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# NEWS RELEASE

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## John Horgan's BC NDP government releases its first full budget.

**VICTORIA, BC – February 20, 2018:** Today, John Horgan's BC NDP government released its first full budget after delivering a throne speech last Tuesday.

The Ministry of Agriculture was the only resource-based ministry highlighted in today's budget. The Ministry will receive a \$29 million increase in funding over the next three years to support [GrowBC](#), [FeedBC](#) and [BuyBC](#). Some of the initiatives highlighted in each of the three areas include:

- *GrowBC:*
  - Helping connect land owners with new farmers
  - Facilitating transitions to the next generation (succession planning)
  - Expanding Agri-Service B.C.
  - Continue support for the *Environmental Farm Plan* (EFP) program
  - Wildfire recovery
  - Complete an agriculture land use inventory
  - Expand the work of the *Climate Action Initiative*
  - Enhance seafood, and
  - Protect animal and plant health
  
- *FeedBC:*
  - Build capacity along the entire supply chain
  - Increase procurement of B.C. products by Institutions, and
  - Accelerate innovation
  
- *BuyBC:*
  - Build and support a strong B.C. brand, and
  - Support export marketing in key markets

Other highlights from the budget:

- Closing tax loopholes on the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) to ensure farmland is farmed and not used by investors or for mega-mansions
- Carbon tax increases by \$5/tonne in June 2018; the current [Greenhouse Carbon Tax Rebate Program](#) continues for the next year and the carbon tax exemption on marked fuel changes with the changes in carbon tax

- Electricity will be fully exempt from PST effective April 1, 2019
- Increasing the [Foreign Buyers Tax](#) from 15% to 20% and expanding it to the Capital Region, Fraser Valley, Central Okanagan and Nanaimo Regional Districts
- Increasing the [Property Transfer Tax](#) and School Tax on residential properties valued over \$3 million
- Elimination of Medical Services Plan (MSP) premiums by January 2020, and replacing this with a 1.95% Employer Health Tax coming into effect January 2019 (employers with payroll under \$500,000 are exempt from this tax)
- Significant investment in child care and affordable housing
- Balanced budget, but increased taxation

In November, B.C. farmers and ranchers spent a day with government during BC Agriculture Council's (BCAC) premier advocacy event, "Ag Day" in Victoria. Agriculture representatives travelled from all over the province to meet with Cabinet Ministers, MLAs, and senior government officials to emphasize the economic impact the sector brings to the province.

"During Ag Day in Victoria, we were very clear about the concerns and challenges we face as an industry such as climate change, taxation, land use policies and overall sustainability for the future," says Stan Vander Waal, BCAC Board Chair. "Hearing what was announced today tells me that the farmers' voices were heard and we look forward to working with government to expand on the details referenced in the budget - specifically with regards to taxation, the land use inventory, closing the loopholes on agricultural land and building the B.C. brand."

[Read more](#) on the government's recent budget announcement.

-30-

**For more information:**

Danielle Synotte

Director of Communications & Engagement

T: (604) 854-4454

E: [dsynotte@bcac.bc.ca](mailto:dsynotte@bcac.bc.ca)