in the city. JM

This One-to-One is part of our newest initiative, the Community Spotlight Series. Read the complete One-to-One with Joshua Myers on our blog here.

Learn more about the Community Spotlight Series here.

The Future of Work and Mental Health in the Workplace

PODCAST | Latest GVPOD Series with host Bridgitte Anderson



Paula Allen
TELUS Health

Alex Pang
4 Day Week Global

David Hobbs
TTT Studios

Rory McGuire
Blackbird Interactive

Carolyn Rush
PwC Canada

Our latest series explores the intersection of work and mental health. In each episode, we explore key trends and strategies for building a healthier, more resilient workplace.

So whether you're a business leader, HR professional, or simply passionate about fostering a healthier workplace culture, listen now and unlock the keys to a brighter future for yourself and your organization.

The TELUS Mental Health Index with Paula Allen

To unravel the blueprint for success in the new era of work, we need to understand the problems better and set ourselves up for success. Paula Allen, Global

Leader and SVP of Research and Client Insights at TELUS Health, takes us through the TELUS Mental Health Index, offering a compelling overview of the collective mental health landscape across Canada.

The 4 Day Work Week with Dr. Alex Soojung-Kim Pang

Dr. Alex Soojung-Kim Pang, Program Director at 4 Day Week Global, explains how a compressed workweek could benefit many industries and professions as employers seek new ways to keep morale up and retention rates high without sacrificing productivity. Dr. Pang's insights illuminate the transformative potential of re-designing workdays to prioritize focused work and adapt to evolving

remote or hybrid work models.

Employee Well-being in the Age of AI with David Hobbs

We've all heard of ChatGPT, but there are countless other AI tools that are having a profound impact on the workplace. As these tools become more integrated into our daily work, David Hobbs, Founder of TTT Studios, helps us unpack how we can harness AI tools to better our teams and operations. With a strong emphasis on a human-centred approach, David sheds light on AI's capacity to streamline mundane tasks, fostering creativity and empowerment among employees. He underscores the importance of robust safeguards in data privacy and security to ensure a positive

integration of AI in the workplace.

Implementing the 4-Day Work Week with Rory McGuire

There is nothing quite like a local example to show how big ideas can be implemented in the local context. Rory McGuire, President of Blackbird Interactive, takes us on their journey to fully implementing a four-day work week and the data-first approach they used to ensure its success. By adopting a data-first approach and prioritizing transparency throughout the transition, Rory and his team exemplify how organizations can empower employees and enhance productivity while embracing innovative work structures.

The Workforce of the Future with Carolyn Rush

We take a holistic look at the future of work with Carolyn Rush, partner at PwC, by exploring the expectations, hopes, and fears of CEOs and employees across Canada. Drawing from PwC's extensive surveys on CEO perspectives and workforce expectations, Carolyn sheds light on the evolving workplace landscape amid technological disruptions. She underscores the importance of trust-building, adaptation, and mental health support in navigating the complexities of modern work environments. [SB](#)

[Listen to our podcast here.](#)

Canadian CEO Insights for the Future

RECAP | PwC's 27th Annual CEO Survey

With a legacy spanning over a century, PwC is dedicated to empowering Canadian organizations to thrive in today's dynamic business landscape. Boasting a team of 7,700+ partners and staff across the nation, PwC brings a wealth of expertise and a collaborative spirit to address the most pressing challenges and opportunities facing businesses today.

At the recent 'Canadian CEO Insights for the Future: The Reinvention Imperative' event hosted by GVBOT, PwC shared valuable insights gleaned from their deep industry knowledge and global perspective.

Throughout the event, attendees explored not only what Canadian and global CEOs are thinking, feeling and doing about the heightened urgency to change how they create, deliver and capture value but also what the recent 27th Annual Global CEO Survey - Canadian Insights, conducted by PwC, reveals about key opportunities to accelerate the pace of reinvention.

This year, the survey examined leaders' actions, the barriers they face in moving forward, and how they can overcome them. Furthermore, it focused on key opportunities to accelerate the pace of reinvention - the ability to adapt to forces of change disrupting businesses and society today. Here are some highlights from our event:

During the event, attendees were reminded of the growing urgency among global CEOs to reassess their business models. With a staggering 45% of CEOs worldwide questioning the viability of their organizations in a decade, the imperative for reinvention is undeniable. In response, an overwhelming 97% of global CEOs have already taken steps towards reinvention over the past five years, underscoring the widespread recognition of the need for change.

The survey's valuable insights provided a comprehensive overview of the current state of business sentiment. Despite improvements in overall pessimism, Canadian CEOs remain less optimistic than

their global counterparts, with 55% expressing concerns about declining economic growth at home. Moreover, a significant proportion (32%) of Canadian CEOs fear that their businesses may not be viable in a decade without adaptation.

In response to the challenges highlighted, organizations are taking proactive measures to drive reinvention. From adopting generative AI to addressing climate change, there is a growing recognition of the need to adapt to evolving trends. Notably, Canadian CEOs are slightly ahead of the global curve in AI adoption, with 36% having already integrated the technology into their operations.

The event emphasized the challenges and opportunities associated with the reinvention journey. Concerns around cybersecurity and economic threats loom large, highlighting the need for vigilant risk management strategies. However, CEOs are forging ahead, with many investing in new technologies and forming strategic partnerships to enhance their capabilities



and drive innovation.

Another key area highlighted is the urgent need to address climate change. Both Canadian and global CEOs are making strides towards improving energy efficiency and developing climate-friendly products and services. Despite perceived barriers, such as lower returns on climate-friendly investments, organizations are recognizing the long-term benefits of sustainability initiatives.

Insights from the event served as a call to action for business leaders to embrace the imperative of reinvention. By staying ahead of emerging trends, leveraging new technologies, and fostering a culture of innovation, organizations can position themselves for long-term success in an ever-evolving landscape.

These Insights were discussed at the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade's 'Canadian CEO Insights for the Future: The Reinvention Imperative' event, presented by PwC Canada. [View photos from the event here.](#)

Upcoming GVBOT Events

[EVENTS](#) | [Register Now](#)



Litigation-Proofing Your Business: Strategies for Safeguarding Success Friday, April 26, 2024

Join us for this breakfast event to gain valuable insights from legal experts, who specialize in helping businesses navigate the complex legal landscape and get answers to some common questions.



Shaping the Future Together: In Conversation with UBC President Dr. Benoit-Antoine Bacon Tuesday, May 7, 2024

Meet UBC President & Vice-Chancellor as he shares the university's priorities and future plans in biomedical innovation, Indigenous engagement, and more.



Critical Minerals - the Time is Now Thursday, May 9, 2024

Michael Goehring, President and CEO of the MABC will speak about British Columbia's critical minerals opportunity and the urgent action industry and governments must take to turn this potential into reality.



Power Pathway: Building B.C.'s Energy Future Wednesday, May 15, 2024

Join Chris O'Riley, President and CEO of BC Hydro, B.C.'s largest Crown corporation, for an overview of their plan to electrify the province.

RECAP | Take a look at our events in March

