



March 31, 2021

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David Milburn, President  
Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association  
of British Columbia

Nigel Holmes, Executive Director  
Harness Racing BC

Grant Watson, President  
Canadian Thoroughbred Horse Society (British Columbia Division)

Via email: [stephenh@strategies360.ca](mailto:stephenh@strategies360.ca)

Dear Mr. Milburn, Mr. Holmes, and Mr. Watson:

Thank you for your ongoing communication and collaboration with government regarding the significant impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the horse racing industry in BC. I appreciate that the horse racing industry, like many other industries, has experienced significant challenges throughout the duration of the pandemic.

Government has reviewed the joint Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association and Harness Racing BC request of \$11M in provincial funding to support a full 2021 race season. Government has also reviewed a separate request received by the Minister of Agriculture, Food, and Fisheries for a three-year grant of \$375,000 a year to assist recovery and stability for Thoroughbred horse breeding and a PST exemption request for horse sales.

After careful consideration, government will not be providing any additional funding to BC's horse racing industry in 2021.

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Decisions regarding relief funding during the pandemic are difficult choices and are based on many factors as we focus on COVID-19 recovery over the next year. Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch (GPEB) staff conducted extensive analysis of the information that was provided by the industry. The analysis was considered in tandem with other government funding priorities.

This decision is not a reflection on the value of your industry to British Columbia. Government has received requests to support industries across the province and has had to establish priorities and make difficult choices.

Your comments and suggestions concerning a PST exemption for horse sales have been passed to the appropriate staff in the Ministry of Finance. Each year, government reviews provincial taxes and considers changes in preparation of the provincial budget. The government then implements tax changes that it determines to be appropriate within the context of the province's fiscal situation and other priorities. Your comments have been noted and will be considered as part of these discussions.

I understand that this is not the outcome that you were hoping for. GPEB will continue to fulfill its mandate to uphold the integrity of horse racing through these challenging times.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Robinson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Selina Robinson  
Minister

cc: Honourable Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture, Food & Fisheries  
Honourable Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General  
Brian Butters, Horse Racing Industry Management Committee  
Stephen Howard, Strategies 360