

Pay raise for early childhood educators >A3 B.C. Transit mulls fare hike >A4

Carving out a fright-night niche



Tara Norris holds a pumpkin with a casting of her face in it — part of her Halloween display at 528 St. Charles St. There are plenty of spooky Halloween decorations around, but some Greater Victoria homeowners are taking their outdoor displays to the next level. Stories, A3

DARREN STONE, TIMES COLONIST

B.C. job postings must include pay amounts starting this week

LOUISE DICKSON  
Times Colonist

All B.C. employers must include pay information on public job postings starting Wednesday.

It's one of the requirements of the province's Pay Transparency Act, which was passed into law this year in an effort to address the pay gap between men and women.

"People deserve equal pay for equal work," Kelli Paddon, parliamentary secretary for gender equity, said in a statement Monday. "Making sure transparent wage or salary information is included in all job postings helps make sure people are being offered the same pay for the same work."

According to Statistics Canada, women in B.C. are paid 17 per cent less than men, and the pay gap is even wider for Indigenous, migrant and visible minority women, or women with a disability.

While the average hourly wage for men was \$35.50 last year, Indigenous women earned an average of \$26.74 an hour. Indigenous men earned an average wage of \$31.03 an hour. Immigrant women earned an average of \$28.78 an hour com-

pared with immigrant men, who earned an average of \$36.42 an hour.

Under the act, employers will no longer be able to ask prospective employees how much they've been paid in the past and can no longer punish employees who disclose how much they earn to co-workers or to people applying for jobs.

Raji Mangat, executive director of West Coast Leaf, said requiring employers to include wage and salary information on job postings is a first step in B.C. moving toward pay equity and employment equity legislation.

"It's not the be-all and end-all of ensuring that the gap between people based on gender, based on race, is addressed," said Mangat. "For us, the act is a starting point and we'll be monitoring and watching how it is implemented and what impact it has. But we're going to continue to push for pay-equity legislation, which we do not have in B.C."

The act will affect all workplaces, but will have more of an impact in non-unionized workplaces, especially when you look beyond hourly wages to salaries, commissions and overall compensation, which might include things like bonuses, said Mangat.

"There are places where there's not a lot of information about how much people make, where people are more able to negotiate and where there's discretion on the part of the employer about what to start paying someone," she said.

Since June 2022, Canada's federally regulated private companies have been required to report the wage gap. Last year, Prince Edward Island started including salary rates in publicly advertised job postings.

First up are B.C.'s Public Service Agency, Crown corporations and public agencies with more than 1,000 employees such as ICBC, WorkSafeBC, B.C. Housing, B.C. Transit and B.C. Lottery Corporation.

On Nov. 1, 2024, all employers with 1,000 employees or more will have to publicly post reports about their gender pay gap. A year later, the requirement will apply to employers with 300 employees or more.

In her statement, Paddon pointed to the government's other efforts to help women in the workforce, including new investments in child-care supports and increases to the minimum wage.

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Coalition urges governments to deal with chronic street disorder

CARLA WILSON  
Times Colonist

Thirty-plus B.C. retailers, trade organizations and community associations — including representatives from Victoria and Nanaimo — are calling for a unified effort to tackle "epidemic" levels of theft, violence and vandalism.

The Save Our Streets (SOS) coalition, unveiled in Vancouver on Monday, is urging all levels of government to develop plans with measurable outcomes to tackle disorder.

Many initiatives take on one issue at a time rather than looking at wider solutions, said the group, whose members include the Downtown Victoria Business Association, the Nanaimo and Area Public Safety Association, London Drugs, Save-on-Foods and the B.C. Restaurant and Food Services Association.

"All levels of government, regardless of their political stripe, just have to act differently and they have to act with urgency," said London Drugs president Clint Mahlman, founding chair of the group. He said escalating levels of violence, vandalism and theft have reached a crisis point.

"Governments and justice administration officials need to step up and do their jobs to make our streets safer."

Mahlman said his stores' loss-prevention officers have faced knives, box cutters, needles, hatchets and chains, as well as people biting, spitting and throwing punches.

Security staff at the stores

are now pilot-testing professional-grade stab-protection vests that cost \$1,700 each.

"That's the extremes we are having to take to protect our staff."

This past weekend, a London Drugs staffer in Prince George was sent to hospital after being attacked. A chronic offender returned to a Mission outlet with a large knife after being asked to leave, Mahlman said. The man was arrested by RCMP, who were waiting for him.

