

# **65 fine news stories published with records obtained under the *B.C. Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act***

Collected and summarized by Stanley L. Tromp, 2022  
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[1]

***Internal government documents reveal B.C.'s 9-1-1 system was unprepared for heat wave, as NDP set to weaken information-access laws. By Wendy Cox and James Keller, The Globe and Mail, Oct. 27, 2021***

The B.C. Opposition Liberals released documents obtained under the FOI act to show that the province's E-Comm system, the agency that manages 911 calls, was woefully understaffed. In early June, three weeks before a deadly heat wave, a data analyst for the agency warned that calls for an ambulance had been going up and the response time by the ambulance service had been declining. The analyst wrote that the BC Ambulance Service "is compromising public safety overall by negatively impacting 911 answerability." Between June 20 to July 29, historic heat records were shattered and the BC Coroners Service and the province reported 569 "heat-related deaths." As calls flooded in, 911 operators had a duty to stay on the telephone with the person seeking help until either fire or ambulance paramedics could respond. But staff in those services were themselves backlogged, waiting for patients to be seen in emergency rooms. As a result, some operators were on calls for hours with increasingly desperate people and were unable to pick up other calls coming in.

[2]

***Hundreds of thousands of chickens died during June heat dome: reports. By Denise Ryan, Vancouver Sun, Sept. 27, 2021***

It wasn't just humans that suffered during the deadly heat dome that punished B.C. in June. At least 651,000 animals died on farms as a result of the heat wave, the vast majority of them chicken and other poultry, according to records obtained by animal justice advocate Camille Labchuk through a freedom of information request. Chickens are particularly vulnerable to

extreme heat because they can't sweat to cool down. During a heat wave, the birds can pant, ruffle their feathers or hold their wings out to try to cool themselves, but require additional help such as cooling pads, tunnel ventilation and fans. Documents obtained by Labchuk, executive director of Animal Justice, show that the B.C. Chicken Marketing Board recorded 416,146 deaths during the heat dome June 24-30; the B.C. Egg Marketing Board noted 145,000 deaths; the B.C. Turkey Marketing Board had 61,000; and the B.C. Broiler Hatching Egg Commission reported a loss of 29,210 animals.

[3]

***Preventing Low Supplies of PPE in B.C. By Jon Woodward, and Bob Mackin, CTV Television, and The Breaker, July 18, 2020***

In 2014, Ebola ravaged parts of Africa and cases even showed up in the U.S. In response, B.C.'s health authorities donated essential masks and other personal protective equipment, \$1.6 million worth. Trouble is, it wasn't replaced. So when the coronavirus arrived in B.C. this year, there wasn't nearly enough supply. Internal documents obtained through FOI show that wasn't the only factor that decimated BC's PPE stockpiles between 2013 and 2019. Around 20% expired and around 15% were taken out for everyday use. At the end of it all, BC had lost about two-thirds of its PPE, with officials warning in January, "should a widespread pandemic occur in B.C., the current level of pandemic supplies will likely not meet B.C.'s requirements, which may lead to a public safety risk," a risk that materialized.

[4]

***Rapists, pimps allowed to keep jobs working with children. By Stewart Bell, Vancouver Sun, Oct. 23, 1997***

The *Sun* reported that pimps, rapists and other convicts had been cleared to work with children by B.C.'s criminal records review panel. The \$1-million B.C. government screening program for people working with children deemed people with records for serious sexual offences and/or violent crimes to be "no risk." The 217 declared "no-risk" included those with criminal records for sexual assault, sexual interference, living off the avails of child prostitution, indecent acts, assault, kidnapping and drug trafficking. The story was based on data that Bell obtained by FOI from the Ministry of the Attorney General. The next day, NDP Attorney General Ujjal Dosanjh ordered an investigation.

[5]

***B.C. College of Teachers keeps some bad records spotless; Incidents of a sexual nature, violence, wiped from histories. By Janet Steffenhagen, Vancouver Sun, July 5, 2011***

Scores of educators who were investigated and disciplined by their employers for misconduct - including inappropriate relationships with students, violence, threats and theft - remain members in good standing with the B.C. College of Teachers. Documents obtained via FOI by The *Sun* show that the college, which is responsible for regulating the profession in the public interest, handled many cases of proven misconduct in a way that left disciplinary records clean. Not only

is the public unaware of these transgressions, but so too are boards of education and their hiring authorities, the college admitted. Dozens of cases were dismissed by the college's preliminary investigation subcommittee without action or settled informally, including some that involved sexual interference and intimate relationships with minors; slapping, shoving and punching students; consuming alcohol during class; threatening and stalking colleagues; and accessing child pornography on a school computer.

[6]

***Children in ministry care at risk as system in crisis, audit reveals: Girls placed in homes with "sexual deviants" are one example of a program near collapse.*** By Jeff Lee, *Vancouver Sun*, Sept. 17, 1999

An internal audit of children in provincial government care found girls placed in homes housing "sexually deviant males," young children sharing homes with teens with behavioural problems, and unlicensed group homes that offered inadequate food. The auditors' report found serious deficiencies in virtually every area of the province's children-in-care program, including an extraordinary turnover of foster parents and an inability to find enough qualified, trained replacements. In some cases unlicensed group homes were run by unskilled staff and employees had criminal backgrounds, despite the fact criminal record checks are mandatory.

[7]

***B.C.'s child labour laws make Canada look bad; Why should kids work at 12?*** By Catherine Evans and Adrienne Montani, editorial, *Vancouver Sun*, July 11, 2016.

In 2004, when the B.C. government lowered the work start age to 12, our province became an outlier among developed states around the world. Nowhere else are there so few restrictions on the type of work children can do at such a young age. WorkSafeBC does not publish reports on how many children under 15 are injured on the job. We know, however, from interviews with children and FOI requests to WorkSafeBC that children under 15 are working in B.C. and some of them are getting hurt. Having even one child injured at work badly enough to be reported to WorkSafeBC before that child has even completed their compulsory schooling is not the message that Canada and Canadians want to send to the rest of the world.

