



September 27, 2021

Cliff: 6763

Shawna LaRade, President
Scott McCannell, Director
Professional Employees' Association
505 – 1207 Douglas Street
Victoria, BC V8W 2E7

Dear Shawna LaRade and Scott McCannell:

Thank you for your letter dated September 21, 2021 by email. I am responding to the submission of the results of the survey conducted by the PEA's Government Licensed Professional (GLP) chapter regarding member opinions about returning to the office in the foreseeable future. I appreciate that you have taken the time to ensure that the concerns of your members have been shared.

I would like to take this opportunity to provide clarity on the Public Service Agency's corporate perspective on the issues you have raised about the telework policy. The policy does not restrict working from home to two days per week, nor does the policy restrict pre-pandemic telework arrangements from continuing. These decisions are made by individual ministries based on how they have implemented the policy in their operating context.

The BC Public Service Agency continues to monitor government updates for British Columbians on important next steps in BC's pandemic response. In turn, we continue to assess the impact these steps have on BC Public Service workplaces. Accordingly, in late August we postponed the implementation of our flexible work approach to October 12, after the Thanksgiving long weekend to align with the potential delay in the transition to Step 4 of BC's Restart Plan. However, for those who wish to return to their regular workplace in the interim, they are encouraged and supported to do so. Those who need to or choose to be in our workplaces can rest assured they remain safe thanks to the controls we have in place. We will continue to assess our plans in the context of the pandemic over the weeks ahead and communicate further changes to staff as needed.

I agree that the Joint Standing Committee is the appropriate venue to bring forward the survey results and continue discussions on COVID safety protocols and telework. We will get through this by continuing to work together.

Again, thank you for bringing your concerns to our attention. The BC Public Service recognizes the important contributions made by all employees who have been working to support the Province's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The significance of their continued service has not gone unnoticed.

Sincerely,

Lori Wanamaker
Deputy Minister to the Premier,
Cabinet Secretary and Head of the BC Public Service