He said London Drugs has spent millions of dollars in the past couple of years ensuring its stores are safe for customers and staff. As well as training staff in non-confrontational de-escalation skills, the company relies on technology, he said.

For example, it will use a high-definition camera to monitor someone committing a crime, then turn the file over to police, who can then arrest the individual outside the store.

Jeff Bray, chief executive of the Downtown Victoria Business Association, said the SOS group's retail members have seen a "significant spike" in losses through shoplifting and smash-and-grabs. "We really need to raise the profile of this problem because it is costing huge amounts of money when this stuff walks out the door. And there seems to be no repercussions for perpetrators."

>See VIOLENCE, A2

Les Leyne: Coalition brings sense of urgency to forefront, A2

Vandalism rebates for business, A5



Jeff Bray, executive director of the Downtown Victoria Business Association, on Lower Johnson Street. Bray says retailers have seen a "significant spike" in losses through shoplifting and smash-and-grabs and there seem to be no repercussions for perpetrators.

DARREN STONE, TIMES COLONIST

B.C. Hydro seeks rate increase>B1

Israel pushes deeper into Gaza, hostage freed >A11

A 670-km milestone: Coastal GasLink pipeline fully installed

AMANDA STEPHENSON  
The Canadian Press

CALGARY — The Coastal GasLink pipeline, one of the largest energy infrastructure projects in recent Canadian history, is physically complete.

TC Energy Corp., the company behind the project, said Monday it has finished installing pipe along the entire 670-km route from Dawson Creek to Kitimat — a milestone that marks the culmination of more than five years of construction and 10 years of planning.

The final weld was completed Oct. 7 at the base of Cable Crane Hill near Kitimat, TC Energy

said. The company said mechanical completion of the pipeline, which involves final documentation, engineering analysis and testing, will be done before the end of the year.

The completion of the Coastal GasLink pipeline is a significant win for Canadian natural gas producers. The pipeline will transport natural gas from western Canada to the Shell-led LNG Canada processing and export facility being built in Kitimat — opening up new Asian markets for domestic natural gas drillers.

That facility, which will be the first liquefied natural gas export facility in Canada, is still under construction. But LNG Canada

said in an update in July that the project is 85 per cent complete and on track to start shipping its first cargoes by mid-decade.

The LNG Canada facility itself, a more than \$40-billion project, represents the single-largest private investment in Canadian history.

And the Coastal GasLink pipeline is one of two major pipelines — the second being the Trans Mountain oil pipeline — expected to come online in the coming months.

Both are viewed by Canada's energy sector as potentially transformative, in terms of their ability to improve access to markets and to allow oil and

gas companies to expand their production.

But the completion of the Coastal Gas pipeline has not been without challenges. What was initially expected to be a \$6.2-billion capital project has run into significant budget overruns over the course of construction. Estimated project costs climbed first to \$11.2 billion, and most recently to \$14.5 billion, according to TC Energy's latest project price tag estimate as of February.

Contributing to the increased costs have been unexpected construction issues, including problems with erosion and sediment control, and rising labour costs.

The project has also attracted opposition and protests from environmentalists and Indigenous leaders. While many Indigenous groups along the project's pathway support the pipeline, the hereditary Wet'suwet'en chiefs, whose territory the pipeline crosses, do not.

In the winter of 2020, protesters blockaded freight and passenger rail services across the country to show solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en.

TC Energy itself has been under significant scrutiny from investors and credit rating agencies for its heavy debt load as well as for the rising costs of Coastal GasLink.

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CORRECTION

Columbia River Treaty money

Canadian entitlement funding resulting from the Columbia River Treaty goes into B.C. consolidated revenue. The destination of the funding was incorrectly described in a Canadian Press story on page B3 of the Oct. 27 edition.

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‘Enough is enough,’ says coalition against public disorder



LES LEYNE

If widespread “frustration, desperation and fear” across B.C. are enough to focus governments’ attention on a problem, the Save Our Streets got off to a good start on Monday.

It’s a disparate coalition of companies and agencies brought together by two beliefs.

One: Public disorder, homelessness and addiction issues have grown so bad that B.C. is in distress.

Two: the federal, provincial and municipal governments are collectively either failing to respond, or responding with measures that aren’t working.

So 31 businesses and citizen groups have banded together under the theme “enough is enough” to push the overall public disorder issue a lot higher up on the government’s agenda than it is now.

Premier David Eby welcomed the group’s arrival and said he is open to any new ideas.

But the thrust of his response illustrates some of the very

problems that SOS is “sick and tired of,” according to London Drugs president Clint Mahlman. He helped form the group due to severe shoplifting and violence in and around some of the firm’s stores.

