

**MINUTES OF THE
59th ANNUAL CONVENTION**

OF THE

**ASSOCIATION OF
VANCOUVER ISLAND
AND
COASTAL COMMUNITIES**

**Langford, B.C.
April 11 – 13, 2008**

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**ASSOCIATION OF VANCOUVER ISLAND
AND COASTAL COMMUNITIES
MINUTES OF THE
FIFTY NINTH ANNUAL CONVENTION
LANGFORD, B.C.
APRIL 11, 12 AND 13, 2008**

CONVENTION OPENING SESSION

President Rod Sherrell called the Fifty Ninth Annual Meeting of the Association to order at 2:00 p.m. on Friday, April 11th. Ms. Carolyn Janzer Led the assembly in singing "O Canada". President Rod Sherrell introduced the AVICC Executive to the delegates in attendance.

Mayor Stewart Young welcomed the delegates to Langford. The Mayor thanked AVICC for selecting Langford as the host for the 2008 AVICC conference. Mayor Young urged the delegates to make use of the Langford Trolley and take an opportunity to see the community of Langford.

President Sherrell reviewed the program for the weekend and highlighted some of the special sessions that delegates would have the opportunity to take part in throughout the Convention. President Sherrell advised that the Premier Gordon Campbell would be speaking right after the lunch on Saturday. Chair Sherrell noted that UBCM President Susan Gimse and UBCM Executive members would be joining the AVICC delegates for the Welcome Reception and taking part in the AVICC Convention.

FIRST REPORT FROM THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Chair of the Nominating Committee, Past President Councillor Bea Holland, presented the Nominating Committee Report for the positions on the 2008 Executive and advised that there would be a call for nominations from the floor for the Table Officer positions at 4:20 p.m. Nominations received in advance were:

President	Mayor Barry Janyk, Town of Gibsons
First Vice-President	Mayor Christopher Causton, Town of Ladysmith
Second Vice-President	Director Barbara Price, Comox Valley RD
Director at Large	Councillor Barry Avis
	Chair Joe Stanhope

KEYNOTE PANEL

Mayor Causton introduced the panel on Climate Change which included Dr. Dan Smith, Chair, Department of Geography, UVic, Trevor Murdoch, Associate Director of the Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium, UVic, Eva Riccius, Manager, Marine Planning, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Nochola Wade, Executive Director, Caron Neutral Operations and Mr. Gerard Leblanc, MCIP, Duck Unlimited Contractor. Some presentations are attached as Appendix 'A'. Mayor Causton chaired the Question and Answer session. Chair Sherrell thanked the panel and presented them each with a gift.

REAR ADMIRAL T. H. W. PILE, CD

Councillor Avis introduced Rear Admiral Pile. Admiral Pile addressed the delegates. Admiral Pile spoke of the activities of the Navy as specific to Vancouver Island and Coastal communities. The Admiral stressed the importance of partnerships. He also spoke of the importance of the location of the Navy in British Columbia as we look across to the Asian Pacific. The Admiral also spoke of the broad role of the Navy, which does not just focus on coastal communities. Councillor Avis thanked the Rear Admiral and presented him with a gift.

ANNUAL MEETING

ADOPTION OF CONFERENCE RULES AND PROCEDURES

On regular motion, duly moved and seconded, the Conference Rules and Procedures as printed in the Annual Report and Resolutions Book were adopted.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

On regular motion, duly moved and seconded, the Minutes of the 58th Annual Meeting of the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities held in Qualicum Beach, April 13 – 15, 2007 were adopted.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS AND ANNUAL REPORT

On regular motion, duly moved and seconded, the President's report was adopted.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mayor Causton presented the Audited Financial Statements of the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities for the year ending December 31, 2007 (Appendix B). On regular motion, duly moved and seconded, the statements were adopted.

2008 DUES STRUCTURE

On regular motion, duly moved and seconded, that the proposed dues structure as outlined was adopted.

APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

On regular motion, duly moved and seconded, that the Executive be authorized to appoint auditors for the year commencing January 1, 2007 was adopted.

APPOINTMENT OF SCRUTINEERS

On regular motion, duly moved and seconded, that the Executive be authorized to appoint the following as Scrutineers:

Mr. Evan Parliament, District of Sooke
Ms, Lindy Kaercher District of Langford
was adopted.

