

Coalition of BC Businesses

News Release

For Immediate Release

Business coalition supports EI program for self-employed

Entrepreneurs no longer have to choose between raising a family and raising a business

VANCOUVER, B.C. (November 3, 2009) – The Coalition of BC Businesses today applauded the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and the Government of Canada for extending all Employment Insurance (EI) benefits to self-employed Canadians on a voluntary basis. The new Fairness for the Self-Employed Act would ease some of the risk associated with self-employment and provide greater financial security to Canadian entrepreneurs.

“This is welcome news to BC’s 216,300 owner/operators,” said John Winter, Chair of the Coalition of BC Businesses. “No longer will an economic downturn or the decision to care for children leave them in the lurch without employment insurance or parental leave.”

A majority of BC businesses are run by self-employed British Columbians. Of the 384,300 business in British Columbia, 56% are self-employed and without paid help.

“It’s only fair that the growing number of self-employed British Columbians be allowed to pay into EI and be eligible for maternity and parental benefits,” said Winter. “British Columbians who hang their own shingle should not have to choose between raising a family and raising a business.”

Member industries of the Coalition of BC Businesses that would particularly benefit from today’s announcement include real estate, construction, retail and convenience stores.

The Coalition of BC Businesses represents the voice of over 50,000 small and medium-sized businesses in the development of British Columbia's labour and employment policies.

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Small Business Industry Fact Sheet

Small Businesses are key drivers of the B.C. economy

- Small businesses account for 98 percent of all businesses in B.C.
- In 2008, small businesses generated more than one-third of all economic activity in B.C.
- BC small businesses shipped approximately \$11.9 billion worth of merchandise to international destinations in 2007, representing just over 38 per cent of the total value of goods exported from the province.

Most BC small businesses are self-employed

- Of the 384,300 business in British Columbia, 56% or 216,300 are self-employed and without paid help.
- Roughly 82 per cent of small businesses were micro-businesses with fewer than five employees.
- Women make up 34 percent of self-employed people in British Columbia, the fourth-highest rate in the country.

Small Businesses are top employers in B.C.

- Small businesses employ more than one million British Columbians – that's half the jobs in the province.
- Small businesses are home to over 56 percent of B.C.'s private sector jobs – the highest rate in Canada.
- Small business growth in B.C. is leading the country – 8.8 percent between 2002 and 2007, double the national average, creating 84,700 jobs.

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