

Government Licensed Professionals

The Experts BC Counts On



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BC's Union for Professionals

Introduction

From professional oversight to emergency response, government licensed professionals are the backbone of the BC public service

The Professional Employees Association (PEA) is a BC labour union that represents 1,800 government licensed professionals (GLP) employed in the BC Public Service. These agrologists, engineers, foresters, geoscientists, lawyers, pharmacists, psychologists, and veterinarians play a vital role in ensuring the safety, sustainability, and resilience of our province.

A strong and stable province relies on the dedication of these professionals. They oversee everything from infrastructure development to environmental protection. They also provide regulatory oversight of projects that are carried out by the private sector, ensuring adherence to strict safety, environmental, and ethical standards. Their expertise helps prevent costly failures, protects the public interest, and upholds the integrity of the province's long-term investments. Without their oversight, the essential services and infrastructure that drive BC's economy could be at risk. We all have a shared interest in supporting this workforce to sustain BC's economic stability and long-term growth.

Despite their critical contributions, BC's government licensed professionals are facing mounting challenges that threaten the effectiveness of public service delivery. The government must act decisively in the upcoming 2025 collective bargaining round to support these professionals and ensure the continued strength of the BC public service.



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Challenges

Urgent Challenges Facing the BC Public Service

1. The Inefficiency and Cost of Contracting Out

Indiscriminately contracting out work within the BC public service has resulted in unnecessary spending and inefficiencies, costing the government significantly more than if it invested in hiring and retaining in-house professionals. While there is a place in government service delivery for BC's skilled consultant industry, the outsized budget allocated to external contracts for delivering core government functions often fails to deliver meaningful results or provide long-term value.

Instead of streamlining operations, contracting out often creates additional layers of review, oversight, and delays, as well as leading to gaps in institutional knowledge. Many government licensed professionals spend valuable time managing external contracts just to complete basic functions of their work—time that could be better spent on direct service delivery if there were enough staff in place. The inefficiency comes from the resource intensive processes of documenting and conveying the scope of individual tasks to a consultant and then performing the iterative review process to ensure that scope is met. Ministries have also spent significant resources buying back institutional knowledge that has been lost through attrition.

If the province continues down the path of increasing reliance on external contracts, it risks further inefficiencies and rising costs. Investing in a stable, well-resourced public service workforce would allow for greater efficiency, better service outcomes, and long-term savings by reducing the need for costly external contracts that often fall short of expectations.

Challenges

2. Small Teams, Persistent Vacancies and High Turnover

Chronic vacancies and high turnover in the BC public service are straining the province's ability to meet its growing needs, from climate change mitigation and infrastructure planning to resource management. A key driver of this instability is the significant pay gap between government licensed professionals in BC and their counterparts in federal and municipal governments, other provinces, and the private sector. As a result of BC being the most expensive province to live in, combined with lower salaries and limited career progression opportunities, many skilled professionals are leaving the public service, making it increasingly difficult to attract and retain top talent.

The result is an overburdened workforce, where remaining professionals are forced to take on excessive workloads with small teams. This leads to burnout and reduced efficiency. Without competitive compensation, additional staffing, and improved working conditions, the public service will continue to struggle to fulfill its mandate, putting the province's stability, safety, and long-term planning at risk.

3. Modernized Tools that Remove Barriers

Investing in modernized tools for the BC public service is essential to keeping the province on pace with the rapid evolution of technology. Outdated systems create inefficiencies, slow down critical decision-making, and make it harder for government licensed professionals to effectively serve the public. While the necessary tools exist, they are not modern enough to keep pace with technological advancements.

Many professionals in the BC public service are responsible for creating, reviewing, approving, and finalizing critical content that drives decision-making and project implementation. Slow approval processes for capital spending, outdated policies, and aging digital tools create unnecessary bottlenecks that hinder efficiency. Updating policies and investing in cutting-edge digital systems will enable a more productive, results-focused workforce, ensuring BC remains competitive and that the economy continues to move forward.