SECOND REPORT FROM THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE FOR TABLE OFFICERS

The Chair of the Nominating Committee, Past President Councillor Bea Holland, called for nominations from the floor for the positions of Table Officers in addition to those received by the Committee.

There were no further nominations for President, First Vice-President or Second Vice-President and the Chair declared the following elected by acclamation:

President:	Mayor Barry Janyk
First Vice-President	Mayor Christopher Causton
Second Vice-President	Director Barbara Price

BEAR MOUNTAIN – THE VISION

Councillor Holland introduced Mr. Dale Sproule, Director of Real Estate and Mr. Steve Howe, Director of Golf Sales for Westin Bear Mountain Resort. Mr. Sproule spoke about the real estate portion of the Bear Mountain Resort and explained future plans for the resort. Mr. Howe talked of how the vision of Westin Bear Mountain Resort came about and highlighted many of the green initiatives that the Resort is implementing and about the benefits to the City of Langford. Councillor Holland thanked Mr. Sproule and Mr. Howe for their presentation.

WELCOME RECEPTION

The Welcome Reception sponsored by TimberWest and the Private Forest Landowners Association was held in the Ballrooms and Pre Function area of the Westin Bear Mountain Resort. Entertainment was supplied by the Naden Jazz Band.

The Convention re-convened at 8:30 a.m., Saturday, at the Westin Bear Mountain Resort.

MUNICIPAL INSURANCE ASSOCIATION

Councillor Barry Avis introduced Mr. Sherman Chow, Risk Manager from MIA. Mr. Chow made a presentation on some of the most unusual claims that have been made to MIA. Councillor Avis thanked Mr. Chow and Mr. Gibson for attending and making the presentation to the AVICC members and presented them with a gift.

RESOLUTIONS

Rules for dealing with resolutions adopted during the Annual Meeting were reviewed by Mayor Christopher Causton

ADDRESS BY DIRECTOR SUSAN GIMSE PRESIDENT, UNION OF B.C. MUNICIPALITIES

Chair Rod Sherrell introduced UBCM President Susan Gimse. President Gimse's remarks are annexed to these minutes as Appendix "B". Councillor Holland thanked President Gimse for her update on UBCM activities and for joining the AVICC delegates in Langford and presented President Binnie with a gift in appreciation.

The convention then commenced consideration of the resolutions.

RESOLUTIONS

RR1 TWINE AND AGRICULTURAL PLASTICS RECYCLING

Comox Strathcona RD

WHEREAS agricultural plastics and twine are recyclable materials generated by the agriculture industry and often sent to municipal solid waste landfills for disposal;

AND WHEREAS diverting agricultural plastics and twine to recycling facilities will reduce the volume of non-biodegradable materials at the landfill;

AND WHEREAS the BC Agricultural Council's Agriculture Environmental Partnership has a pilot to encourage farms and agri-businesses in BC to look to industry funded, environmentally sound and sustainable options for managing and recycling twine and agricultural plastic:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities provide information on the Agriculture Environment Partnership Initiative pilot and the issue of agricultural plastic and twine disposal to its member municipalities and regional districts;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities ask the provincial government to consider adding agricultural plastics and twine to the slate of product stewardship initiatives developed by the Ministry of Environment.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

RR2 NON-RESIDENT CORPORATE VOTE

Langford

WHEREAS the Local Government Act does not permit non-resident incorporated property owners to vote in local government elections;

AND WHEREAS every tax paying entity should have the right to vote in the jurisdiction in which they own property:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UBCM petition the provincial government to amend the Local Government Act to permit non-resident incorporated property owners the right to vote in local government elections.