[8]

***Warning: Not for kids: Despite the risks, babies and toddlers are being prescribed anti-psychotic drugs that are not proven safe for young patients.*** By Ann Rees, *The Province (Vancouver)*, Dec. 20, 2000

Hundreds of youngsters are being prescribed anti-psychotic medications which are not proven to be safe for young patients. In many cases the mental disorders they are suffering are so serious that doctors believe benefits from the drugs outweigh the risks. The drugs have never been proven safe for young children. Doctors across Canada were shocked to learn the youngest patient on an anti-psychotic medication in B.C. last year was a baby boy under a year old who

was prescribed a drug called haloperidol. Yet in B.C., haloperidol was prescribed to 136 patients under age 20 last year -- and 25 of them were 10 or younger, according to data obtained through Freedom of Information from the provincial PharmaNet prescription drug database.

[9]

***Woodlands residents were sterilized: Internal documents also outline cases of assault, abuse.***  
**By Kim Pemberton, *Vancouver Sun*, March 4, 2002.**

At least four mentally disabled residents of Woodlands Institution were sterilized, according to internal documents obtained by *The Vancouver Sun*. The documents, which took one year to obtain through FOI, also confirm earlier Sun reports that some mentally disabled residents were physically assaulted, verbally abused and inhumanely treated while living at the provincial home for the mentally disabled in New Westminster. *The Sun* also found documents on abuse cases not previously reported, including the case of a resident who was frequently shackled to his desk over an eight-month period to prevent him from running away from school.

[10]

***The Shock Treatment - Electroconvulsive therapy remains a popular but controversial treatment.***  
**By Danielle Egan, *The Tyee*, Aug. 24, 2018**

In B.C. forced psychiatric detainment has doubled over the past decade, and ECT rates have spiked 36 per cent since 2011. This controversial treatment can even be forced upon non-consenting citizens, according to the BC Mental Health Act, a policy currently being challenged in the BC Supreme Court, by the Council of Canadians with Disabilities, which initially filed the suit with two plaintiffs, including a 66-year-old former nurse who was involuntarily detained and forced to undergo ECT hundreds of times. The Council had no data on the use of involuntary ECT use in B.C., so I recently applied for that data, via an FOI request. That data revealed that 280 citizens were forced to have ECT last year, up from 254 in 2007, the earliest year of the available data. Last year, 39 of these people were over the age of 75.

[11]

***Why aren't inspection records public?***  
**By Chad Skelton, *Vancouver Sun*, June 21, 2008**

Earlier in 2008, *The Sun* filed a series of FOI requests to Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health, asking for a large volume of inspection data, including reportable incidents. *The Sun* has now made that data available on its website through a series of searchable online databases at [www.vancouversun.com/care/](http://www.vancouversun.com/care/). The databases, which can be searched by a facility's name, allow users to see a wide variety of inspection data for more than 3,000 licensed care facilities across the region -- not only daycares, but long-term care homes, drug rehab centres and group homes for the disabled. The databases show the current risk rating (high, moderate or low) for every licensed facility in the region. And they include a list of every serious incident reported by each facility -- such as abuse, neglect and medication errors -- a total of 35,000 incidents in all.

[12]

***Chokings, sex attacks and suicide, but no details. By Sam Cooper, The Province (Vancouver), Oct. 19, 2011***

A three month-investigation by *The Province* using FOI law has brought to light some alarming statistics about conditions in B.C. care homes. From 2008 to the present, in Interior Health residential facilities, there have been 12 "patient safety event causing death" incidents, 25 cases of "sexual incident toward patient," plus 692 "physical toward patient" incidents. In Vancouver Coastal licensed care homes, there were 26 attempted suicides, 18 chokings, 44 disease outbreaks and 42 medication errors. In Fraser Health licensed facilities, there were 70 unexpected deaths, 120 disease outbreaks, 15 cases of neglect and seven poisonings. These statistics are certainly alarming when viewed out of context, but because of information roadblocks - including a complete failure to release information by Vancouver Island Health - The Province is unable to tell readers exactly what they mean.

[13]

***Policy that hurts elderly driven by Liberals, NDP charges: Regional health officials only following policy, MacPhail says. By Craig McInnis, Vancouver Sun, July 27, 2002***

A new provincial policy that splits up elderly couples when one partner has to go into a nursing home is being driven by the government, not the regional health authorities, B.C. New Democratic Party leader Joy MacPhail said. She made the comment after releasing documents, obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, that detailed the new policy, which was part of the major overhaul of the health-care system announced this spring. MacPhail said the documents show Liberal government policy is responsible for the wrenching stories of elderly couples who have been separated since the changes took effect.

[14]

***SkyTrain's Mounting Death Toll. Experts urge platform barriers already saving lives in other cities. By Bob Mackin, The Tyee, Nov. 18, 2008***

British Columbia Coroners Service statistics obtained through FOI reveal that at least 54 people have died on SkyTrain tracks and platforms since 1985. Ten deaths were accidental, and the rest were suicides. The SkyTrain president said there is no plan to retrofit any Expo Line or Millennium Line platforms with barriers to stop people from falling or jumping on tracks. Past Olympic cities like Beijing and Torino have such barriers on their new rapid transit lines, as do Hong Kong, Las Vegas, London, Paris and Singapore.

[15]

***Briefing note: taller wood-frames have "significant" fire safety concerns. By Sean Holman, Public Eye Online, April 1, 2009***

A briefing note prepared for the B.C. Housing and Social Development Minister advised there would be "significant" fire safety concerns with five and six storey wood-frame buildings. But despite that note, obtained by Public Eye via FOI, the government moved ahead with its plan to permit the construction of those controversial buildings. Premier Gordon Campbell first mentioned the possibility of taller wood-frames at the Council of Forest Industries annual convention on April 16, 2008, telling attendees, "Wood can be used up to four storeys. Let's push that ceiling." But the note warned "combustible buildings higher than three or four storeys are considered to present a significant fire load," and that increasing their height "will likely meet firm resistance from building and fire officials."

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***106 chairlift 'incidents' in 2008. By Larry Pynn, Vancouver Sun, Feb. 21, 2009***

The eyes of the world turned to the Whistler ski resort when a gondola tower collapsed, leaving dozens of skiers and snowboarders stranded or injured and raising the spectre of a similar disaster during the 2010 Olympics. However, FOI documents show that scores of accidents at B.C. ski resorts go unpublicized and that visitors are far more likely to be injured while loading, unloading, or just falling off a lift. The B.C. Safety Authority recorded 106 "reportable incidents" at ski hills in 2008, including an unlucky 13 persons who plunged as far as nine to 12 metres from lifts, some suffering serious injuries in the process. Grouse Mountain recorded the most falls from lifts at three, followed by two each at Mount Seymour, Blackcomb, Whistler, and Kimberly Mountain.

