

October 14, 2020

BC Co-op Association Election Campaign Party Survey - Response

### Questions 1 and 2

**Co-operative, non-profit service delivery, including in long-term elder care and child care, have proven to reduce costs – up to 50 per cent for child care, according to the 2019 study Economic Impact of the Co-operative Sector in Canada – and provide better care – higher staff retention and higher quality of care were identified as advantages of co-op elder care in the 2008 report Co-op Elder Care in Canada.**

**If elected, will your Party commit to funding pilot projects to establish seniors long-term care co-operatives and child care co-operatives?**

*The BC Liberals doled out hundreds of millions to for-profit corporations to create new care homes – and it failed miserably, with four of those care homes put under public administration for failing to provide required levels of care. As part of our platform, we’re working with non-profits to build public care homes that keep seniors safer, healthier and more comfortable. We would also be happy to meet with your organization should we form the next government to discuss other measures to increase the number of co-op elder care and child care facilities.*

**Will you work with the BC Co-op Association to address regulatory challenges that are preventing co-operative child care from being established in the province?**

*If we form the next government, we would be happy to sit down with you to look at how we can address these challenges.*

### Question 3

**Provinces across Canada have established policies that promote co-operative start-ups and development. From preferential tax policy and investment funds to legislative frameworks that encourage local investment, co-operatives in Alberta, Nova Scotia, and Quebec benefit from an environment that promotes co-op growth.**

**If elected, will your Party conduct a cross-jurisdictional review with the aim of identifying policy tools that will drive investment in BC co-operatives and enact measures, including amending the Cooperative Association Act, to do so?**

*Under the Cooperative Association Act, a cooperative association must establish its own memorandum and rules, including rules respecting membership, shares, financial management, general meetings and investment shareholders of an association. Cooperative associations must have a single class of membership shares and these associations are founded on the principle that one member has one share. Furthermore, a cooperative association may alter its memorandum or rules, but this alternation must be authorized by a special resolution of the members which must be filed with the registrar. If there are*

*ways to improve the Act, we would be happy to meet with you and discuss should we form the next government.*

#### **Question 4**

**The recent announcement that co-op retailer MEC would be sold to a private equity firm has been seen as a failure of the brand to respond to changing markets for its primary products, as well as a failure of MEC to abide by co-operative principles of democracy and transparency. The failure highlights the need for enhanced knowledge and training about co-operatives and co-op governance.**

**If elected, will you build co-op literacy through integration of co-operative models in secondary curriculum and providing funding for development and promotion of Open Educational Resources to be used in universities and colleges?**

*The BC NDP shares the concerns of British Columbians regarding the sale of Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC) to an American private investment firm. Should we form the next government, we would be happy to meet with your organization to discuss ways that co-op literacy could be improved.*

#### **Question 5**

**Co-operatives are not well understood within government and as a result, government procurement opportunities often unintentionally exclude relevant co-ops from bidding. To alleviate this situation, Government's Core Policy and Procedures Manual should explicitly guide and support procurement from co-ops and other forms of social enterprise. Further, establishing community-development related criteria for procurement would increase the likelihood of co-op success while keeping jobs and investment local.**

**If elected, will your government commit to amending government's Core Policy and Procedures Manual to explicitly ensure that co-operatives can bid on all government contracts for which they otherwise qualify?**

*Should we form the next government, we would be happy to sit down with you to discuss this issue and ways to improve and enhance cooperatives success, including through better government procurement policies.*

#### **Questions 6 and 7**

**Despite recent investment in affordable housing, more needs to be done to guarantee every resident of British Columbia has a safe, secure, affordable home. Housing co-ops already play a critical role in the communities they serve, and with appropriate supports they can do even more.**

**If elected, will your Party commit to increasing existing commitments to the development of new affordable housing, including a significant increase in the number of new co-op homes?**

**Will you create a new capital fund to support the acquisition of purpose-built rental properties by the community housing sector and the conversion to co-ops where supported by existing tenants?**

*The housing crisis is affecting all of us, including those wanting to live in co-op housing. For years, when housing-related revenues were soaring, BC Liberal government investments in affordable public housing fell short. The resulting lack of affordable housing has hurt people, communities, and our economy. We've started to turn that around, with more than 25,000 affordable homes – including co-op housing – complete or underway across the province in just three years. But there is more work to do.*

*We are committed to continuing to roll out our 10-year housing plan, and the 114,000 new, affordable homes it's bringing to tens of thousands of British Columbians, including people who live in co-ops now, and those who hope to someday. We will continue to work closely with the Co-op Housing Federation of B.C. and the BC Non-Profit Housing Association as we implement this plan, to make sure that our investments in housing are accessible to those wanting to build rental housing and co-op housing alike.*

*We will also expand the role of our innovative HousingHub team at BC Housing, launched in 2018, to include working with the co-op and non-profit housing sector on a new program to acquire and preserve existing rental housing. While we work to build the new housing that our communities need, we need to make sure that we don't lose the affordable housing that exists, and we know that co-op and non-profit housing providers will be key partners in doing that important work.*