

Date: September 12, 2017

To: The Honourable John Horgan, Premier
The Honourable Rob Fleming, Minister of Education
The Honourable Carole James, Minister of Finance

Cc: Dr. Andrew Weaver, Leader Green Party

Via: Email, Canada Post and Twitter

From: Robert Ford (no relation)

Re: **Seismic Upgrades for BC Schools**

Dear Mr. Horgan, Mr. Fleming and Ms James,

I am pretty much nobody -- or anybody -- a parent in Vancouver with two children in elementary and secondary school.

I noticed the absence of any mention of seismic upgrades to BC schools in your recent budget update.

Until you've created a plan that allows for all schools in BC, please stop making announcements like this: https://archive.news.gov.bc.ca/releases/news_releases_2017-2021/2017EDUC0097-001514.htm

Why are the children of Delta more important than my son and his classmates who are in a 105-year-old structure? This sense of unfairness comes from there being no overall plan for all schools in the province. At least not one that's funded.

And if the money is not in place, no announcement is worth more than the air it floats on. A commitment to expedite the process is like promising to run faster when you were originally in a sitting position.

Prioritization

Therefore, I have a suggestion. Publish right away a chart of all schools in the province that are not yet complete that looks like this.

Name of School	Seismic Rating (3=Most Dangerous, 1=Not too bad)	Student Population as of September 30, 2017	Risk Weight (Seismic * Population)	Current Status (Nearly Done, Started, Not Started)
Henry Hudson Vancouver	3	396	1188	Not Started
Kitsilano Secondary	3	1400	4200	Nearly Done
Etc.				

This chart will tell you which schools are at the most risk of killing the most children in an earthquake. Clearly those should be done first.

You can tweak this chart every September 30 based on school populations.

Scheduling. All districts should be divided into accessible labour areas. For example Prince Rupert likely won't use the same labour force as Vancouver and Burnaby. Your speed of upgrades should be estimated based on how fast you can have qualified workers do the work.

Budget. This work is a once-in-a-century job and should be amortized accordingly. You have a lot of actual data for how much upgrades cost (a dollars-per-square-foot figure would work) and therefore should be able to estimate every school in the province.

I strongly recommend distinct legislation to create a Seismic Mitigation Fund that is given money every quarter until the job is done. Also, why not set up a new lottery to help? PACs are always looking for ways to raise money. Why not have special, interesting-looking scratch tickets that PACs sell where they can keep some of the money? All proceeds would go to the Seismic Mitigation Fund. There's a grim irony to think gambling might help lower the odds of children being crushed to death during school hours.

Did you notice this proposal is nonpartisan?

It's time for creativity and commitment on seismic upgrades. Can I rely on you to undertake this well before the February budget?

Thanks,



Robert Ford
Interim PAC Chair, Hudson Elementary
1480 Arbutus St., Suite 32
Vancouver, BC V6J 3W8
robert@quokkasystems.com