ON MOTION, was NOT ENDORSED

R1 MUNICIPAL FISCAL IMBALANCE

Nanaimo RD

WHEREAS prior to 1997, the Province of BC Revenue Sharing Act provided for a sharing of provincial revenues with local governments;

AND WHEREAS in 1997, the previous Provincial Government eliminated these transfers, forcing local governments to increase their reliance on property taxes;

AND WHEREAS local governments have been required to act on behalf of their citizens with regards to new regulations and services, which previously were handled directly by the Province;

AND WHEREAS other revenue sources available to local governments cannot fill the gap between the growing costs to service our citizens and a sustainable level of property taxation;

AND WHEREAS the decline in transfers to local governments is in contrast to the rate of federal transfer payments to British Columbia and the other provinces;

AND WHEREAS compared to growing provincial and federal surpluses local governments across Canada are struggling:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Province and Federal governments take steps in their upcoming budgets to address the local government fiscal imbalance by developing a revenue sharing program with local governments and that these revenues be stable over time.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

R2 MUNICIPAL FISCAL IMBALANCE

Parksville

WHEREAS there exists a fiscal imbalance between municipalities and the senior levels of governments as the financial positions of the federal and provincial governments have greatly improved and the transfer payments to local governments have been reduced;

AND WHEREAS this imbalance, coupled with the need to meet increased service demands and to address the issue of replacement of aging infrastructure has resulted in ongoing increases in municipal property and business taxes and user fees which puts an undue burden on the municipal taxpayer:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities, the Union of BC Municipalities and the Federal of Canadian Municipalities be requested to lobby both the Province of BC and the Government of Canada to take steps in their upcoming budgets to address the Municipal Fiscal Imbalance by reinstating a revenue sharing program with municipalities and that these revenues be stable over time.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

R3 MUNICIPAL FISCAL IMBALANCE

Qualicum Beach

WHEREAS in 1997, the previous Provincial Government eliminated the transfers the *Revenue Sharing Act* provided prior to 1997 for a sharing of provincial revenues with local governments, forcing local governments, forcing local governments to increase their reliance on property taxes;

AND WHEREAS other revenue sources available to local governments cannot fill the gap between the increasing responsibilities and growing costs to service our citizens and a sustainable level of property taxation;

AND WHEREAS giving consideration that the decline in transfers to local governments is in contrast to the rate of federal transfer payments to British Columbia and compared to the growing provincial and federal surpluses:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Provincial Government take steps in their upcoming budget to address the local government fiscal imbalance by reinstating a revenue sharing program with local governments and that these revenues be stable over time.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

R4 BC RESOURCE COMPANIES

Tahsis

WHEREAS resource companies are subject to royalties, and extraction or stumpage fees;

AND WHEREAS local small communities are impacted by the activities of these companies and are challenged to maintain the infrastructure and services they utilize:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities request that the Province return a portion of monies collected in royalties and extraction or stumpage fees to the affected local government.

The resolution as amended, then read:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities request that the Province return a portion of monies collected in royalties and extraction, water royalties or stumpage fees to the affected local government.

ON MOTION, as amended, was ENDORSED

R5 SUSTAINABLE UNCONDITIONAL FUNDING

Gibsons

WHEREAS municipalities and regional districts throughout British Columbia are coming under increasing pressure to assume new roles in areas of social, environmental and economic responsibilities;

AND WHEREAS senior levels of government are reducing funding in specific programs in the areas of social, environmental and economic responsibilities that cause local governments to come under increasing pressure from its constituents;

AND WHEREAS local infrastructure is falling behind in its maintenance, and replacement, as local governments are reluctant to increase taxation while senior governments are enjoying budget surpluses;

AND WHEREAS many local governments cannot develop long term plans and sustainable solutions as their vital projects are entirely dependent upon receiving non-recurring senior governments grants;

AND WHEREAS a totally new level of taxation for local government would be required to fund the infrastructure needs and the new social, environmental and economic role responsibilities;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (AVICC) and the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) lobby the Federal and Provincial governments to help local governments address the social, environmental and economic inequities;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that both AVICC and UBCM work with senior government to establish sustainable unconditional funding for infrastructure repair and maintenance.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

R6 CONSUMPTION BASED TAXATION

Nanaimo City

WHEREAS senior governments are recording record surpluses as a result of significant cuts to social and climate protection services that our citizens expect as fundamental services to Canadian society;

AND WHEREAS local governments, being the only government accessible to our citizens, are obligated to carry out the social and climate protection services that senior governments have abandoned;

AND WHEREAS property taxes are not a fair and representative way to charge for “soft” services that are provided by local governments;

AND WHEREAS due to market conditions, property taxes are no longer representative of one’s ability to pay;

AND WHEREAS local governments in the United States have consumption based taxation as one of their revenue tools:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the local governments of British Columbia wish to re-open discussions with the Province regarding the use of consumption-based taxation as a revenue tool for local governments.