[17]

***Violations 101. By Stanley Tromp, Vancouver Courier, June 24, 2011***

An audit by the Ministry of Finance (obtained via FOI) highlighted many safety violations, fire hazards, and "general neglect over a long period of time" - at Vancouver Community College. KD Engineering, VCC's former building management company for 31 years, had been hired without tender, and had been paid about \$1 million a year with no written contract. A lack of inspections of the King Edward diesel shop exhaust system "contributed to potential carbon monoxide poisoning." The fire pumps at each campus were not tested monthly to ensure they were working. The emergency back-up electrical supply for the fire pumps, was not operable. "No effective oversight of this contractor's performance, leading to significant non-compliance with life-safety laws," the audit concludes. In sum, the health and safety of 25,000 students and children in the KEC daycare may have been placed at risk for years.

[18]

***B.C. dairy farm inspections reveal animal welfare breaches; Overcrowding, tails accidentally torn off, dehorning without pain medication among the findings at one in four B.C. dairy farms. By Larry Pynn, Vancouver Sun, Sept. 18, 2016***

More than one in four B. C. dairy farms failed to comply with a provincial Code of Practice related to animal welfare during an 18-month period, inspection documents obtained through

FOI show. Issues revealed during routine inspections by the B. C. Milk Marketing Board showed overcrowding, lame or soiled cattle, tails accidentally torn off by machinery, branding and dehorning of calves without pain medication, and cows lying on concrete. Postmedia News obtained the inspection reports after the release of disturbing undercover video shot at a major Chilliwack dairy operation in 2014. "It shocked a lot of us," said Tom Hoogendoorn, vice-chair of the B. C. Milk Marketing Board. "Hardened farmers were crying when they saw that." The B.C. SPCA described it as showing "employees at Chilliwack Cattle Sales using chains, canes, rakes, their booted feet and their fists to viciously whip, punch, kick and beat the dairy cows, including downed and trapped cows who could not escape the abuse."

[19]

***Provincial documents shed light on the darker side of horse racing. By Larry Pynn, Vancouver Sun, Dec. 27, 2011***

Twenty horses died in as many months at Hastings Racecourse in Vancouver due mainly to bone fractures, according to provincial documents released through FOI. Thirteen horses were euthanized after leg, shoulder or pelvis fractures, the documents show. Other deaths related to medical problems such as pulmonary edema and hemorrhage, perforated intestinal ulcers, foot infections and brain disease. The documents detail necropsy results from the provincial Animal Health Centre in Abbotsford on horses between Jan. 1, 2010, and Sept. 13, 2011. Peter Fricker of the Vancouver Humane Society urged the public to think twice before supporting any event - horse racing or otherwise - that subjects animals to undue risk or stress.

[20]

***Biologist mauled for grizzly critique: Environment Ministry employee suspended two weeks for negative report on provincial policies. By Malcom Curtis, Victoria Times-Colonist, April 13, 2000.***

An Environment Ministry biologist claims B.C.'s grizzly bear population is dropping due to over-hunting and poor government management. But for his candor he was suspended for two weeks after circulating a report that criticizes provincial policies. Dionys de Leeuw, in a report distributed to other government scientists, said the government has catered to a small group of hunters by increasing the "allowable kill" of bears to up to 1,300 annually in the early 1990s from 300 a year in the early 1970s. "Clearly grizzly bears, as individuals and as a population have suffered the consequences of this overkill," the Terrace-based biologist wrote. The report was obtained by the Sierra Club of B.C. under FOI.

[21]

***Freeze on dialysis money 'will mean some die.' By Barbara McLintock, The Province (Vancouver), June 14, 2002***

Dozens of British Columbians who suffer from kidney disease will die unnecessarily if the government insists on its funding freeze for dialysis, according to government documents. "If no

growth monies are available, then DEATH, in patients who would otherwise live, would be the impact," writes the B.C. Renal Agency in its submission to the Provincial Health Authority. The documents were obtained by the Hospital Employees Union under FOI. The agency says it's impossible for it to freeze the budget because of the rapid increase in the number of patients whose lives can be saved only through the use of dialysis. HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt said the government should have released the report for public discussion.

[22]

***Food exceeds bacterial limits. By Larry Pynn. Vancouver Sun, Aug. 23, 2003***

Almost 80 per cent of raw-food samples and 30 per cent of cooked- food samples analyzed by the B.C. Centre for Disease Control last year exceeded bacterial health guidelines. Information supplied to *The Vancouver Sun* after a FOI request reveals that 78.8 per cent of 33 samples of "raw ready-to-eat" foods tested by the disease-control lab -- vegetables, sprouts, salads, and sushi -- failed to meet federal health guidelines for at least one of four bacteria types. Of 555 samples of "cooked ready-to-eat" foods tested, 30.6 per cent failed one or more bacteria types. The random tests in food establishments, including restaurants and delis, covered a wide range of foods, but mainly meats, poultry, dairy products, salads, sandwiches, baked goods, Chinese and ethnic foods.

[23]

***Liberals were warned HST would hurt economy; Documents reveal top Victoria bureaucrats discussed new tax as early as March 2009. By Jonathan Fowlie, Vancouver Sun, Sept. 2, 2010***

The B.C. Liberal government pushed ahead with the harmonized sales tax despite warnings from high-level officials that it could lead to at least five years of increased unemployment, lower wages and depressed productivity. "While the long-term economic gain [of the HST] is relatively clear, harmonization will cause a short-term loss in GDP and unemployment," says a briefing note prepared by the top official in B.C.'s tax policy branch for Finance Minister Colin Hansen. The revelation came in documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act.

