



Holding the BC Liberal government accountable

Much has happened since my last e-newsletter update. As many of you know, on St. Patrick's Day I entered the race for leadership of the Official Opposition. Many of you have come forward and offered your support and sage advice, and I want to sincerely thank you for that as the task ahead is a daunting one! I want to assure you that representing the constituency of Juan de Fuca will remain my top priority through it all.

The Legislature has been in session for a number of weeks and it feels good to be back in the House. We have debated the budget, which continues to increase the provincial debt at breakneck speed. During the election campaign the premier traveled around BC in a bus stamped with the slogan "Debt Free BC." After 13 years of a BC Liberal government our record debt levels will continue to rise over the three year plan presented with the annual budget documents. Hardly debt free, and certainly not a record to be proud of.

The government states that personal

provincial taxes have not increased. So I called on the Premier to tell us where we are in terms of the total burden of cost through increased fees and charges that government puts on its citizens with its new budget policies. When you add increased MSP premiums, hydro rates and the many other costs, it makes the 'no new taxes' statement meaningless.

In BC Hydro's June 2013, three year fiscal plan it stated that "The annual dividend payment is forecast to average \$243 million." Then, only eight months later, we find the three-year fiscal plan, (yes, the very same document), states "The annual dividend payment is forecast to average \$410 million." I tried to give the Minister of Energy an opportunity to explain how he shot BC Hydro's overall debt up by \$2 billion. I tried to get him to explain how announcing another billion and a half dollars in deferred debt, and putting a crushing 28% increase on the backs of BC businesses and ratepayers was good fiscal management! No answers were forthcoming.

I also asked the Minister of Transportation about increased ferry costs and severe service cuts. Did his government do an economic analysis on the consequences to ferry dependent communities before they implemented these changes? Increased fares have a direct consequence to ridership. Despite the obvious correlation, the government has not done an impact assessment to determine what further damage will result from higher fares and reduced service.

Unfortunately, all I received in return to these questions was hollow rhetoric.

I have not just been pointing out the shortcomings of the current government, I have also proposed some much needed reforms. Last month I wrote about two private members bills that I introduced in the House, the [Standing Committee Reform Act](#) and the [Parliamentary Calendar Act](#). Both pieces of legislation call for more accountability to the legislative process,

continued on page 2

Community Office

WEST SHORE OFFICE
Monday-Friday
10am-4pm

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COMMUNITY EVENTS

Apr 9 Parenting in a Digital Age. Boys & Girls Club Services of Greater Victoria and Safe Online Outreach Society present an evening community workshop for parents and caregivers of children and youth, ages 8-18. Spectrum School Theatre, 957 Burnside Rd W, 6:45pm to 8:15pm. Suggested Donation: \$15 at the door. Reserve your seat at reception@bgcvc.org or contact 250-384-9133 x203. Info: [CLICK HERE](#).

Apr 9 Awareness Film Night. Three short films will be presented in partnership with the Sierra Club of BC on Fracking, followed with a talk on how fracking affects us, the land and our water supply. The District of Sooke will then present their draft Community Energy Emissions Plan. By donation, 7 to 9:30pm at Edward Milne Community School, 6128 Sooke Rd. Info: [www.awarenessfilmnight.ca](#).

Apr 10 Chronic Pain Management Workshop. A free workshop offered by the Arthritis Society. 1:30 to 3:30pm at Westshore Parks & Recreation Centre, 1767 Island Hwy. Call to register: 250-478-8384

Apr 11-13 Godspell. This classic Broadway musical, produced by Sooke Harbour Players, is sure to be fun. 7pm Fri/Sat or 2pm matinee Sunday. Edward Milne Community theatre. Tickets \$15 for all ages. Info: [CLICK HERE](#).

Apr 12 Highlands Folk Coffee House. This month's music features Bijoux du Bayou. Doors open at 7pm, entertainment starts at 7:30pm with an "open mike" that begins the evening. Admission \$5 (or as you can afford) includes a cup of coffee or tea and goodies. Caleb Pike House, 1589 Millstream Rd. Info: [CLICK HERE](#).

continued on page 2

Accountable *from page 1*

and allows for MLAs to be more productive in the jobs they were voted in to do.

