



British Columbia
& Yukon

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March 4, 2024

Honourable Harry Bains

Minister of Labour

P.O. Box 9206 Stn Prov Govt

Victoria, BC V8W 9T5

Harry.Bains.MLA@leg.bc.ca

Dear Minister:

Re: Urgent Need for Resources at the BC Labour Relations Board

We write on behalf of the Public Policy Committee of the Chartered Professionals in Human Resources of British Columbia and Yukon (CPHR BC & Yukon). Founded in 1942, CPHR BC & Yukon has grown to include more than 8,000 members encompassing CEOs, VPs, directors of HR, HR generalists, HR advisors, consultants, educators, students and small business owners in BC and the Yukon. We support our members with education and advocacy and, where public policy topics affect HR professionals, we provide our feedback and recommendations to government.

We write today to express the concerns of our members with respect to the serious lack of resources at the BC Labour Relations Board and the adverse impact which that has on the business and operations of the Board, including unacceptable delays in the processing of applications, adjudication of complaints and issuance of decisions. The effect on the objectives of the BC *Labour Relations Code*, as set out in section 2 of the Code, are self-evident and the consequences for employers, unions, employees and the overall health of labour relations in the province are profoundly negative.

As you know, the Board plays a critical role in the proper functioning of labour relations in British Columbia. Recent changes to the Code have resulted in a 300 percent increase in new certification applications and there has been no corresponding budget increase to ensure that the Board is properly resourced, staffed and supported. The dramatic increase in demand for the Board's services has resulted in long processing times, significant backlog and excessive delays in decision-making and the resolution of disputes. This has serious consequences for all internal and external stakeholders in the Board – for all of the parties affected by the important work carried out by this administrative tribunal.

Here are some of the consequences which arise out of the lack of resources at the Board:

- **Employers and unions** experience delays in the resolution of labour disputes, impacting productivity and efficiency and the ability to navigate an increasingly challenging and difficult business environment.

- **Employees** face extended periods of uncertainty while waiting for their claims to be heard and determined, leading to significant and avoidable financial hardship, decreased employee engagement, needless anxiety and mental distress and, in some cases, job loss.
- The **labour relations system itself** comes under unnecessary criticism as public confidence in the system is undermined and its integrity and effectiveness starts to be questioned.

To address the critical issues identified here, we urge you to invest additional resources in the Board on an urgent basis and, specifically, consider the following:

- **Hire more decision-makers and support staff** to increase the capacity of the Board to hear and determine cases more quickly and efficiently.
- **Implement digital tools and other technology solutions** to help streamline administrative processes, improve efficiency and reduce waiting times.
- **Fund recruitment, retention, training and development properly and adequately** so new and existing staff have the necessary knowledge and skills to ensure the Board delivers consistent, high-quality and timely decisions and other resolutions.

Ensuring that the Board is properly resourced, staffed and supported to keep pace with the significantly increased demand for its services is not just another cost. It is an investment in a fair and efficient system of labour relations for the benefit of all stakeholders, inside and outside the Board, and the public as a whole.

Our members and HR professionals in general have a keen interest in the smooth and seamless operation of labour relations in the province and, as a key and engaged stakeholder group, we invite you to contact us should you have any question regarding the matters raised in this letter or should you wish to communicate how the government plans to address the concerns expressed here. Similarly, members of our Committee would be happy to meet with you in person should you find that helpful.

Truly yours,

Chartered Professionals in Human Resources of British Columbia and Yukon (CPHR BC & Yukon)

Per:



James D. Kondopulos, CPHR
Chair, Public Policy Committee and Board Director

cc: Public Policy Committee
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