Support a Strong BC Public Service

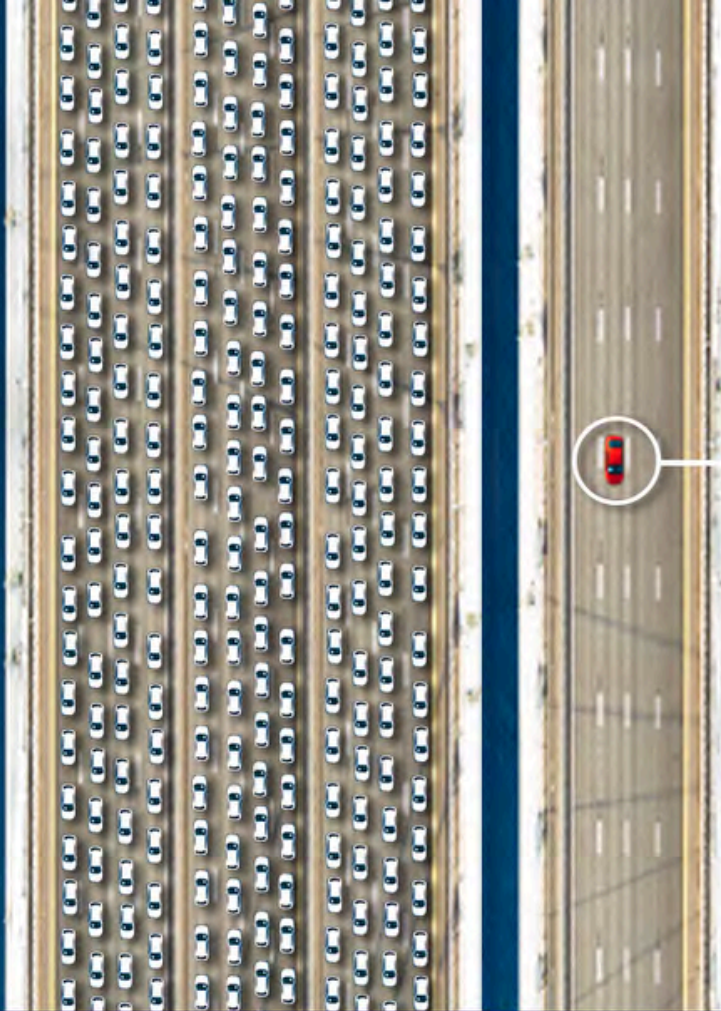


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Government licensed professionals are essential to maintaining BC's economic stability, public safety, and long-term growth. Their regulatory oversight ensures that the private sector meets strict safety, environmental, and ethical standards, protecting both public interests and infrastructure investments.

Addressing the issues outlined here through competitive compensation, reducing contracting out and improving access to modernized tools will strengthen BC's public service, ensuring it can continue to uphold the province's safety, sustainability, and economic resilience.

1.3 •
MILLION
PEOPLE
cross 3000
bridges in
BC every day



8
ENGINEERS
in BC's public
service keep
them safe

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Transportation Engineers Keep BC's Roads, Bridges and Dams Safe

Engineers in the BC Public Service played a crucial role in the rapid emergency response to the devastating floods and landslides of 2021, which severely damaged communities and key infrastructure across the province. They were on the ground assessing damage, working long hours on structural and hydrotechnical engineering, and designing new bridges that enabled the swift reopening of the Coquihalla Highway. Without their expertise and dedication, BC would not have been able to restore these vital transportation routes as quickly as it did.

Beyond emergency response, public service engineers play an essential role in ensuring that highway and road projects are designed through the lens of Indigenous reconciliation and accessibility. They work to incorporate Indigenous knowledge and community priorities into infrastructure planning, helping to build stronger partnerships and more inclusive solutions. Additionally, they focus on improving access to remote communities, ensuring that critical transportation networks promote safety, economic development, and connectivity for all residents.

29,000 CHILDREN

& youth receive community mental health support



40 PSYCHOLOGISTS

are in the BC public service

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The Critical Role of Psychologists in BC's Public Service

When a child struggles with mental health, the effects ripple through families, schools, and communities. Early intervention is key to improving long-term outcomes, and public-sector psychologists play a vital role in delivering timely, evidence-based care.

In BC, approximately 40 psychologists within the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) provide essential mental health support to children and youth facing severe anxiety, depression, trauma, and other complex issues. These highly trained professionals—each with at least a decade of education and extensive clinical training—conduct psychological assessments, develop treatment plans, and offer therapy to children and their families.

Without these publicly funded services, many families would be unable to afford care, and the already strained healthcare system would face even greater pressure. However, BC is facing serious challenges in recruiting and retaining psychologists in the public sector due to significant wage gaps between private and government positions.

ONE

Silviculture Forester ensures



2,000,000 TREES

are planted every year in BC

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BC's Foresters Help Grow Resilient Trees to Withstand Climate Change

Foresters play a critical role in maintaining and regenerating the province's forests, ensuring their resilience to climate change and sustainability for future generations. Working across BC's vast Crown lands, they carefully select tree species, oversee reforestation, and monitor forest health to support ecological diversity and economic sustainability.

Woodlands supervisors with BC Timber Sales help manage reforestation efforts, planting millions of trees annually. These professionals approach prioritizes ecological suitability, climate resilience, and diverse forest ecosystems that support wildlife and Indigenous cultural values.

Foresters analyze climate models, conduct research on seed varieties, and implement sustainable forest management practices. Their expertise helps BC's forests recover from logging, wildfires, and environmental stresses, ensuring they remain a vital resource for the province's economy and environment.



BC's Mine Audits Unit Ensures Responsible Mining

The Mine Audits Unit was created in response to the BC Auditor General's 2016 report on compliance and enforcement in the mining sector, which identified weaknesses in the regulatory framework. The report gained urgency following the 2014 Mount Polley tailings dam breach—one of the worst environmental disasters in BC's mining history—where 23 million cubic meters of mine waste were released into waterways. Investigations revealed that inadequate regulatory oversight contributed to the disaster, underscoring the need for stronger government oversight of mining operations.

PEA members who work within the Mine Audits Unit play key roles in the strengthening of BC's mining oversight by ensuring that regulatory improvements lead to safer, more sustainable practices. Through its audits, the unit enhances government oversight, mitigates environmental risks, and maintains public confidence in the responsible management of BC's natural resources. By advancing these objectives, these professionals contribute to a future where mining continues to support economic growth while minimizing its environmental footprint for future generations.

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