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***Liberals' ears burning over 'fire sale' of land. By Michael Smyth, The Province (Vancouver), April 16, 2015***

In the Lower Mainland's red hot real-estate market, it's not uncommon for a seller to get the asking price on a property - and sometimes more. That's why the NDP Opposition wants to know why the Liberal government sold several parcels of Crown land in Coquitlam for 33 per cent under their appraised value. Freedom-of-information documents show the land had been independently appraised at \$128 million. But the government sold it for just \$85 million. That's \$43 million less than the appraised value. And look who the buyer was: Wesbild Holdings Ltd. The company and its director, developer Hassan Khosrowshahi, are generous donors to the Liberal party.



[25]

***Interest, small payments up Tourism debt. By Rob Shaw, Victoria Times Colonist, Oct. 9, 2013***

Five years after starting to pay off its share of the Vancouver Convention Centre, Tourism Vancouver is \$19 million deeper in debt than when it started, new documents show. The tourism agency began in 2008 to pay \$89 million it owed the province for its share of the \$883.2-million Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre expansion project on the city's downtown waterfront. But the repayment amounts were so low they were outpaced by the government's interest rate, and so the tourism agency has slid deeper into debt, according to an FOI request. The agency's total debt ballooned to approximately \$108.4 million in July 2013, the government wrote in an Oct. 4 response letter obtained by the *Times Colonist*.

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***Delay of Skeena sale costly for taxpayers. By Steve Mertl, Canadian Press, April 11, 2002***

The B.C. government could have sold ailing forest company Skeena Cellulose Inc. back to the private sector in 1999 for more than 16 times what it eventually got for it, but rejected the deal because there were strings attached. And because it took another three years to unload the troubled company, B.C. taxpayers appear to have coughed up an extra \$100 million to prop up the company, documents obtained by The Canadian Press via FOI indicate. The government finally sold Skeena in a deal that wraps up for \$6 million.

[27]

***Final bill for fast ferries may reach 400 million. By Craig McInnis, Vancouver Sun, Jan. 23, 1999***

The cost of B.C.'s new fast ferries could exceed \$400 million by the time all the bills are in, according to figures released by the new president of the provincial ferry corporation, by FOI. Philip Halkett revealed that B.C. Ferries has already exceeded by \$5 million the \$230-million spending cap set by the provincial Treasury Board for the entire project.... The first board of B.C.'s fast-ferry project harboured profound doubts about the deal, virtually from the day it was set up. But the minutes from BC Ferries board meetings (via FOI) show that board was let go by the government only a few months after being put in place. And after that, the tough questions stopped for more than 18 months. (In the end, it took \$450 million to build three ships, but they were sold off for \$19 million.)

[28]

***Public land bought with \$210.9M taxpayer loan; Under terms of 2008 mortgage for Little Mountain interest doesn't accrue until 2026. By Dan Fumano, The Province (Vancouver), Sept. 1, 2021***

Thirteen years after the B.C. government sold the Little Mountain social housing property to a private developer, new revelations about the controversial deal prompted more public outrage.

The full sales agreement for the six-hectare Vancouver site was made public for the first time, revealing that in 2008, the B.C. Liberal government gave the property's buyer, Holborn Properties, a \$210.9-million mortgage but it will not begin accruing interest until 2026. "Where'd they get that money? They got it from us, the people of British Columbia. B.C. Housing provided the mortgage ... 18 years, no interest payments," said David Chudnovsky, the retired NDP MLA who obtained the sales contract through a 3½-year FOI process. Holborn, a Vancouver-based development firm owned by one of Malaysia's wealthiest families, opposed Chudnovsky's access attempts for years, but abandoned that effort last week. Holborn initially pledged to build 234 units of social housing, but only 53 of the promised units have been built so far.

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***Whale gamblers also bet on B.C. real estate; 'High-risk' VIPs may have used winnings to invest in properties, documents suggest. By Sam Cooper, Vancouver Sun, Sept. 30, 2017***

Paul King Jin, the alleged suspect at the centre of a major RCMP probe into money laundering and underground banking, is connected in big B.C. real estate loans to "high-risk" VIP gamblers from China, a Postmedia investigation shows. The RCMP's investigation, dubbed E-Pirate, alleges that Jin and his associates used an illegal cash exchange business in Richmond to lend suspected drug dealer cash to high-roller gamblers who, with troubling ease, used massive wads of small bills to buy chips in B.C. casinos. These ultrawealthy Chinese "whale" gamblers who were recruited in Macau casinos, could pay back these loans in China, thus ending up with cash in Canada while avoiding China's tight capital-export controls. BCLC documents, obtained by Postmedia through FOI, allege that 36 VIP gamblers, mostly from China, were linked to massive cash drops from Jin's network.

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***Cash, cars and computers: How B.C. confiscates millions without showing evidence of crime. By Bethany Lindsay, CBC BC, June 24, 2019***

Data obtained through a FOI request shows the province made 913 administrative forfeiture claims last year, amounting to \$3.36 million in cash, 288 vehicles, 501 cellphones, 56 computers and a slew of other items including electronics, jewelry and a Wayne Gretzky rookie card. These administrative claims account for a whopping 80 per cent of B.C.'s civil forfeiture files, according to the Civil Forfeiture Office. That statistic was shocking, but not surprising to Micheal Vonn, policy director of the B.C. Civil Liberties Association. "It is simply an unjustifiable system," she told CBC. "You wouldn't be in support of citizens who have no moral culpability [being] swept into a program to provide cash to the government on the basis of a system in which it doesn't make any sense for them even to attempt to defend themselves," Vonn said.

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***10-year analysis shows convictions in less than three percent of sexual assaults reported to Vancouver police. By Staff, Global News, Aug. 16, 2016***

Only a small fraction of sexual assaults that occur in Vancouver are ever reported to police. And of those that are, only a similarly small percentage are ever resolved with a conviction. That's the depressing picture made crystal clear in a story by Global News. From 2005 to 2015, there were 5,231 sexual assaults reported to the Vancouver Police Department, according to documents obtained by the news network via a freedom-of-information request. Over the same 10-year period, police brought charges forward in 1,022 cases of sexual assault. There were only 156 eventual convictions, or 2.98 percent of cases taken to police.

