

May 2nd, 2019

Hon. Harry Bains
Minister of Labour
Room 342 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Subject: WorkSafeBC Review

Dear Minister Bains:

As you may know, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) is a non-profit, non-partisan business association. With 110,000 members across Canada, including 10,000 in British Columbia, we are the largest organization exclusively representing the interests of small and medium-sized independent businesses to all levels of government.

We are writing to you today to express our concerns about the recently announced WorkSafeBC (WCB) review. Our first concern is the surplus. As you know WorkSafeBC is embarrassingly overfunded. This overfunded position is to the tune of \$6.4 billion (153% assets over liabilities). As you are aware, CFIB members' feel this should be refunded to the employers who pay it, as has been done in other jurisdictions (Alberta, Saskatchewan, PEI). Any review needs to consider the entrepreneurs who have overpaid into this system, and how to refund them some of this money.

Our second concern is that the review has the appearance of not being objective. With the appointment of Ms. Paterson to lead the review, there does not seem to be a balance of employer and employee viewpoints. There is no doubt Ms. Patterson is very accomplished. She has extensive experience representing workers in complex compensation appeals at all levels including discriminatory actions, section 257 applications, arbitration, disability appeals, and Canada Pension Plan appeals. Additionally, she co-authored a report for the BC Federation of Labour: "Adding Insult to Injury: Changes to the Workers' Compensation System 2002 - 2008. Impact on Injured Workers". With this extensive background focusing on employee issues, we feel it may make it difficult for her to put equal weight on employee and employer interests.

Although we have no problem having someone with an employee-centric background as part of the review, it is essential government also appoint someone with the same experience but from the employer side: This precedent was already set by the government with the Fair Wage Commission.

WorkSafeBC's board is also required to maintain a balance between employer and employee views by having board members from both backgrounds.

A balance of employer and employee representatives in this review process is imperative for the system to find stability. Large swings in either direction are not of benefit to either the employee or the employer. It is incumbent on the government to ensure that both sides are strongly represented.

We appreciate you reading our concerns and look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,



Richard Truscott
Vice-President, British Columbia and Alberta



Samantha Howard
Director, British Columbia, NWT & Yukon

CC: Dr. Andrew Weaver, Leader of the Third Party
CC: Hon. Bruce Ralston, Minister of Jobs, Trade and Technology
CC: Andrew Wilkinson, Leader of the Official Opposition