Eby cited a number of moves the NDP has made since a coalition of mayors goaded the government to take some action 18 months ago.

Some 300 repeat offenders are being monitored and supported to get out of the catch and release cycle. More mental-health workers have been hired and millions have been spent on supportive housing.

B.C. also led a push to get the federal government to change bail conditions for violent offenders. That’s a good response to SOS concerns, but it’s also currently a good example of failure.

The federal reforms were late in coming and are now tied up in the Senate.

Eby on Monday segued from violent offenders to the need for Senate reform, or even abolition. That’s a time-consuming rat hole that swallows up all hope of immediate action on making people feel safer.

Mahlman said: “Governments at all levels have responded in piecemeal fashion but are not acting in unison or with any sense of urgency...”

“The current approach is not

working. We hear from politicians all the time that they share our concerns, but we’re well past the point that words don’t mean much.

“We want to see measurable results.”

The coalition has a multi-stage strategic plan to make crime and violence a major issue in upcoming federal and provincial election campaigns.

Karen Kuwica, of the Nanaimo Area Public Safety Association, said that city was forever changed after one of the largest tent cities in Canada developed five years ago. Violent repeat offenders live in the community rather than in care as the opioid and housing affordability crises worsen. It amounts to a public safety emergency, she said.

She called for a “reformed social policy that restores civil society, rather than doubling down on what we already know is failing.”

Tanya Finley, a restaurant owner in Nelson and member of a neighbourhood network, said that community’s beautiful downtown is now a centre of homelessness, crime and addiction.

“I feel I’m watching a government-assisted slow suicide of people they are claiming to help.”

Reviving people multiple times a day and leaving them on

cold winter streets “is not dignified. It’s cruel and disgraceful.”

She said the Kootenays are being swallowed by pilot projects, band aids and mismanagement.

People are afraid of shelters or overdose prevention sites because there are no guardrails.

“Saving lives and complete chaos do not go hand in hand. Compassion and love come with rules, boundaries and understood expectations, then consequences when needed.”

SOS is going to have a hard time maintaining its stated “non-partisan” stance on such a politically charged issue. The speakers’ perceptions of street crime were presented in the starkest, most extreme fashion.

But there’s one aspect where SOS might find some common ground.

It’s on the need for measurable results and statistical evidence showing whether the current approach is making streets safer. It wants constant independent monitoring of all levels of governments’ actions to determine what is working.

Seven years into the official public health emergency declared about the opioid crisis, it’s remarkable how it’s just a routine fact of modern life now.

SOS is aiming to rekindle some outrage about how bad the overall situation has become. lleyne@timescolonist.com

Vandalism putting staff and customers at high risk

>FROM A1: VIOLENCE

This month, Victoria police arrested 20 people and recovered \$25,000 worth of stolen merchandise in a three-day blitz at a store in the 500 block of Johnson Street. One person who was arrested and released returned two days later to steal more goods. That person was arrested again and this time kept in custody.

Last week, Vancouver police reported that there had been 258 arrests in a campaign against violent and chronic offenders that saw close to \$57,000 worth of merchandise recovered.

Bray said the prime concern is the safety of staff and customers. He is among those calling for changes at the federal level to make it more difficult to release chronic offenders on bail.

For those whose criminal activity is driven by mental-health problems and addictions, “we need to have much stronger services, including involuntary care for people who are really, really struggling,” Bray said.

In Nanaimo, frustration with street disorder has led to ongoing public rallies to call for change.

Karen Kuwica of the Nanaimo and Area Public Safety Association said the city is in the midst of an “extreme social crisis,” the result of the convergence of the opioid crisis, shortage of affordable housing and a mental-health and addictions crisis.

Another member of the group, Kevan Shaw, said the situation is “past the tipping point.”

“Enough was enough a long time ago.”

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Fresh Dungeness crabs fill tanks at the Alioto-Lazio Fish Company at Fisherman’s Wharf in San Francisco. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife says commercial crabbing will be delayed until at least Dec. 1. AP FILE

California’s commercial Dungeness crab season delayed again to protect whales

The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — The start of the commercial Dungeness crab season in California has been delayed for the sixth year in a row to protect humpback whales from becoming entangled in trap and buoy lines.

The state Department of Fish and Wildlife said commercial crabbing will be delayed until at least Dec. 1. The situation will be reassessed on or before Nov. 17.

It’s the latest delay for the start of the commercial season, which traditionally begins in mid-November for waters between the Mendocino county line and the border with Mexico.