More recently, I introduced another piece of legislation – the [Hydro Affordability Act](#). This legislation would give the BC Utilities Commission the authority to require BC Hydro to offer a discounted lifeline rate in order to maintain the affordability of energy for low-income British Columbians. To qualify for a lifeline rate, families or individuals would have to demonstrate their need based on household income and number of persons residing in the household. Those struggling to provide the basic necessities for their families should not be forced to decide between feeding their families and keeping the heat on. With this legislation, the BC Liberal government will have

an opportunity, at a minimum, to do what’s right and bring in protective measures that will stop low-income families from falling further behind.

By now, your hydro rates will have begun their steep 28% climb on April 1st, with a 9% rate increase. Yet another impact on your dollar that many will find won’t be able to stretch far enough. Therefore, my colleagues and I launched a webpage where families and businesses can share their stories about how the hydro rates will impact them. It is important to hear from those most affected by these rate increases so we can hold the BC Liberal government accountable for their mismanagement of BC Hydro. [CLICK HERE](#) to go online and share your story.

*John Horgan, MLA Juan de Fuca
www.johnhorgan.ca*

Boys & Girls Club Services of Greater Victoria

Did you know that the Boys & Girls Clubs offer a full continuum of programs that respond to specific needs of youth and their families in Greater Victoria?

These programs tackle a broad range of critical issues facing young people and their families today. They help them overcome barriers, enhance their lives and empower them to reach their full potential.

[CLICK HERE](#) to check out their community workshops, parenting programs and much more.

Langford residents vote on recreation options

On March 29th the City of Langford hosted a ‘Recreation Open House’ where residents could have an opportunity to vote on what recreational facilities they’d like to see in Langford’s future.

The Eagle Ridge Centre was packed with residents who were eagerly sticking markers on their favourite amenities. John voted for one of his favourites, a cultural centre with a performing arts centre and outdoor amphitheatre and stage.



COMMUNITY EVENTS

Apr 12 8th Annual Family Arts Fair. Family activities including music, dance, crafts and visual arts, interactive demos and workshops. In partnership with the District of Sooke & British Columbia Arts Council. From 9am to 12:30pm. SEAPARC Leisure Centre, 2168 Phillips Rd. Info: [CLICK HERE](#).

Apr 12 Earth Day at Westshore Town Centre. Learn how to be environmentally responsible with banner painting, recycled crafts, tree seedlings and a free children’s garden kit (while supplies last). There will also be a variety of items accepted for recycling. 10am to 4pm. Info and a list of goods accepted. Info: [CLICK HERE](#).

Apr 20 Easter Egg Hunt. There will be egg hunts for children at different times, for different ages, along with a bouncy castle, inflatable football, face painting, craft tables and much more. Bring a non-perishable food item to donate and be entered into a draw for prizes. 10am to 12pm, free, Langford’s City Centre Park. Info: [CLICK HERE](#).

Apr 27 Cougar Ridge Hike. A scenic hike for adults only, led by a CRD Regional Parks’ naturalist, begins at Roche Cove in East Sooke and follows the Cedar Grove Trail. After lunch return via the Galloping Goose. Wear sturdy shoes and pack a lunch. 11am-3pm, free. Meet at parking lot off Gillespie Rd. Info: [CLICK HERE](#).

Apr 28–29 Showcase of Arts and Sale. Over 200 works for show and sale by local artists and artisans. A light lunch can be purchased at the Palm Court Tea Room. Admission by donation. Juan de Fuca 55+ Activity Centre, 1767 Island Hwy. Info: [CLICK HERE](#).

May 3 Sooke Spring Fair and Auction. This year the fair’s theme is “Energizing Sooke”. Hosted by the Rotary Club of Sooke, this annual event has local businesses and organizations showcasing their products and services. Opening ceremony at 10am. SEAPARC Leisure Complex, 2168 Phillips Rd. Info: markziegler@shaw.ca or 250-642-5784.

Do you have an upcoming community event?

Send full event information to John.Horgan.MLA@leg.bc.ca and we’ll do our best to fit it in!