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***Clark met with Chinese developers while housing prices skyrocketed.* By Sam Cooper, *Vancouver Sun*, Nov. 14, 2017**

In 2015, as home prices skyrocketed in Vancouver, then-premier Christy Clark and then-trade minister Teresa Wat held intimate meetings with Hong Kong developers and donors who had billions invested in Vancouver property. They wanted to know if Clark's government would intervene in the market to reduce prices, documents obtained by Postmedia News show. The internal Ministry of Trade documents, released through a FOI request, for the first time reveal some of the courting strategies employed by Clark and Wat for trade meetings with real estate tycoons and corporations in China and Hong Kong. The 477 pages of notes highlight a "master narrative" about the significant place of foreign investment in Vancouver real estate, which differs from the government's public stance in 2015.

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***Justice, lies and videotape.* By Leonard Cunningham and Jason Lee, *Vancouver Courier*, Feb. 2, 2003**

Documents obtained through FOI reveal that from 1992 to 1996, the city paid out more than \$310,000 in claims resulting from alleged excessive force during arrest and false arrest. From 1997 to 2001, that figure jumped to more than \$510,000. For lawyer John Richardson, a member of PIVOT legal society, the Stanley Park beatings are "just the tip of the iceberg." This past October, PIVOT, an organization of lawyers and activists, released a scathing report on VPD police practices. Over a nine-month period, it collected affidavits from more than 50 individuals from the Downtown Eastside alleging police use of torture, unreasonable use of force and unlawful detention.

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***BC Rail sale was tainted, documents suggest.* By Scott Simpson, Lori Culbert and Jim Beatty, *Vancouver Sun*, March 3, 2004**

The British Columbia government was accused last November by Canadian Pacific Railway of leaking confidential competitive information to a rival railway during a fierce bidding war for ownership of BC Rail, *The Sun* has learned. A letter obtained from Premier Gordon Campbell's office through FOI shows CPR officials feared the government's handling of the BC Rail sale was "extremely prejudiced" and would lead to higher prices for shippers in the BC Rail service

area. That document, which suggests the \$1-billion sale of BC Rail may be tainted by influence-peddling, fraud and corruption, is a five-page summary of the police investigation into breach-of-trust allegations and seven searches on Dec. 28 at the B.C. legislature and the offices of people with ties to the provincial or federal Liberals.

[35]

***New rules would end most police chases. By Rob Shaw, Victoria Times Colonist, April 8, 2007***

New, more restrictive rules for police pursuits in Victoria could reduce the number of high-speed chases by up to 90 per cent, the *Times Colonist* has learned. Only nine per cent of chases in Victoria in the past six years – about seven of 82 cases - were started for what could be defined as "serious" criminal offences. Those included breaking and entering, robbery, armed carjacking, erratic driving that forced an officer to fire his gun at the driver, two hit and runs, and a suicidal driver. The data from 2001 to 2005 were obtained by this paper under FOI. The Victoria Police Department's new guidelines, restricting chases to the most serious offences, are expected to be unveiled later this month. Chief Paul Battershill said he's aware that by changing the rules, Victoria will eliminate the vast majority of its chases.

[36]

***Governments short-change crime victims. Ministry retroactively deposits accrued interest back to account. By Rebecca Aldous, Victoria News, March 29, 2009***

More than \$7 million in provincial funds targeted for victims of crimes was diverted from its intended use, according to FOI documents obtained by Black Press. E-mails between the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General and the Ministry of Finance show that interest from the Victims of Crime Act special account, which funds victim services programs and promotes equal access to victim services throughout B.C., was added to general revenue. The account's interest and any other income must remain within it, according to the act. "(The provincial government) has been taking money from victims," NDP public safety critic Mike Farnworth said.

[37]

***Videos show fare scofflaws being shocked by Tasers. By Darah Hansen. Vancouver Sun, CBC, March 6, 2010***

Surveillance video documenting nine out of 10 incidents where a Taser was deployed against "non-compliant" transit passengers was made public by the region's transit police authority, a year after an FOI request was filed by CBC/Radio Canada. The footage was taken between 2007 and 2008. Captured by both Taser-mounted video cameras and station surveillance cameras, the black-and-white images are grainy and, in some cases, too blurry to make out what is happening. Transit police had earlier released written details of the incidents, including four cases where

passengers were hit with the electro-shock device while being investigated for possible fare evasion.

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***B.C. minister fears money laundering involves billions of dollars, cites reports. By Staff, Vancouver Sun, Jan. 18, 2019***

Documents that say money laundering in British Columbia now reaches into the billions of dollars are startling to the province's attorney general who says the figures have finally drawn the attention of the federal government. David Eby said he's shocked and frustrated because the higher dollar estimates appear to have been known by Ottawa and the RCMP, but weren't provided to the B.C. government. Confidential provincial government documents dated April 2017 and released through Freedom of Information requests show the government was tracking suspicious currency transactions at B.C. casinos, especially in \$20 bills, for years.

[39]

***Province accused of diluting jail report; Union points to deleted portions of draft document on violence behind bars. By Kim Bolan, Vancouver Sun, Dec. 2, 2015***

The union representing B.C.'s corrections officers wants to know what the government is hiding in a heavily censored report on prison violence in the province. The B.C. Government and Service Employees Union has appealed to the B.C. Information Commissioner after getting a copy of a report by Liberal MLA Laurie Throness with large sections blanked out. The document is a first draft of Throness' report on escalating violence in B.C. jails. His final report was made public in December 2014. The BCGEU says it was initially told there was no draft version, but got the document on Nov. 20 after an FOI request. The draft contains some strong language about violence in nine B.C. provincial jails that is missing from the final version.

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***Rogue mail: B.C. companies rake in big profits selling lotto tickets in the States. By Ann Rees, Wendy McLellan, The Province (Vancouver), June 25, 1995***

Law-enforcement agencies on both sides of the international border are investigating B.C.-based lottery-marketing companies suspected of ripping off elderly Americans. The companies net more than \$120 million US a year by sending foreign lottery-ticket promotions through the U.S. mail. U.S. officials say that's illegal under their laws and have asked B.C. to help stop the practice. So far, B.C. has failed to shut the companies down. Briefing notes to the B.C. attorney-general's ministry, obtained through FOI, show it was made aware of substantial illegal activity two years ago. At a 1993 meeting in Seattle, U.S. officials told the Canadians they had seized 50 tons of illegal mail to that point. The Americans raised the possibility that Canadian officials could face U.S. charges if they continued to allow B.C. lottery tickets to be resold into the U.S. B.C. banned the resale of B.C. Lotto tickets a month later.