“Large aggregations of humpback whales continue to forage between Bodega Bay and Monterey and allowing the use of crab traps would increase the risk of an entanglement in those fishing zones,” Fish and Wildlife director Charlton H. Bonham

said in a statement Friday.

The recreational take of Dungeness crab using traps will be temporarily restricted in some areas when the recreational season opens Nov. 4, officials said. Recreational crabbers will be able to use other methods, including hoop nets and crab snares.

The commercial crab industry is one of California’s major fisheries and the shellfish is especially popular around the holidays.

Humpback whales can get caught in the vertical ropes connected to heavy commercial traps, which they can drag around for months, leaving them injured, starved or so exhausted that they can drown.

Humpback whales migrate north annually from Mexico’s Baja California peninsula where they birth calves. In spring, summer and fall the humpbacks feed on anchovies, sardines and krill off the California coast before heading back south.

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# B.C. Transit asks for feedback on proposed fare increase

MICHAEL JOHN LO  
Times Colonist

B.C. Transit is looking for feedback on proposed fare increases for Greater Victoria bus riders. The agency says it could improve bus service if single-trip fares were raised to \$2.75 or \$3 per trip by 2025. Fares have been \$2.50 a trip since 2010.

A recently released survey from B.C. Transit offers four options. The first two options would see single-trip fares increase to \$2.55 in 2024 and \$2.75 in 2025, with day passes increasing to \$5.10 and \$5.50 respectively; one option would see the 30-day concession pass cost \$50 in 2025, while in the other, it would cost \$55.

The other two options would see the single-trip fare and day pass fare increase to \$3 and \$6 respectively in 2025, with one option opting for a more gradual increase spread across the two years rather than a sharp jump in 2025.

In nearly all options, the price of the adult 30-day pass — which currently costs \$85 — would remain unchanged, but in one option it would increase to \$90. The primary financial pressures on B.C. Transit according to their service plans are the high and potentially volatile price of fuel, increasing asset costs driven by the adoption of electronic fare collection system Umo and the transition toward electric buses, as well as the Canadian exchange rate as many assets have parts involving U.S. or European manufacturers. The latest B.C. Transit service plan shows an expected \$987,000 decrease in provincial operating revenue by the end of the 2024-25 fiscal year.

Projected operations and maintenance expenses are both expected to fall in the next two years from about \$229.6 million to \$223.9 million and \$81.5 million to \$79.9 million respectively. Administrative expenses are expected to increase from \$41.5 million to \$45.9 million in the next two years.



BC Transit fares — \$2.50 per trip — have not increase since 2010. DARREN STONE, TIMES COLONIST

Provincial funding for transit across B.C. is set to decrease by \$1.2 million in the next two years even as B.C. sets targets for transit ridership to increase by 10 million.

At the same time, B.C. Transit is collecting responses for another survey to help it make the decision between providing good crosstown service or extensive local coverage of communities.

It has proposed a new 40 route, which would run from Esquimalt via Admirals Road and McKenzie Avenue to UVic, likely at the expense of route 24 and 25 coverage.

Routes 9 and 11 are also being looked at for coverage tweaks, though B.C. Transit has already indicated that it will reverse the changes to route 11 that reduced local service coverage in the Gorge-Tillicum neighbourhood after neighbourhood protests.

The changes could come into effect in April during the spring service change.

Input from both surveys will be reviewed at a future commission meeting.

To participate in the fare increase survey, visit <https://engage.bctransit.com/victoria-fare-review>. To participate in the service change survey for January and April 2024, visit <https://engage.bctransit.com/january-and-april-2024-service-change-survey>. [mjlo@timescolonist.com](mailto:mjlo@timescolonist.com)

# Vandalism rebates up to \$2,000 available to B.C. small businesses

Vancouver Sun

Small B.C. businesses will soon be eligible to get government funds to clean up after vandals or prevent vandalism. The Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation announced that up to \$2,000 will be available starting in November for businesses to recover the costs of vandalism, such as replacing broken glass and cleaning up graffiti.

“Supporting small businesses with this rebate helps provide some relief for the costs they’ve taken on through no fault of their own,” Jobs Minister Brenda Bailey said in a release. The \$10.5-million rebate program opens Nov. 22, offering up to \$2,000 for vandalism repairs and up to \$1,000 for prevention measures. The applications can be for any vandalism since Jan. 1, so

businesses can recoup costs incurred this year. The rebate program is being handled by the B.C. Chamber of Commerce and applications can be made at [bcchamber.org](http://bcchamber.org). The money is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Eligible repair work includes replacing broken glass and removing graffiti, while eligible prevention measures include installing security cameras or gates.

