

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Office of the Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia
Jack Webster Foundation

April 28, 2022

Announcing the inaugural Lieutenant Governor's B.C. Journalism Fellowship recipient

VANCOUVER – In the spirit of supporting a healthy democracy with a thriving journalistic community, the Honourable Janet Austin, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, with the support of the Government House Foundation and in partnership with the Jack Webster Foundation, is pleased to announce the first recipient of the new Lieutenant Governor's B.C. Journalism Fellowship is Francesca Fionda, an experienced and award-winning investigative and data journalist, journalism instructor and adjunct professor.

The fellowship was offered and designed to provide a working journalist the opportunity to develop a well-substantiated, long-form piece of journalism to shed light on a subject of importance to British Columbians.

Fionda has been awarded \$25,000 to explore the gaps in support for evacuees of disasters in British Columbia. Over the coming months, she will investigate parts of this issue that have not been deeply covered. The findings of this investigation could have major impacts on preparedness and planning for people in B.C. displaced by disasters that are now occurring far too often. The Tyee has committed to publishing Fionda's work this year. The fellowship selection was determined by an esteemed jury of community leaders and former journalists.

"This year alone, our province was hit with disaster after disaster," said Fionda. "It's crucial that we look deeply at how we can support communities as they rebuild and where we're falling short. I'm grateful for this tremendous opportunity to create long-form journalism and hope that reporting on this issue will highlight ways forward through the climate crisis."

Details regarding eligibility and requirements for applications for next year's fellowship can be found here: <https://www.jackwebster.com/lieutenant-governors-bc-journalism-fellowship/>

Application intake for 2023 will begin starting in early 2023 with the recipient(s) announced in spring of 2023. At this time, the Lieutenant Governor's B.C. Journalism Fellowship is committed to delivering the annual award for three years: 2022, 2023, and 2024.

Quotes:

David Beers, editor-in-chief of The Tyee –

"What an honour to see Francesca receive the inaugural Lieutenant Governor's B.C. Journalism Fellowship, and for we at The Tyee to be able to publish what I'm sure will be a powerful piece of reporting in the public interest. We salute the Honourable Janet Austin, the Government House Foundation and the Jack Webster Foundation for creating this source of support allowing ambitious projects. It's a vital building block in constructing a diverse and vibrant new journalism landscape."

Honourable Janet Austin, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia –

"This inaugural fellowship project will analyze the displacement of British Columbians from the

increasingly severe climate disasters we are experiencing throughout our province. The news outlets we rely on in our democracy to maintain an informed citizenry are under-resourced and eroding, in a period of increased polarization and diminishing trust in the fact-based storytelling offered by professional journalists. Ms. Fionda has a talent for illuminating complex issues by utilizing data analysis to weave vibrant, informative stories allowing readers to more fully understand the impacts and nuances of these challenges we face.”

Joy Jennissen, chair of the board of the Jack Webster Foundation –

“We are incredibly pleased to partner with the Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia on this program. Providing journalists with the time and resources to go above and beyond their typical level of coverage will ensure that some of the under-reported but crucial challenges in B.C. receive the deep, complex storytelling they deserve.”

About the Government House Foundation

The Government House Foundation was created in 1988 to preserve, enhance and support the legacy of Government House, the ceremonial home of all British Columbians. Resources raised by the Foundation also help fund the legacy programs of Lieutenant Governors past and present.

The Honourable Janet Austin is the 30th Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, acting as the representative of the Crown in the province, and serving British Columbians through the themes of her mandate: reconciliation, diversity and inclusion, and engagement in democracy. Her Honour’s previous role was that of CEO of the YWCA Metro Vancouver; her professional career includes work with BC Housing and Big Sisters, in addition to serving on various boards, such as TransLink and the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade.

About the Jack Webster Foundation

The Jack Webster Foundation was established in 1986 upon the retirement of its namesake, who was western Canada’s best-known and most influential reporter, in order to foster and celebrate excellence in journalism, protect the public interest for British Columbian’s and create a community where trusted outstanding journalism thrives.

Contacts:

Janet Mitchell
Executive Director
Jack Webster Foundation
604 603-4218
info@jackwebster.com

Amanda Campbell
Director
Communications and Programmes
Office of the Lieutenant Governor of British
Columbia
250 480-8948
Amanda.Campbell@gov.bc.ca

Rachel Rilkoff
Communications and Events Officer
Office of the Lieutenant Governor of British
Columbia
778 679-2278
Rachel.Rilkoff@gov.bc.ca

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: news.gov.bc.ca/connect