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***Children left in cars at casinos. By Chad Skelton, Vancouver Sun, July 11, 2006***

More than 40 people have been banned from B.C. casinos over the past three years for leaving their children alone in the car while they go inside, according to B.C. Lottery Corp. internal records obtained by *The Sun*. Coquitlam RCMP has responded to several such incidents at that city's casino and a spokeswoman said officers have found children as young as three left alone in cars. While most children are found during the day, BCLC said a few have been discovered as late as 3 a.m. at some of the province's 24-hour casinos - left there by both parents and grandparents. In response to a FOI request, BCLC provided *The Sun* with a list of recent barrings at its casinos.

[42]

***Suspected money laundering at B.C. casinos under-reported, CBC probe reveals. By Curt Petrovich, CBC News, May 21, 2008***

CBC News learned the B.C. Lottery Corp. underreported suspected money laundering at the province's casinos for years. Documents show casino workers routinely observe dozens of suspicious financial transactions each year, but only a fraction are reported to the federal agency that tracks money laundering. Players can feed thousands of dollars in \$20 bills into slot machines and cash out after playing only once or twice, walking away with a casino cheque for the remaining amount. By law, BCLC must file reports of all incidents of suspected money laundering with the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada, or FINTRAC, the federal agency that tracks the crime. The federal agency has asked the province to investigate.

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***Illegal gaming unit closed in 2009 due to BCLC 'funding pressure'; IIGET believed organized crime might influence regulated casinos. By Sam Cooper, Vancouver Sun, Oct. 24, 2017***

B.C.'s illegal gambling task force was shut down in 2009 due to urgent "funding pressure" on the B.C. Lottery Corp., according to a confidential B.C. government memo. The March 2016 memo for the finance minister is the first known document indicating the illegal gambling task force was disbanded by B.C. officials for financial reasons. It also suggests, in the aftermath of the unit's closure, organized crime has been able to increase its dangerous reach into both legal and illegal casinos, for the purposes of money laundering. These outcomes mirror the concerns IIGET warned of in its 2009 threat report for the B.C. officials that governed it. That report, obtained by Postmedia News by FOI, cryptically noted: "A conflict of interest or perception of corruption undermines the integrity of gaming in B.C. and so this is a very important part of the report."

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***B.C. gaming investigators repeatedly warned bosses of 'horrendous' money laundering. By Eric Rankin, CBC BC, Jan. 11, 2019***

When former RCMP deputy commissioner Peter German brought down his Dirty Money report, he guessed the amount of suspicious cash laundered through B.C. casinos "exceeded \$100 million" over approximately seven years. Now, secret internal reports obtained by CBC News through FOI show the dollar figure is at least seven times higher: more than \$700 million between 2010 and 2017. And the co-author of the confidential reports - who was one of the province's top gaming investigators - believes the actual figure is \$1 billion. "I crunched the numbers and added them all up," said Joe Schalk, former senior director of investigations with the province's Gaming Policy Enforcement Branch. Shortly after warning of a "massive escalation" of suspected dirty money flowing virtually unimpeded into B.C. casinos, Schalk and his boss were fired in 2014. Schalk says "at times we were even told we should not be talking about money laundering."

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***B.C. to probe lotto corp.: Report of retailers winning sparks ombudsman's inquiry. By Chad Skelton, Vancouver Sun, Dec. 19, 2006***

B.C.'s ombudsman has launched an investigation into the B.C. Lottery Corp. after revelations by *The Vancouver Sun* that lottery retailers win prizes at several times the rate of the general public. On Dec. 13 *The Sun* reported that over the past six years, those who sell lottery tickets have won 4.4 per cent of all lottery prizes over \$10,000 -- a rate anywhere from three to six times their share of the population. The figures, obtained through a Freedom of Information request, raised fears that retailers may be stealing customers' winning tickets.

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***'Damn near extinction': Population of B.C. steelhead on verge of collapse. Glenna Luymes, Vancouver Sun, Oct. 18, 2021***

A decades-long slide in Interior steelhead populations could escalate this year with only 58 fish expected to spawn in the Thompson watershed. Ottawa has declined to pursue an emergency listing of the Interior steelhead as endangered under the Species at Risk Act, citing the adverse impact of widespread fishery closures on First Nations, recreational and commercial fisheries. Instead, Ottawa said it would collaborate with B.C. on a steelhead recovery plan. But while the research was peer-reviewed by the Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat, it was never released publicly. In producing a Scientific Advisory Report to inform government decision-making, Fisheries and Oceans altered key points in order to support "status quo commercial salmon harvesting," according to provincial government officials, whose comments were found in 1,600 pages of documents obtained by the B.C. Wildlife Federation through FOI requests.

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***B.C. funding caribou extinction through fossil fuel subsidies and tax breaks: study.* By Matt Simmons, *Canadian Press*, Oct. 1, 2021**

The connection between caribou and money goes deeper than the iconic creature's depiction on Canada's 25-cent coin; the B.C. government is funding the extinction of endangered caribou through fossil fuel subsidies, according to a University of British Columbia study published. "B.C. has committed a lot of money, a lot of resources and talks a lot about the priority of caribou habitat restoration, but on the other hand is actively subsidizing an industry that is encouraging caribou declines in the very area that B.C. wants to protect," Adriana Di Silvestro, one of the lead authors of the study, told *The Narwhal*. The study collated data from records obtained from publicly available sources or through FOI requests. There are more than 3,000 active oil and gas wells in federally designated critical caribou habitat and more than half of those are operated by companies that received credits and subsidies in the past three years, said the study.

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***Court-ordered fines going unpaid in B.C., report says.* By Larry Pynn, *Vancouver Sun*, July 20, 2012**

About 40 per cent of court-ordered environmental fines in B.C. are going unpaid, West Coast Environmental Law revealed. The organization used FOI to obtain a copy of Closing the Gap, an Ministry of Environment report of 2010 on the payment of environmental fines. It shows that the average payment rate for fines on violation tickets between 2003 and 2008 was 80 per cent, compared with an average payment rate of 59 per cent for fines imposed through court convictions. Lower value court fines tend to be paid, but higher fines, most often given to corporations, are unpaid - 83 violators collectively owed \$700,000 in outstanding court fines. About 70 per cent of fines handed out specifically under the Environmental Management Act and its predecessor, the Waste Management Act, went unpaid, according to WCEL.

