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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General  
Emergency Management BC

### **State of emergency extended to continue B.C.'s COVID-19 response**

VICTORIA – The B.C. government has formally extended the provincial state of emergency, allowing Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, to continue to use extraordinary powers under the Emergency Program Act to support the Province's COVID-19 pandemic response.

“Government and public health officials are doing what we can to fight this pandemic, but individual responsibility is going to play a major role in how this pandemic turns out,” said Premier John Horgan. “As we head into fall, every one of us needs to be following public health guidance to the letter so we can keep schools safe, keep the economy moving and flatten the curve.”

On Aug. 21, police and other provincial enforcement officers were given the ability to issue \$2,000 violation tickets for owners or organizers contravening the provincial health officer's (PHO) order on gatherings and events. Between Aug. 21 and Sept. 12, 14 violation tickets were issued, including eight \$2,000 violation tickets to owners or organizers contravening the PHO's order on gatherings and events, and six \$200 violation tickets to individuals.

“We're asking British Columbians to do the right thing and continue taking the health of your family, friends and neighbours seriously,” said Farnworth. “We've put measures in place to protect people and deal with those who insist on breaking the rules. We all need to take personal responsibility and make choices that will keep our communities safe.”

The state of emergency is extended through the end of the day on Sept. 29, 2020, to allow government to continue to take the necessary actions to keep British Columbians safe and manage immediate concerns, such as recent outbreaks in some areas of the province.

Actions taken in the previous two weeks to support British Columbians include:

- investing \$1.6 billion in a fall and winter preparedness plan that will significantly build upon and strengthen measures that respond to the health-care requirements of COVID-19;
- boosting funds for school-based wellness programs and supports by \$2 million to enhance mental health programs and support a safe return to school;
- protecting jobs and workers impacted by COVID-19 with an online variance application that simplified the process to extend temporary layoffs, resulting in approval of more than 500 variances that protect more than 9,100 jobs across a variety of sectors;
- delaying implementation dates to April 2021 for changes to provincial sales tax and B.C.'s carbon tax to help businesses and families through the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery; and

- continuing the Province's emergency order protecting eligible businesses from being evicted, which will remain in place for the duration of the federal Canadian Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance program.

On July 10, the COVID-19 Related Measures Act came into force. The legislation enables provisions created for citizens and businesses in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to continue as needed should the provincial state of emergency end.

The extension of the provincial state of emergency is based on recommendations from B.C.'s health and emergency management officials. Farnworth made the original declaration on March 18, 2020, the day after Dr. Bonnie Henry, provincial health officer, declared a public health emergency.

#### **Quick Facts:**

- Declarations of provincial states of emergency may be issued by the minister responsible under the Emergency Program Act.
- The provincial government can extend the period of a declaration made by the minister responsible for further periods of up to 14 days at a time.
- During the 2017 wildfire season, the province was in a provincial state of emergency for 10 weeks from July 7 to Sept. 15.

#### **Learn More:**

Learn more about B.C.'s economic recovery planning: <http://gov.bc.ca/recoveryideas>

For information on BC's Restart Plan, visit: [www.gov.bc.ca/RestartBC](http://www.gov.bc.ca/RestartBC)

News release on measures to enforce COVID-19 public safety:  
<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020PSSG0046-001568>

For information on non-medical issues like travel recommendations and how to manage social isolation, visit: [www.gov.bc.ca/COVID-19](http://www.gov.bc.ca/COVID-19)

For information on federal and provincial government supports available to individuals, families, businesses and organizations, visit: [www.gov.bc.ca/covidgovernmentbenefits](http://www.gov.bc.ca/covidgovernmentbenefits)

For recommendations on protecting yourself and your community, including for employers, businesses and schools, visit:  
[http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-\(novel\)](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-(novel))

For more information and latest medical updates on COVID-19, follow the BC Centre for Disease Control on Twitter: @CDCofBC  
Or visit its website: <http://www.bccdc.ca/>

For non-medical information relating to COVID-19:  
Visit: [www.gov.bc.ca/COVID19](http://www.gov.bc.ca/COVID19)  
Email: [servicebc@gov.bc.ca](mailto:servicebc@gov.bc.ca)  
Or call: 1 888 COVID-19

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