



Transport Action British Columbia
BC's Public Transportation Advocacy Organisation
<https://www.transportationaction.ca/>

April 12, 2022

The Right Honourable John Horgan,
Premier, British Columbia

Dear Premier Horgan,

We are writing in regard to the government's decision to provide rebates to BC automobile drivers Insurance Corporation of British Columbia.

We first want to thank you for not caving in to populist pressure to cut gasoline taxes. In a supply-side inflationary shock such as this, measures which increase demand for gasoline are ineffective at best and highly likely to be counterproductive, adding profits to oil companies as people demand more fuel and raising the price to compensate. We would like to ask that this move be coupled with demand-side measures that give people real choices to avoid the pumps altogether, like immediate investments in public transit operating budgets.

Recently, Translink has announced a fare increase, one of the only increases from a transit agency in Canada and BC this year. In other countries such as New Zealand, they are cutting fares along with supports for drivers. Now is not the time to add costs which reduce demand for transit, pushing those marginal commuters to either compete for gasoline powered transportation, or to reduce their economic activity. We understand that just 1% of the taxpayer's money used for the insurance rebates would have been enough to defray the TransLink fare increase this year. TransLink has had to go ahead with its fare increase at a time when other systems around the world are responding to the economic fallout of the Ukraine crisis with fare cuts and freezes.

A further 1-2% of the largesse provided through the ICBC could have given BC Transit enough additional funding to bring about labour peace in the Sky-to-Sky region, getting those vital services back on the road, providing living wages and better working conditions for transit operators across the province.

Modest investments such as these would go a long way to help British Columbians, not just car owners, to get ahead in a time of rising living costs. We therefore hope your government will find a way to provide immediate relief for transit riders.

Yours sincerely,

Alex Mandel

President - Transport Action British Columbia

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Transport Action BC is an advocacy group that promotes the use of sustainable transportation. We are affiliated with Transport Action Canada, a national federation of consumers devoted to the public interest in transportation systems.