ON MOTION, was REFERRED TO AVICC EXECUTIVE

**ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE IDA CHONG
MINISTER OF COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Chair Sherrell welcomed Minister Chong to the 58th AVICC Convention. Minister Chong’s remarks are annexed to these Minutes as Appendix "C". Mayor Causton thanked Minister Chong for her remarks and presented her with a gift.

The Convention adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

The Convention reconvened at 10:45 p.m.

RESOLUTIONS

The Resolution Session resumed with Chair Rod Sherrell in the Chair.

R7 INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING FOR FIRE HALLS

Nanaimo RD

WHEREAS all local governments are legislated to prepare and maintain active emergency plans for their communities;

AND WHEREAS communities expect fire departments to play a key role in responding to emergency events;

AND WHEREAS fire halls in many communities are aging and many would suffer long term damage in the event of an earthquake;

AND WHEREAS fire departments contribute to the safety of all persons and property in the Province of BC;

AND WHEREAS there are no designated categories in current Provincial or Federal infrastructure programs to assist with constructing fire halls or to address seismic upgrades:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Province of BC and Government of Canada include seismic upgrading and construction of fire halls as eligible for funding in both current and future infrastructure grant programs.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

R8 REIMBURSEMENT OF COSTS FOR KEEPING OF PROVINCIAL PRISONERS

Nanaimo City

WHEREAS federal and provincial prisoners are housed in municipal lockups on a routine basis at a significant cost to the municipal taxpayers;

AND WHEREAS the Provincial reimbursement for the costs of keeping such prisoners does not reflect the actual costs;

AND WHEREAS discussions between the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, initiated by the endorsement of previous resolutions on this matter, has not resulted in changes to the level of reimbursements:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (AVICC) and the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) continue discussions with the Province to ensure that municipalities housing federal and provincial prisoners are reimbursed at a level that reflects actual costs.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

R9 GAS FRANCHISE FEES

Nanaimo City

WHEREAS section 22 of the *Community Charter* provides that a council may, by bylaw adopted with the approval of the electors, enter into an agreement that grants an exclusive or limited franchise for the provision of a public transportation system, water through a water supply system, sewage disposal through a sewage system, or gas, electrical or other energy supply system;

AND WHEREAS such agreements traditionally include a service fee with utility companies to compensate for the costly disruption and repair of roads, water, sewer, storm drains and other municipal infrastructure caused by installation of the utility system works;

AND WHEREAS section 7(5) of the *Vancouver Island Natural Gas Pipeline Act* revoked the ability for municipalities and regional districts on Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast to set such rates or charge fees by means of section 22 of the *Community Charter*, thereby passing the infrastructure repair costs onto local taxpayers (including those who will never be connected to natural gas):

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (AVICC) and the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) urge the Provincial government to amend the *Vancouver Island Natural Gas Pipeline Act* immediately in order to restore equal rights on this matter and provide fair and equal treatment for all local government taxpayers in British Columbia.

The resolution, as amended, then read:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (AVICC) and the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) urge the Provincial government to amend the *Vancouver Island Natural Gas Pipeline Act* immediately in order to restore equal rights on this matter and provide fair and equal treatment for all local government taxpayers in British Columbia.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that AVICC appeal to the Auditor General to undertake a review to determine if the pipeline has been paid for.

ON MOTION, as amended, was ENDORSED

R10 ELECTED OFFICIALS REMUNERATION

Nanaimo City

WHEREAS on January 30, 2007, the Premier tasked the Independent Commission to Review MLA Compensation to report back to the Speaker of the House in 90 days on the following terms of reference:

- Review MLA compensation including pension arrangements for Members of the Legislative Assembly;

- Recommend the basic compensation including pension arrangements for Members of the Legislative Assembly and stipends for the Premier, Members of Executive Council, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Speaker;
- Recommend allowances for parliamentary secretaries, chairs of legislative caucuses, whips and chairs of legislative committees; and
- Recommend the means by which MLA compensation, including pension arrangements, can be independently reviewed regularly and what, if any, annual adjustments should be made;

AND WHEREAS local governments throughout British Columbia struggle with determining an appropriate level of compensation for their elected officials:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (AVICC) and the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) recommend that the Independent Commission to Review MLA Compensation be mandated to recommend a process for determining appropriate remuneration for local government elected officials.