# Small plane crashes in Surrey, injuring pilot

SURREY — A small plane has crashed in Surrey, injuring the sole person on board. RCMP say they responded to reports of the crash Monday afternoon near Crescent Beach in south Surrey.

Police say emergency responders found the pilot of the aircraft suffering from minor injuries, and that person was taken to hospital for treatment. Investigators say the pilot is thought to be the only person on the aircraft, while there were no other reports of damage or injuries on the ground. Police say the investigation continues. A statement from the Transportation Safety Board says it is sending a team to Surrey to investigate the crash involving a privately registered Cessna C185. — The Canadian Press



A firefighter stands near a small plane that crashed in Surrey on Monday. Police say emergency responders found the pilot, the sole person on board, suffering from minor injuries. VIA CP

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# Health professionals, not police should care for intoxicated prisoners: B.C. agency

ASHLEY JOANNOU  
The Canadian Press

SURREY — Intoxicated people are dying in jail cells in what the British Columbia police watchdog says is an “outdated practice” of holding them for their own protection when they should be getting health care.

A report released by Ronald J. MacDonald, the chief civilian director of the Independent Investigations Office, says detaining these people in jail offers no guarantee of safety or health.

His report released Monday says police officers should not be responsible for caring for intoxicated people.

“Too many people die in police custody, often through no fault of the police. The care of intoxicated persons should not be a police responsibility,” MacDonald’s report concludes.

“It is a health care issue. It is time for government to take steps to facilitate the changes necessary to ensure intoxicated persons who need care receive it from trained health care professionals.”

MacDonald says there are options, besides jails, that are already being used in other places in the province, such as sobering centres or having health professionals on site.

“Officers and jail guards are not trained medical personnel, and jail cells are not the best place for such prisoners,” the report says.

“Holding intoxicated persons in police cells, ostensibly for their own protection, guarded by people who are not trained health professionals, is an outdated practice, and proven not to provide adequate guarantees of their safety and health.”

Outside the legislature Mon-

day, Public Safety Minister Mike Farnworth said he had just become aware of the report and will review it before making any comment.

MacDonald was unavailable for further comment on his report on Monday.

The report came after a man in Williams Lake, who was thought to be suffering from alcohol or drug withdrawal, had a “life-threatening health crisis” in RCMP cells last year.

The unidentified man was arrested on Nov. 13, began vomiting about 24 hours later, then was found struggling to breathe and was rushed to hospital.

The report says the RCMP’s call for help was actually “optimal” for the man because his symptoms were serious enough that he was hospitalized, but any later would have increased his risk of death.

MacDonald says the officers didn’t commit any offences in the way they treated the man but he has concerns about how intoxicated prisoners are housed in the province.

Jennifer Metcalfe, executive director of Prisoners’ Legal Services with the West Coast Prison Justice Society, said she supports MacDonald’s call for change and thinks it should include better medical support for people going through withdrawal after arriving in jail.

“I think it’s important that people who are intoxicated or in withdrawal are treated appropriately by health-care professionals with compassion,” she said, adding that’s not likely to happen if someone is held in a cell.

The Independent Investigations Office is a civilian oversight agency that investigates all officer-related cases where there has been serious harm or death.

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## IT'S COME TO THIS

Retailers demand action from  
governments on street crime  
as employees wear stab-proof  
vests on the job **PAGE 3**

Retailers say crime is so out of control in B.C. that some employees at London Drugs wear protective vests to work, in fear of being stabbed. UNION OF CANADIAN CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS



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# Retailers send governments an SOS: control street crime

JOANNE LEE-YOUNG AND KATIE DEROSA

Some of B.C.'s largest retailers, including London Drugs, Save-On-Foods, Aritzia and Lululemon, came together Monday to urge politicians at all levels to get street crime under control, saying that shoplifting and violent assaults have taken a toll on their staff and led to higher costs for consumers.

The situation has gotten so bad that some employees at London Drugs now wear protective vests underneath their work clothes.

"I never thought I would be at a press conference, in my role, and that I'd have to be authorizing certain staff members to be wearing stab vests," said London Drugs chief executive Clint Mahlman. "But that's the extremes that we're having to take to protect our staff."

Nearly three dozen companies and industry organizations from across B.C. announced Monday they've created a new public safety coalition named SOS: Save Our Streets.

Mahlman was blistering in his criticism that the current approach by governments is not working and that escalating violence, vandalism and theft on streets in communities throughout B.C. is at a crisis point.