[49]

***Imported eggs spell danger for local fish.* By Greg Middleton, *The Province (Vancouver)*, May 18, 1997**

Opponents of fish farming fear that B.C. is risking its wild salmon by continuing to allow the import of Atlantic salmon eggs that may be diseased. The provincial and federal governments have known about the risk for years, says David Narver, the former director of the provincial fisheries branch. Narver, who warned the federal fisheries department of the risks of imported eggs in a 1993 letter, said in the letter that the risk remains no matter how vigilant the fisheries department is. Fisheries consultant David Ellis, who helps natives develop fisheries, got a copy of the letter under FOI. Anti-fish-farming lobbyists such as Alexandra Morton believe diseases brought in with Atlantic salmon eggs are already killing wild salmon.



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***Oil, climate change threaten food supply: B.C. report.* By Randy Shore, *Vancouver Sun*, April 2, 2007**

Climate change and rising oil prices are a threat to B.C.'s ability to feed itself in the future, scientists and planners say. B.C. farmers produce only 48 per cent of the meat, dairy, fruit and vegetables that we consume, according to a report prepared by the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture. The report, titled B.C.'s Food Self-Reliance, says that the area of farmland with access to irrigation in B.C. would have to increase by nearly 50 per cent by 2025 to provide a healthy diet for all British Columbians. Maintaining our current level of food self-reliance in 2025 would require a 30-per-cent increase in agricultural production, it says.

[51]

***Victoria let fish farms off the hook for hundreds of thousands of dollars.* By Jeff Lee, *Vancouver Sun*, Feb. 5, 2004**

The provincial government refunded more than \$425,000 in fines and forgave hundreds of thousands of dollars in unpaid penalties assessed against salmon farmers for illegally expanding their operations. The decision was made in 2001, just six months after the Liberals swept into power, according to documents obtained through FOI by the Sierra Legal Defence Fund. Sierra says the refunds, including more than \$175,000 to Stolt Sea Farms, one of the largest salmon farming companies in B.C., was done without ministerial or cabinet approval or Treasury Board scrutiny. The decision was a reversal of a long-standing policy of British Columbia Assets and Land Corp. to charge two times the rent against people who trespass on Crown land.

[52]

***B.C.'s directive to scientists under fire. Teams writing recovery strategies for endangered species told not to identify critical habitat, groups learn,* By Mark Hume, *Globe and Mail*, Dec. 6, 2007**

Two environmental groups are calling for a federal investigation after obtaining documents that show the B.C. government is telling science teams that are writing recovery strategies for endangered species not to identify critical habitat. "This shows how politics trumps science," Gwen Barlee, a director of the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, said. She added the B.C. government doesn't want to identify critical habitat because once it does, it will have to take steps to protect land, possibly curtailing logging or other development. Barlee's office and Ecojustice made FOI requests to obtain draft B.C. guidelines that indicate how recovery plans for endangered species should be structured.

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***No, thank you; Fish farms turn tail on tissue sample reporting.* By Serena Black, *Prince George Citizen*, Aug. 11, 2010**

B.C.'s salmon farm industry has decided not to participate in reporting tissue samples to the provincial government for fish health and sea lice monitoring audits. "Instead of creating and enforcing strict regulations, the government allowed numerous rules to be voluntary measures so salmon farms didn't have to report anything if they didn't want to," said David Lane, executive director at T. Buck Suzuki. Lane also said the association's refusal to provide data has convenient timing. In 2003, Lane took the ministry to court over an FOI request regarding the release of disease and sea lice infestation data. The ministry lost what turned into a six year battle, and Lane was given the information for 2002-03.

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***Mount Polley Disaster Brought Quick Government PR Response, Documents Show. Three-year-old FOI request reveals early belief laws broken and co-ordination with mine owner. By Jeremy Nuttall, The Tyee. June 14, 2017***

In the hours after the 2014 Mount Polley mine disaster, authorities were already concerned laws had been broken and the premier's office was worried fallout from the tailing pond breach would "get in the way" of other planned mines, documents provided to The Tyee reveal. Almost three years after the disaster, and weeks away from a deadline to lay charges under B.C.'s environment act, no charges have been laid and no fines levied. The government's initial reaction to the dam's collapse is revealed in hundreds of pages of emails and other communications obtained through a FOI request and provided to The Tyee by Jessica Ross, an independent researcher.

[55]

***B.C. releases documents revealing hunting culture among conservation officers. By Larry Pynn, Vancouver Sun, Jan. 29, 2018***

After repeatedly denying the existence of such documents, the B.C. government has finally complied with a FOI request revealing a strong hunting culture within the conservation officer service. The person who successfully navigated the bureaucracy where others couldn't and who refused to take no for an answer is Bryce Casavant, the former conservation officer who gained international attention and support when he refused a superior's order to kill two young bear cubs on Vancouver Island in 2015. The documents reveal that 75 of 106 mainly uniform and patrol officers have hunting records and that 48 specifically purchased hunting licences last year. Four officers unsuccessfully applied for limited-entry grizzly bear hunts, which have since been banned by the NDP government except for First Nations for food, social and ceremonial purposes.

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***School fees rejected by top court. By Staff, Prince George Citizen, Oct. 3, 2006***

British Columbia schools can no longer charge parents extra fees for things like music instrument rentals, home economics class materials and shop-class supplies, a B.C. Supreme Court has ruled. The ruling means school boards and the B.C. Ministry of Education will have to

fully fund those activities, John Young, the Victoria school trustee who launched the court challenge, said. Young used school fee schedules from 15 B.C. school districts as evidence in court. With information obtained via FOI, he noted schools are charging hundreds of dollars to students. One school in suburban Victoria is charging students \$1,100 to participate in an athletic program. Young said he met a woman who said she was paying \$700 to keep her three high-school-aged children in school.