ON MOTION, was NOT ENDORSED

R11 FUNDING FOR FILM COMMISSIONS

Campbell River

WHEREAS film and television production are growing economic sectors on Vancouver Island and in other regions throughout British Columbia, offering a high economic return, low environmental impact industry, consistent with British Columbia's increasing attention to sustainable economic initiatives;

AND WHEREAS promotion through qualified regional film commissions, key to growth and development in this sector, requires consistent, stable and adequate funding to maintain professional international standards for film commissions and commissioners, yet provincial requirements to qualify for and receive core operating funding are beyond the scope of current funding provided by the Province.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Province of British Columbia be requested to provide annual core operating funding matching funds granted from municipal and regional governments.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

R12 TERM OF OFFICE

Port McNeill

WHEREAS there is a need to maintain the interest of the general public in the activities of their Municipal Council, Regional Board and Local Government generally;

AND WHEREAS the present onerous three year term makes it difficult to get new members to run for office, in comparison to the former two year system where a municipal election was held each year for half the Council members, thus generating on-going interest in local government and ensuring continuity:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Community request the Honourable Minister of Community Services and Minister Responsible for Seniors' and Women's Issues to introduce a change to the legislation to allow for annual municipal elections for half the Council for a two year term, in order:

1. To keep the interest of the public in this most democratic fashion.
2. To allow for continuity and avoid the possibility of a whole Council being defeated in one election.
3. To attract new Councillors who may be daunted by the length of a three-year term but who may be more willing to accept a two-year term.
4. To ensure the highest level of respect for this most important level of government.

ON MOTION, was NOT ENDORSED

R13 VARYING TAX RATES

Lake Cowichan

WHEREAS the *Community Charter* allows for the establishment of different tax rates for raising municipal revenue from each property class;

AND WHEREAS there is no legislative provision to allow municipalities to impose separate tax rates for each of land and improvements;

AND WHEREAS the current system of property taxation provides little or no incentive for property owners to make significant improvements to their property or provide municipalities the opportunity to reduce the impact of sudden fluctuations in property values by adjusting the tax rates for either land or improvements:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Province amend Section 197 of the *Community Charter* to allow municipalities to have the flexibility of levying separate tax rates for each of land and improvements for each property class.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

R14 ADDITIONAL HOME OWNER GRANT

Sooke

WHEREAS many senior residents of British Columbia have owned and lived in their home for more than twenty years, paid property taxes and intend to continue to live in their home;

AND WHEREAS senior residents have experienced an extraordinary rise in their property assessments over the past twenty years;

AND WHEREAS due to the high assessed value of their property, some senior property owners do not meet the requirements for additional Home Owner Grant and it is a hardship for them to pay their property taxes without the grant:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities and the Union of BC Municipalities urge the Provincial Government to amend the *Home Owner Grant Act* to allow all senior property owners to claim the full additional Home Owner Grant.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

**R15 POLICE RECORDS INFORMATION
MANAGEMENT ENVIRONMENT (PRIME)**

Comox

WHEREAS the Province of British Columbia has legislated that all police forces in British Columbia use the same occurrence records management system, which has resulted in the implementation of a common system called the Police Records Information Management Environment (PRIME);

AND WHEREAS the operation of the PRIME system, throughout British Columbia, has resulted in the need for more support resources than anticipated:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities and the Union of BC Municipalities urge the Province of British Columbia to provide additional support resources to police forces in British Columbia for the operation of the PRIME system.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

**R16 FUNDING FOR VICTIM SERVICES AND
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PROGRAMS**

Nanaimo RD

WHEREAS Victim Services and Restorative Justice programs provide support to victims of crime and provide counseling and alternative resolution services to many young and first time offenders;

AND WHEREAS these programs save dollars by reducing the need for trained police personnel to attend in court and/or respond to the needs of victims of crime;

AND WHEREAS there is no specific funding for Restorative Justice programs and very limited Provincial funding for Victim Services programs;

AND WHEREAS all communities contribute significant local resources to policing services despite growing surpluses at both the Provincial and Federal levels:

RESOLUTIONS

R18 WATERSHED CONTROL

Sunshine Coast RD

WHEREAS a number of resolutions have been endorsed by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities over the years requesting that the Province acknowledge and correct the anomaly that regional districts have an obligation to provide potable water and yet do not have the authority to determine what activities can take place within their watersheds;

AND WHEREAS no action has been taken by the Province to provide regional districts with such authority:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities and the Union of BC Municipalities make this issue a high priority and urge the Province to address this issue.