"Governments at all levels have responded in a piecemeal fashion, but they are not acting in unison or with a sense of urgency as the street-level problems continue to grow," said Mahlman.

"The formation of the SOS coalition is sending the distress alarm that our streets, our businesses, our communities and our fellow British Columbians are at risk, and only governments, particularly the federal and provincial governments, have the resources, the expertise, authority and responsibility to change things for the better on behalf of all our citizens."

B.C. families are having to absorb the cost of retail theft — paying for security measures and repairs due to vandalism — to the tune of \$500 each annually on average, according to the coalition.

Mahlman said the coalition wants "to establish a set of measurable results that prove to British Columbians with statistical evidence ... whether the streets and communities are getting safer or not."

These results would be tracked not



A security officer stands inside the London Drugs at Woodward's Development in Vancouver on Monday. A new provincewide public safety coalition that includes community and business groups wants governments to act on what it says is growing crime and violence crisis across B.C. ARLEN REDEKOP

**This is not an issue in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. This is all throughout B.C.**

Ian Tostenson

only before municipal, provincial and federal elections, but beyond those time frames to ensure that actions have impact, he added.

Other companies involved in the coalition include Purdy's Chocolatier, 7-Eleven Canada and MEC Mountain Equipment Co. The coalition also includes industry associations such as the B.C. Restaurant and Foodservices Association, the Greater Van-

couver Board of Trade, and the Surrey Board of Trade. There are business associations from Nanaimo and Victoria, plus community groups and business owners from Nelson, Fort St. John and Dawson Creek.

"It speaks to the size of the problem," said Ian Tostenson, CEO of the B.C. Restaurant and Foodservices Association. "This is not an issue in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. This is all throughout B.C."

Tostenson said he was moved by the sharing of many stories after Monday's news conference, but especially by one from a restaurant on Vancouver Island that said its security company cut ties with it after saying it could not afford them as a client because they had to respond to so many calls.

"You can see a lot of incidences at quick service businesses," said Tostenson, describing how these owners face issues in keeping bathrooms clean and free of vandalism.

Asked about the coalition, Premier David Eby said he welcomes the work by businesses to raise safety issues and he said the province is awaiting royal assent for federal bail reform legislation aimed at making it harder for repeat violent offenders to be released on bail.

Eby and Public Safety Minister Mike Farnworth expressed dismay that the bail reform bill — passed by the House of Commons in September after pressure from premiers — is being held up by the Senate.

Senators earlier this month grilled B.C. Attorney General Niki Sharma about whether the legislation will disproportionately affect Indigenous and racialized people.

"I've never been more sympathetic to the federal NDP's suggestion that the Senate be abolished," Eby said during an unrelated news conference.

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## Vandalism rebates available to B.C. small businesses

JOSEPH RUTTLE

Small B.C. businesses will soon be eligible to get government funds to clean up after vandals or prevent vandalism.

The ministry of jobs, economic development and innovation announced Sunday that up to \$2,000 will be available starting in November for businesses to recover the costs of vandalism, such as replacing broken glass and cleaning up graffiti.

"Supporting small businesses with this rebate helps provide some relief for the costs they've taken on through no fault of their own," said Jobs Minister Brenda Bailey in a news release.

The \$10.5-million rebate program

**“This rebate helps provide some relief for the costs they've taken on through no fault of their own.”**

Jobs Minister Brenda Bailey

opens on Nov. 22, offering up to \$2,000 for vandalism repairs and up to \$1,000 for prevention measures. The applications can be for any vandalism since Jan. 1, so businesses can recoup costs incurred this year.

"As a business owner, the costs of property damage have been very frustrating and I'm glad to see government support on the way," said Vince Marino, the owner of Junction Public House in Vancouver.

The rebate program is being handled by the B.C. Chamber of Commerce and applications can be made at [bccchamber.org](http://bccchamber.org).

It is available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Eligible repair work includes replacing broken glass and graffiti removal, and eligible prevention measures include installing security cameras or gates.

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NEWS

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few answers  
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# Address crime, big retailers plead

Major chains in B.C. urge action on soaring shoplifting, assaults

JOANNE LEE-YOUNG  
AND KATIE DEROSA

Some of B.C.'s largest retailers, including London Drugs, Save-On-Foods, Aritzia and Lululemon, came together Monday to urge politicians at all levels to get street crime under control,

saying that shoplifting and violent assaults have taken a toll on their staff and led to higher costs for consumers. The situation has gotten so bad that some employees at London Drugs now wear protective vests underneath their work clothes. "I never thought I would be at a

press conference, in my role, and that I'd have to be authorizing certain staff members to be wearing stab vests," said London Drugs CEO Clint Mahlman. "But that's the extremes that we're having to take to protect our staff, and that's not OK." Nearly three dozen companies and industry organizations from across B.C. announced Monday they have created a new public-safety coalition named "SOS: Save Our Streets."

