

Good morning.

Since last September, a total of 772 BC Public Service employees have endured the stress of being told that their positions were being eliminated because of the need to adjust our workforce as part of government's response to the difficult budget pressures we faced through the global economic downturn. I am writing to let you know we are now at a point where I can say with confidence that no further workforce adjustment is needed to meet the budget objectives set out in government's current three-year fiscal plan.

As we and the rest of the world learned with this last downturn, it is not always possible to anticipate where the economy will go from year to year or even sometimes from month to month. There is also always the potential for operational changes or new directions in service delivery to require staffing changes. But, barring any significant unforeseen changes to government's fiscal forecasts through to 2012/13, there will be no more budget-driven workforce adjustment in the BC Public Service during this period.

Of those 772 employees who were impacted since September, I'm pleased to say that 250 have subsequently found new positions within the BC Public Service. To date, 296 have left the public service and the Public Service Agency is working with the remaining 226 to find new placements for as many as possible. The current restrictions on external hiring have been an important factor in our ability to keep the impacts low. For the time being, we will continue with those limits to support placement of impacted employees and ensure continued close management of staffing budgets. You will recall that we made a clear commitment to ensure we limited workforce adjustment to no more than five per cent of our overall workforce, which equals about 1,500 people. With 772 employees impacted, that means our careful approach to managing this challenge has resulted in keeping the total impact to about two and half per cent.

My thanks to the Public Service Agency and all those across government who have worked so hard to ensure we were able to minimize the need for workforce adjustment wherever possible. Setting aside the numbers, I know this has nevertheless been a difficult period for all those directly and indirectly affected by workforce adjustment and the overall fiscal challenge we continue to face. I want to thank all of you for your professionalism throughout this time, and I hope we can all now begin to move forward with a greater sense of certainty and security about your future and career in what I firmly believe is the best public service organization in Canada.

Allan Seckel
Deputy Minister to the Premier and
Head of the BC Public Service