The resolution, as amended, then read:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities and the Union of BC Municipalities make a high priority to urge the Province to provide regional districts with greater authority to determine what activities take place in their watersheds.

ON MOTION, as amended, was ENDORSED

R19 PROVINCIAL WORKING ROUNDTABLE ON FORESTRY

Ucluelet

WHEREAS the provincial government has announced a working panel on issues in the forest industry;

AND WHEREAS communities with the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities region are heavily impacted by the health of coastal forest ecosystems and related economies:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the AVICC petition the provincial government to provide a local government seat on the roundtable and all related discussions;

AND BE IT FURTHER that the AVICC refer this resolution to the Union of BC Municipalities Executive for their consideration of representation at the provincial level.

The Resolution, as amended, then read

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the AVICC petition the provincial government to provide a Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities local government seat on the roundtable and all related discussions;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the AVICC refer this resolution to the Union of BC Municipalities Executive for their consideration of representation at the provincial level.

ON MOTION, as amended, was ENDORSED

TERASEN GAS

Director Price introduced Mr. David Bodnar, Director, Community, Aboriginal and Government Relations for Terasen Gas, a major supporter of AVICC. Mr. Bodnar spoke about some of the changes to the Terasen organization over the past year. Terasen became a member of the Fortis Group of companies approximately one year ago so now they provide not only natural gas and renewable energy and also electricity through Fortis BC. Terasen deliver over 20% of the end use energy used in British Columbia. Mr. Bodnar spoke of the direction of the province on environment, energy and the economy. Mr. Bodnar spoke about climate change and carbon is an element that we need to put a price on and try and reduce our carbon footprint. The natural gas bill will see about a 50¢ a gigajewel attached to the carbon tax. The other line item on your gas bill is the ICE fund to invest in new green technology. This should be about a \$50 a year hit for carbon tax. Terasen customers consume about 1/3 of the natural gas that is produced in the province. Revenue from all of the gas sector is about \$2 billion dollars. In all these revenues are going to increase in terms of social programs, see reduced air quality challenges, reduced greenhouse gases and reduced consumption of heavier polluting fossil fuels. Mr. Bodnar stated that on Vancouver Island there are still about 50,000 customers that are still operating on propane and oil that actually have a gas main right in front of their home and business. There is a huge opportunity to reduce your community emissions. Another step that Terasen has taken is energy efficient programs that have been rolled out year after year and typically been delivered annually with no continuum. This year Terasen is putting an aggressive energy efficiency application before the Energy Commission. It's a multi year program that would see Terasen delivering energy efficiently programs through to the end of 2010 and designed to help residential customers become more energy efficient. There is an institutional and commercial plan to help companies and local governments reduce their environmental footprint. There are also opportunities imbedded in that program for technology deployment and further education. Director Price thanked Mr. Bodnar for his presentation and the sponsorship of Terasen.

The convention adjourned for lunch at 12:05 p.m.

DELEGATE'S LUNCHEON

The Annual Delegate's Luncheon was held at the Westin Bear Mountain Resort.

The convention re-convened at 1:20 p.m.

ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE GORDON CAMPBELL

President Sherrell introduced Premier Campbell. Premier Campbell's remarks are annexed to these minutes as Appendix "D". Mayor Causton thanked Premier Campbell and presented him with a gift.

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

There were two concurrent workshops held from 2:00 p.m. The workshops were on the topics of:

- Coast Forest Policy Panel
- Age Friendly Communities

These workshops adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

ANNUAL AVICC BANQUET AND DANCE

In the evening, the Annual Banquet for delegates and guests was held at Westin Bear Mountain Resort. A Life Membership was awarded to Councillor Bea Holland as Past President and to Mayor Gerry Furney in recognition of his 40 years of service to local government. A dance followed the banquet with music provided by Chevy Ray and the Fins.