Mahlman was blistering in his criticism that the current approach by governments is not working and that escalating violence, vandalism and theft on streets in communities throughout B.C. is at a crisis point. "Governments at all levels have responded in a piecemeal fashion, but they are not acting in unison or with a sense of urgency as the street-level problems continue to grow," said Mahlman. SEE STREET CRIME ON **A4**



Alicia Massie, co-ordinator of campaign research for the Service Employees Union Local 2, says she knew that abandoning living-wage rules for city staff would be "a devastating decision that would fall hard on the shoulders of the lowest paid, least visible and most vulnerable workers." JASON PAYNE

## City dropping living wage commitment 'a step back for equity': internal email

DAN FUMANO

Vancouver's decision this year to cut pay for the city's lowest-paid workers caused "significant anger and disillusionment among city staff," according to internal email correspondence at city hall. "I need to put a couple of implications of this decision on your radar," Vancouver's equity officer

Aftab Erfan wrote in a March email to city manager Paul Mochrie and chief human resources officer Andrew Naklicki. First, the decision moves the city backwards in its efforts toward becoming a more equitable employer, Erfan wrote. "This decision is definitely a step back for equity no matter how it is justified."

Second, she wrote, she had observed "significant anger and disillusionment among city staff in connection with the decision." City staff found internal communication "confusing and inconsistent," Erfan wrote. "What's being explained is not actually making sense to staff, which is leading to all kinds of stories being made up." SEE LIVING WAGE ON **A2**

## SPORTS

HOCKEY

Player's death  
on ice shocks  
Canucks **NP11**

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EXTRADITION HEARING

# B.C. Hells Angel’s lawyer questions FBI’s use of photo

KIM BOLAN

A lawyer for a full-patch Hells Angel argued in B.C. Supreme Court on Monday that a photo taken of his client 11 years ago outside the club’s East End clubhouse was improperly used by the FBI to identify him in a U.S. investigation.

Paul McMurray told Justice Catherine Wedge that the 2012 snapshot of Courtney Vasseur later published in The Vancouver Sun constituted evidence gathered in Canada, meaning it should not have been used by the American law enforcement agency.

Vasseur, a member of the Hells Angels’ elite Nomad chapter, is facing securities and wire fraud charges in New York state that allege he was involved in an international stock scam with illicit profits of US\$35 million.

Monday was the start of a five-day hearing to determine whether the biker and co-accused Curtis Lehner would be extradited to the U.S.

The New York criminal indictment alleges that Vasseur, Lehner, German citizen Hasan Sario, and Domenic Calabrigo, a Canadian living in the Bahamas, “orchestrated multiple pump-and-dump stock manipulation schemes” over several years.

Vasseur, also known by “Black Water,” “Arctic Shark” and other aliases, worked with the others to “secretly amass control of the vast majority of the stock of certain publicly traded companies,” the 35-page criminal indictment alleges.

The accused “then manipulated the price and trading volumes for these stocks, causing the share price and trading volume to become artificially inflated, and finally sold out of their secretly amassed positions at these inflated values at the expense of the investing public.” But before the arguments on extradition began Monday, McMurray raised issues about the photo and asked for a full hearing on whether it should be excluded as evidence in the case.

“The preliminary issue for you to decide with respect to my application is whether or not the evidence we seek to exclude was actually gathered in Canada,” Murray told Wedge.

Federal Department of Justice lawyer Ryan Dawodharry said, “The Attorney General of Canada takes the position that it’s not Canadian-gathered evidence. Rather the photograph was gathered in the United States by the FBI, by an online search.”

Dawodharry explained the FBI found the photo on The Vancouver

Sun’s website, where it was one of more than a dozen pictures of B.C. Hells Angels who had either been charged or convicted of criminal offences as of February 2014.

He also said the photo had been viewed by a confidential informant expected to testify in the U.S. case.

McMurray said that the photo originated from an officer with the anti-gang Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit who snapped it on April 7, 2012 at the “Screwymride” — an annual event at what was then the East End clubhouse to commemorate the 1988 death of Dave (Screwym) Swartz, a full-patch member.