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***Audit uncovers cheats at hairdressing schools: Ex-convicts found out that enrolling in a stylists' course meant a quick buck. By Chad Skelton, Vancouver Sun, July 21, 2000***

Faked attendance records. Tuition fees collected for students no longer attending classes. A system so lax that word circulated among penitentiary convicts that student loans were an easy way for released prisoners to scam money. Those were some of the findings of investigators with the ministry of advanced education, training and technology who launched audits into 70 career colleges in the province during the past three years. The Vancouver Sun obtained details of the audits through freedom of information legislation.

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***School newspapers win access to contracts with Coca-Cola: Details of deals must be released to public, privacy commissioner rules. By Sarah Galashan, Vancouver Sun, May 29, 2001***

Exclusive deals signed between Coca-Cola and two post-secondary institutions in Vancouver are public documents, according to the B.C. information and privacy commissioner. The decision marks a milestone in a five year legal battle between student journalists and administrators at the University of British Columbia and Capilano College where only Coca-Cola products can be sold. In exchange for the exclusive rights to sell and advertise to a campus market, the beverage company paid both schools an undisclosed amount. Andrew Epstein, the lawyer who represented the two student newspapers, The Ubyyssey and The Capilano Courier, during the long arguments under the FOI Act, calls the decision precedent setting. "So far as I know this was the first of its kind in Canada," he said.

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***UBC course enrolments manipulated. By Sarah Schmidt, Vancouver Sun, Jan. 31, 2004***

Senior administrators at the University of British Columbia embarked on a deliberate campaign to manipulate course enrolments to improve the school's standing in the influential Maclean's university ranking, internal documents show. And they did so despite repeated warnings from professors that the moves had either no effect on the learning environment or could actually hurt students. The correspondence, obtained under FOI, details an eight-month effort to limit enrolment in courses for the purpose of improving UBC's fifth-place finish in 2002's university ranking. It included suggestions to deceive students about room capacity and deny them the

opportunity to major in a discipline. The effort also raised concerns about preventing students from graduating on time.

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***Contract binds Vancouver to play by IOC rules or not play at all. By Daphne Bramham, Vancouver Sun, Aug, 7, 2009***

It's easy to understand why the International Olympic Committee would want any disputes with host cities decided by its own "court," so that it is beyond the grasp of courts in countries whose judicial systems are dodgy. But why on earth did Vancouver's mayor Larry Campbell sign the host city contract governed by Swiss law? Signing off Vancouver's right to access Canadian courts in the event of a dispute with the IOC is just one of the troubling pieces of the contract signed in 2003 and obtained by the B.C. Civil Liberties Association under B.C.'s FOI law. The contract's preamble declares that the IOC is "the supreme authority of and leads the Olympic movement." There is no mention in the contract of human rights or the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

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***Fire prevention key amid climate-change dangers: internal gov't document. By Lindsay Bethany and Larry Pynn, Vancouver Sun, Dec. 5, 2014***

As the planet heats up and the risk of "mega fires" rises, B.C. will no longer be able to lean on its world-class wildfire-fighting teams to keep people and property safe, according to a draft provincial document, obtained through FOI. The Forests Ministry paper, called Climate Change Adaption Action Plan for Wildfire Management 2014-2024, suggests fire prevention should become the top priority of the province. It says the average temperature in B.C. is predicted to rise by four degrees by 2080. That warming trend, combined with the higher rate of wildfire spread in forests affected by the mountain pine beetle, means that "mega fires" will be increasingly common.

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***Energy hikes hit poor the hardest; 'Energy poverty' means people can't afford to upgrade their homes. By Scott Simpson, Vancouver Sun, June 25, 2008***

Rising energy costs are hitting a quarter-million low income families three times as hard as other British Columbians, according to a report done for the B.C. government. It calculates that about 18 per cent of B.C. residents are living in "energy poverty," forcing them to spend about 17 per cent of total after-tax income on heat, light and fuel. Those better-off spend about five per cent on energy. The report was obtained by the B.C. Old Age Pensioners' Organization via FOI, and has been posted on the website of the B.C. Utilities Commission as part of a hearing on proposed BC Hydro rate increases.

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***Budget Rent a Car 'may have' engaged in deceptive acts: consumer watchdog. By Staff, CBC BC, March 2, 2016***

A CBC Go Public investigation into Budget Rent a Car has resulted in a Consumer Protection B.C. probe which found the rental agency charged customers for damage to vehicles which occurred either before or after their rentals. As a result, the company has promised not to charge customers for damage they don't sign off on at the end of a rental unless the car is dropped off after business hours or the consumer doesn't wait for the completion of the inspection. The CBC has obtained a supplemental report on the Consumer Protection probe through FOI. It reveals that Budget B.C. made a number of changes to its policies and procedures after the CBC story.

[64]

***Berry pickers worse off, says union report. By Staff, Surrey North Delta Leader, Sept. 29, 2004***

Conditions for farmworkers have worsened because the provincial government has cut back inspections and lowered standards, says a report prepared by the B.C. Federation of Labour. However, a senior government manager disputes the findings. The study says information obtained under FOI requests reveals inspectors have found children as young as 12 years old working in the fields, that some berry pickers are shorted on hourly wages, that some farmers are using inaccurate scales to weigh berry pickers' buckets, and many other abuses. It condemns a B.C. government decision to reduce inspections during peak picking times "in response to concerns by farmers and labour contractors about disruptions to the harvest," according to a 2002 memo from the agriculture and labour ministers.

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***Forests ministry knew of conditions in squalid camps; workers not yet paid. By Aaron Orlando, Revelstoke Times Review, July 21, 2011***

A group of tree planters have not yet been paid a full year after they were found living in squalid conditions in a forestry camp near Golden, B.C., despite the fact that they've won labour decisions ordering they be paid. B.C. Public Interest Advocacy Centre lawyer Ros Salvador found internal government communications through an FOI request. The emails were exchanged in 2010 between ministry of forests managers, B.C. Timber Sales staff and health authority officials. An environmental health officer with Vancouver Coastal Health and an RCMP officer investigated the camp and found the uncomfortable, cold and hungry workers sleeping in a "boxcar on wheels" without proper ventilation. They used a single outhouse, had no showers and were cleaning themselves using cups of water. The RCMP officer felt the condition of the camp warranted follow-up with his supervisors for possible criminal charges. Similar conditions at the Golden camp sparked outrage across the country.

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