The Convention re-convened at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, April 13, 2008.

FOURTH REPORT FROM THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE FOR ELECTORAL AREA REPRESENTATIVE

The Chair of the Nominating Committee, Past President Councillor Bea Holland, presented the Nominating Committee Report for the position of Electoral Area Representative and advised that there would be a call for nominations from the floor.

Nominating Committee Chair Bea Holland then called for nominations from the floor for Electoral Area Representative.

Nominated from the floor was:

Director Mary Marcotte, Cowichan Valley Regional District

There being no further nominations Director Mary Marcotte was declared Electoral Area Representative by acclamation.

THE NEW RELATIONSHIP

Councillor Barry Avis introduced Jonathan Raynor, Director of Third Party Engagement from the Ministry of Aboriginal Relationships and Reconciliation. Mr. Raynor's remarks are appended as "Appendix E". Councillor Avis thanked Mr. Raynor and presented him with a gift.

LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Director Price introduced Carole James, Leader of the Official Opposition. Ms. James Remarks are appended to these minutes as Appendix "F". Councillor Johnson thanked Ms. James and presented her with a gift.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolutions resumed with Mayor Causton in the Chair.

R20 COMMUNITY FORESTS

Tahsis

WHEREAS the Province has eliminated Community Forest License extensions in favor of Community Forest Agreements;

AND WHEREAS the Community Forest Licenses have served the communities (where they are in place) effectively:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities request that the province re-instate community forest licenses and extend them upon expiry.

The resolution, as amended, then read:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Province work with existing Community Forest License holders on renewal in a manner that meets the needs of the affected communities.

ON MOTION, as amended, was ENDORSED

R21 ROAD AND HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

Port Alberni

WHEREAS the quality of highways road and bridge maintenance services provided by the Ministry of Transportation has a significant impact on the safety of our publicly owned highways;

AND WHEREAS the provision of quality highways road and bridge maintenance services not only ensures safe road conditions for those traveling our highways but also ensures that the maximum life span of our highways infrastructure can be realized;

AND WHEREAS the Ministry of Transportation has introduced a self-regulatory model by contracted service providers to assess compliance with required work standard:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Ministry of Transportation be called upon to ensure that contracted highways road and bridge maintenance providers fulfill their contractual obligations through enhanced monitoring and audits of work performance of contractors conducted by the Ministry of Transportation;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Ministry of Transportation provide regular accident reports for the service area, conduct comprehensive contractor performance assessments and report any findings semi-annually to key community stakeholders such as local governments, school boards, emergency community stakeholders such as local governments, school boards, emergency services, chambers of commerce and other relevant stakeholders in the service area;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities and the Union of BC Municipalities be called upon to adopt this resolution and urge the Ministry of Transportation to act on it as soon as possible.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

R22 HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

Alberni-Clayoquot RD

WHEREAS the standard of highway maintenance appears to have dropped this winter compared to previous years;

AND WHEREAS the Ministry of Transportation is responsible for highway maintenance:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities ask the Ministry of Transportation to ensure that there is adequate winter maintenance on Provincial highways.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

**R23 LABELLING OF GENETICALLY
MODIFIED FOOD**

Sunshine Coast RD

WHEREAS it is a fundamental right of the citizens of Canada to make choices regarding what we eat and what we feed our children;

AND WHEREAS genetically modified organisms in our food chain area biologically altered substances often containing the genes of completely unrelated species with no testing of the long-term health implications;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Canada does not currently require food producers to label their products as containing genetically modified organisms, thereby eliminating the ability of Canadians to make fully informed choices with respect to the food we eat:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities and the Union of BC Municipalities request of the federal government that any such food containing genetically modified organisms be labeled as such, including which ingredients are genetically modified organisms.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

R24 WARNING LABELS ON ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Courtenay

WHEREAS warning labels on alcoholic beverages may assist in preventing health problems and reduce the risk to the public:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Provincial Government require the following warning labels on all alcoholic beverages sold in British Columbia:

1. Women should avoid alcoholic beverages during pregnancy because of the risk of birth defects;
2. The consumption of alcoholic beverages impairs your ability to operate machinery and over consumption may cause health problems;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the warning labels contain graphic information similar to that shown on cigarette packages.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