“Although Mr. Vasseur was out in public on the property of the Hells Angels clubhouse, he still had a residual expectation of privacy in the sense that he would not have expected police officers to be taking photographs of him surreptitiously via telephoto lens,” McMurray said.

“What I would also expect is that the evidence will show that RCMP and law enforcement generally believes that the Hells Angels are a criminal organization and members are involved in criminal activity not only within Canada, but also I expect the evidence will show that the RCMP’s position is the Hells Angels is international in scope and engages in transnational criminal activities.”



Courtney Vasseur

He said the police “routinely attend Hells Angels public and private functions in order to observe and record what is occurring. And in that regard, they routinely take photographs of persons wearing Hells Angels colours in order to identify who is a member for investigative and intelligence-gathering purposes.”

McMurray noted that the Extradition Act says evidence gathered on this side of the border “must satisfy the rules of evidence under Canadian law in order to be admitted.”

Wedge said she would rule later on whether evidence should be called to determine the photo’s admissibility.

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London Drugs’ Clint Mahlman speaks inside the Woodward’s development on Monday during the introduction of a new provincewide public safety coalition that calls on governments to work together and act without delay on the growing crime and violence in communities across British Columbia. PHOTOS: ARLEN REDEKOP

## Retail theft leads to price hikes to cover expenses

STREET CRIME FROM A1

“The formation of the SOS coalition is sending the distress alarm that our streets, our businesses, our communities and our fellow British Columbians are at risk, and only governments, particularly the federal and provincial governments, have the resources, the expertise, authority and responsibility to change things for the better on behalf of all our citizens.”

B.C. families are having to absorb the cost of retail theft — paying for security measures and repairs due to vandalism — to the tune of \$500 each annually on average, according to the coalition.

Mahlman said the coalition wants “to establish a set of measurable results that prove to British Columbians with statistical evidence ... whether the streets and communities are getting safer or not.”

These results would be tracked not only before municipal, provincial and federal elections, but beyond those time frames to ensure that actions have impact, he added.

Other companies involved in the coalition include Purdy’s Chocolatier, 7-Eleven Canada and MEC Mountain Equipment Company. The coalition also includes industry associations, such as the B.C. Restaurant and Foodservices Association, the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade, and the Surrey Board of Trade. There are business associations from downtown Nanaimo and downtown Victoria, as well as community groups and business owners from Nelson, Fort St. John and Dawson Creek.

“It speaks to the size of the problem,” said Ian Tostenson, CEO of the B.C. Restaurant and Foodservices Association. “This is not an issue in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. This is all throughout B.C., and the list underscores this.”

Tostenson said he was moved by the sharing of many stories after Monday’s news conference, but es-



A security guard stands watch inside London Drugs at the Woodward’s development in Vancouver on Monday.

pecially by one from a restaurant on Vancouver Island that said its security company cut ties with it after saying it could not afford the restaurant as a client because it had to respond to so many calls.

“You can see a lot of incidences at quick-service businesses,” said Tostenson, describing how these owners face issues in keeping bathrooms clean and free of vandalism.

Asked about the coalition, Premier David Eby said he welcomes the work by businesses to raise important safety issues and he said the province is awaiting royal assent for federal bail reform legislation aimed at making it harder for repeat violent offenders to be released on bail.

Eby and Public Safety Minister Mike Farnworth expressed dismay that the bail reform bill — passed by the House of Commons in September after pressure from Canadian premiers — is being held up by the Senate. Senators earlier this month grilled B.C. Attorney General Niki Sharma about whether the legislation will disproportionately impact Indigenous and racialized people.

“I’ve never been more sympathetic to the federal NDP’s suggestion that the Senate be abolished,” Eby said during an unrelated news

conference. “It’s absolutely out of touch for senators not to understand the grievous and serious public safety issues of releasing someone who has committed multiple violent offences back in the community.”

Eby acknowledged that violent crime and street disorder have become worse following the pandemic and said the government is expanding programs and services available to people struggling with mental health and addiction issues, which are often the backdrop for the “cycle of criminality.”

On Friday, Metro Vancouver police departments reported hundreds of arrests made during two weeks in September as part of an undercover operation targeting violent and chronic shoplifters.

This includes 258 arrests made in Vancouver and 82 in Delta, Langley, Richmond and Burnaby.

VPD Staff Sgt. Mario Mastropieri said shoplifting decreased city-wide during the sting.

Last spring, 138 arrests were made during a VPD undercover investigation into shoplifting.

Mastropieri said a lot of the stolen items “end up on certain marketplaces or are even shipped across the country.”

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