



March 27, 2020

COVID-19 UPDATE: WAGES OVER TAXES

A task force of UDI staff and members have been concertedly engaged on a daily basis with all levels of government to inform on the dire impacts that the COVID-19 crisis has had on our industry. We continue to impress the significance of our sector to the overall economy, as well as the measures that are necessary to bridge the gap and keep our industry viable and people employed as we get through this together.

At a provincial level, UDI worked quickly and effectively alongside construction sector stakeholders to provide critical information on how to maintain construction sites during this time. As a result of these efforts, the government released [specific guidance](#) on construction site operations and defined this work as an [essential service](#). See [here](#) for a collaborative document of industry standards for site safety.

Unfortunately, we have seen little announced in the past weeks that meaningfully address the financial burden our highly-leveraged industry operates under. This oversight has been compounded by the consistent message from the Provincial Government to British Columbians that paying *any* rent is unnecessary during this current crisis. As commercial and residential tenants' requests for rent deferrals pour into our members and subsequently undermine the foundation of this industry and the economy, UDI has taken a strong stance on the impact of this government's message and the lack of recognition of how supporting employers and industry is necessary to maintain a viable economy.

[Here is UDI's letter](#) to the Province for your review.

Today's announcement (see here for [News Release](#) and [Backgrounder](#)) from the Federal Government to support small and medium businesses in retaining their employees through significant wage subsidies and tax deferrals is welcome news. Since the beginning of this crisis, UDI has been advocating for an approach like this to avoid layoffs and closures by supporting businesses to stay open, pay their workers and keep cash flowing in our economy. UDI is committed to continuing to work with provincial and federal counterparts to ensure similar investments and supports can be accessed by our industry.

Please [get in touch directly with me](#) if you would like to discuss how this pandemic has been impacting your company. Your feedback is invaluable as we navigate these unprecedented times.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne McMullin'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue horizontal line.

Anne McMullin, President & CEO, UDI