



March 16, 2023
Our Ref. 128407

Their Worship Simon Yu
Mayor
City of Prince George

Email Address: MayorAdmin@princegeorge.ca

Dear Mayor Simon Yu:

Thank you for your letter of February 24, 2023, regarding veterinary care in northern British Columbia.

Veterinarians are valued professionals, and I can assure you that our Government recognizes the critical role they play in supporting British Columbia's agricultural and aquaculture industries, and in protecting the health and welfare of animals. While there are no current plans to establish a veterinary medicine program in British Columbia, I can share with you some developments that are underway to ensure our province is able to support animal care.

Last spring, the Province of British Columbia [announced increased funding for the Western College of Veterinary Medicine \(WCVM\)](#) to double the intake of BC students starting their veterinary studies—the first increase in over a decade. We were also pleased to provide funding that enabled the WCVM to waive the differential tuition fees for previously admitted BC students who were not in a provincially subsidized seat.

Government also recognizes that increasing the number of educational spaces for veterinary students alone does not address the workforce pressures faced in the sector. Registered Veterinary Technologists are important members of the veterinary care team, who help alleviate some of the demand placed on veterinarians. Training programs for this role are offered through [Thompson Rivers University](#) and [Douglas College](#), allowing over 50 students to become Registered Veterinary Technologists each year. Thompson Rivers University also offers a part-time, [online diploma](#) for individuals already employed in veterinary clinics who wish to upgrade their education and training.

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My ministry and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (AF) are committed to continuing to work with partners to support veterinary care services in the province. For example, an agriculture-focused admissions stream for 15 percent of BC veterinary student spaces at WCVM for Fall 2023 has been supported. The Provincial Government has also added veterinarians and veterinary technologists to the list of priority occupations under the [Provincial Nominee Program](#), helping to ensure clinics have the international professionals they need to provide animal care.

The College of Veterinarians of British Columbia and the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association work together to ensure foreign trained veterinarians have the qualifications and training to practice in the province.

Ministry staff and I continue to work towards a solution on this matter and will continue to work with you and stakeholders to address this shortage of trained veterinarians.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,



Honourable Selina Robinson
Minister

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Minister of Agriculture and Food

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