



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

Honourable Selina Robinson
Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

March 15, 2023

Dear Minister Robinson,

We are writing to you today to reiterate our concern about the shortage of veterinarians in British Columbia and the impact it is having on animals, their owners and the vets themselves.

Last year's funding announcement only mentions subsidizing veterinarian students for the 2022-23 academic year. What happens beyond that? As this academic year comes to an end, we hope that the government will remove this uncertainty and reassure veterinarians that long-term support will be there by committing to further funding.

The shortage of veterinarians, including for large animals, is an ongoing issue — and the situation is becoming much more serious. In the past few years, pet ownership has risen, which has also increased the demand for veterinary services. Demand already outstripped the number of veterinarians available in previous years, so many pet owners are now finding it virtually impossible to find a practitioner able to take their pets on as patients. It's taking them two weeks or longer to get an appointment, with ranchers and farmers across the province facing the same lengthy wait times.

The situation is even worse in rural areas, where veterinarians report it can take eight weeks or longer for them to book appointments. In some cases, the animals suffer tremendously or even die before getting the help they need. This is a tragic and heartbreaking consequence of the shortage.

In addition, the added pressure on veterinarians is becoming unmanageable. They are stressed out, burned out, and exhausted as they try to offer care to as many patients as possible.

One of the solutions to this shortage is to simply train more veterinarians. We would like to know whether you will continue to fund these seats that are essential to training veterinarians who are already in extreme shortage. If not, what measures are being pursued that will help resolve this urgent situation?



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

We hope that there will be an open dialogue on this issue, and an earnest effort to find ways to increase the number of veterinarians in British Columbia for the benefit of people and animals alike. We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Coralee Oakes
MLA, Cariboo North
Shadow Minister for Advanced Education
Food

Ian Paton
MLA, Delta South
Shadow Minister for Agriculture and
Food

cc: Hon. Pam Alexis, Minister of Agriculture
cc: Shirley Bond, Shadow Minister for Health