



March 31, 2016

Hon. Christy Clark, Premier
Parliament Buildings, Victoria, BC

Dear Premier Clark:

Re: Claw Back of Bus Passes and Transportation Allowance

As an organization of families and individuals who advocate for people with disabilities, BC FamilyNet Society is writing to urge you first, to immediately reverse your decision to claw back bus passes and transportation allowances from the recent \$77.00 increase in Persons With Disability Benefits, and secondly to create and implement a timely plan that will effectively address the severe poverty of people living with disabilities.

The effect of your government's decision is that the many people who depend on accessible transportation for their inclusion into the community will be receiving less than \$25 monthly increase after a nine year freeze, a pitiable average of less than \$3 monthly over those nine years of steeply increasing housing and food costs.

The full \$77 increase is in itself woefully inadequate to keep up with steadily increasing costs. These measures, seemingly taken without consulting the affected community, give no one real choice, and are unfair to every person with disabilities regardless of their transportation needs. As Minister de Jong stated, the increase does not make life easier for people. People will continue to struggle to meet their most basic needs, while at the same time facing new challenges in participating in the life of the community.

That a prosperous province like British Columbia should put such a low priority on people who live with disabilities is indefensible and unacceptable. Please reverse the claw back of transportation subsidies immediately as a small indication that this government truly understands the conditions of poverty on people with disabilities. Then, in collaboration with the disability community, go to work on a plan that will address that poverty in a meaningful and ongoing way.

Sincerely,

Linda Derkach, President
BC FamilyNet Society

cc Michelle Stilwell, Minister of Social Development and Social Innovation
Michael de Jong, Minister of Finance
Michelle Mungall, NDP Critic for Social Development
Carole James, NDP Finance Critic
John Horgan, Leader of the Opposition