



NEWS RELEASE

B.C. government per-person spending in 2022/23 almost 20% higher than 2019 despite end of pandemic

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VANCOUVER—The British Columbia government’s per-person spending in 2022/23, the latest year of available data, was nearly 20 per cent higher than in 2019/20, finds a new study published today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

“It’s difficult to overstate how much the B.C. government has changed course from nearly two decades of restrained spending to record-high spending levels as measured by per-person spending adjusted for inflation,” said Ben Eisen, senior fellow at the Fraser Institute and co-author of *British Columbia’s Current Spending Peak: Highest in History, Highest Growth in Canada*.

B.C. government spending (in 2022/23) reached its highest point ever on a per-person basis (\$14,275) after adjusting for inflation, higher than during the height of the pandemic (\$13,899).

As a result, the government projects a \$5.6 billion budget deficit this fiscal year. But if it had simply held per-person spending (inflation-adjusted) to 2019/20 levels in recent years, overall spending would now be \$8 billion lower than it is, and the province would be in a surplus rather than a deficit.

“Many British Columbians would be surprised to learn that the provincial government spent more on a per-person basis last year than it spent during the height of COVID,” Eisen said.

“As a result of rapid spending growth, the government is set to incur large deficits and accumulate substantial new debt.”

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