

'It will be proceeding': Horgan and Trudeau talk pipeline, child care and transit ^[1]

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Source: Vancouver Sun

Format: Article

Publication Date: 14 Jan 2020

AVAILABILITY

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EXCERPTS

VICTORIA — B.C. will be able to keep open dozens of \$10-a-day child care sites after Ottawa pledged money to the program during a meeting Monday between Premier John Horgan and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

The \$60 million in federal funding for 53 prototype sites was set to expire March 31, leaving roughly 2,500 parents who only pay \$200 a month per spot in limbo. But Trudeau raised the issue during a teleconference meeting with Horgan and offered to continue the support.

“That’s the commitment the prime minister made to me today,” said Horgan. “The prime minister recognizes the importance of child care to families and the economy.”

The \$10-a-day child care issue was a promise by the NDP in the 2017 B.C. election, and since forming power the party has set a 10-year plan to implement the program.

Horgan and Trudeau had been set to meet in Victoria on Monday, but a snowstorm forced the cancellation of the PM’s flight. They had also set up to have a friendly beer in Horgan’s constituency of Langford, which was also cancelled. Instead, the two used video conferencing.

Horgan also raised the issue of federal funding for the Massey Tunnel replacement project, which could be a new eight-lane tunnel. Trudeau promised to contribute money during last year’s federal election campaign. Horgan said that because the new crossing won’t be tolled, he expects Ottawa to provide financial support and that Trudeau said he supported the idea.

The PM also expressed interest in helping fund a B.C. replacement for the aging Royal B.C. Museum in Victoria, which Horgan called “a cultural icon” for the province worthy of federal support.

The two leaders spent time discussing a blockade of the 670-kilometre, \$6 billion Coastal GasLink natural-gas pipeline project near Smithers by hereditary chiefs of the Wet’suwet’en nation who don’t agree with a deal the elected council signed to approve the pipeline. Trudeau told Horgan that the pipeline is a B.C. matter because it runs from Dawson Creek to Kitimat, and that Ottawa is monitoring the situation.

The Wet’suwet’en hereditary chiefs have said they don’t grant permission for work on their land and will defy an injunction to clear the site issued last month by the B.C. Supreme Court. A similar blockade last year resulted in national coverage of armed Mounties arresting protesters and Indigenous leaders.

“All the permits are in place for this project to proceed,” said Horgan. “It will be proceeding.”

He added that “the rule-of-law applies in British Columbia.”

The pipeline is the key feeder of a planned \$40-billion LNG Canada terminal in Kitimat, which the NDP government supports and has offered a \$6-billion tax break package for. Horgan toughened his language on the dispute Monday, saying that while he respects the relationship with the Wet’suwet’en hereditary chiefs, the company has 20 signed deals with elected First Nations and has the support of his government.

“We do stand behind it, I’m standing behind it today,” said Horgan.

Trudeau was in B.C. to meet with some of the families of the 57 Canadians who died when Iran shot down a Ukrainian passenger plane near Tehran last week. The PM has demanded Canadian investigators get access to the crash scene, full accountability from Iran and justice for the families of the victims.

Horgan said he feels Trudeau has “done a really good job” in how he’s responded to the crisis and represented the country.

“We shared our disappointment and sadness for those families and those communities affected,” Horgan said.

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