**R25 TRAINING SPACES FOR DOCTORS AND
OTHER MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS**

Powell River RD

WHEREAS there is a nation-wide shortage of doctors and other medical professionals and this shortage is particularly acute in rural areas, which comprise much of this province;

AND WHEREAS this shortage has resulted in large part, from the lack of training opportunities available at our post-secondary institution:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities lobby the Minister of Health to substantially increase funding provided to universities and other medical training facilities so they can supply the larger number of graduates who will be required to rectify the increasingly critical shortage of medical personnel available to attend to the health care needs of BC residents.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

R26 SMALL COMMUNITY WATER AND SEWER SYSTEMS

Tahsis

WHEREAS the regulatory requirements for water distribution and sewage disposal systems are the responsibility of local government;

AND WHEREAS the training and development of water distribution and sewage disposal system operators has become a financial and logistical burden to small communities;

AND WHEREAS the ability to meet the standards for local operators may put the community at risk in maintaining water quality and safety of treated sewage on the environment in small communities:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities request that the Province develop and fund a program to educate and certify water and sewer system operators in small communities.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

**R27 INTEGRATED OCEANS MANAGEMENT
PLANNING PROCESS**

Alert Bay

WHEREAS the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia have signed a Memorandum of Understanding respecting the implementation of Canada's Oceans Strategy on the Pacific Coast of Canada;

AND WHEREAS the process of integrated planning for the Pacific North Coast Integrated Management area (PNCIMA) appears to have stalled due to lack of commitment and adequate funding:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities urge the Government of British Columbia to immediately commit to increased engagement and collaboration in the integrated Oceans Management Planning Process for the Pacific North Coast Integrated Management area (PNCIMA).

The resolution, as amended, then read:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities urge the Government of Canada and the Government of British Columbia to immediately commit to increased engagement and collaboration in the integrated Oceans Management Planning Process for the Pacific Coast of Canada

ON MOTION, as amended, was ENDORSED

R28 IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATED OCEANS MANAGEMENT
UNDER CANADA'S OCEANS ACT **Central Coast RD**

WHEREAS the Pacific Ocean plays a critical role in the economy, culture, ecology and health of BC, especially coastal communities;

AND WHEREAS the Province of British Columbia and the Government of Canada signed a Memorandum of Understanding Respecting the Implementation of Canada's Oceans Strategy on the Pacific Coast of Canada in 2004 and the Government of Canada identified the Pacific North Coast Integrated Management Area (PNCIMA) in 2005 as the lead Large Ocean Management Area (LOMA) for the Pacific Region under Canada's Oceans Action Plan:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities:

1. Urge the Government of Canada to move on its commitment under the *Oceans Act* to work with governments and interested parties to immediately develop an Integrated Oceans Management Planning Process for PNCIMA;
2. Urge the Government of British Columbia to engage in the collaborative process of Integrated Oceans Management Planning;
3. Request that the federal government engages local governments in the PNCIMA planning process;
4. Call for the continued allocation of funds to Integrated Oceans Management in the federal budget, including funds to support the engagement of municipalities;
5. Request that an Integrated Oceans Management Planning Process for PNCIMA be publicly announced before December 31, 2008.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

R29 TRANSMISSION LINES ASSOCIATED WITH IPP'S **Powell River RD**

WHEREAS private interests are proposing an inordinate number of run-of-river Independent Power Projects (IPP's) throughout the Province, with each project requiring a corridor for its transmission line;

AND WHEREAS collectively, these transmission lines have the potential to reduce the forestry value of a large expanse of crown land and to negatively impact recreation and tourism values in their vicinity:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities strongly urge the Provincial Government, together with the BC Transmission Corporation and BC Hydro, to initiate a process which will require the pre-planning and coordination of IPP transmission line routes and capacities with the objective of having companies share this infrastructure in order to reduce its extent and to minimize its impact on other crown land resources and users.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

R30 NON-REFILLABLE 15L PET CONTAINERS

Sunshine Coast RD

WHEREAS the Province has made a commitment to the 'Three R's' of reduce, reuse and recycle;

AND WHEREAS the introduction of 15 litre non-refillable PET containers will increase the amount of waste entering landfills:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Ministry of Environment be urged to ban 15 litre non-refillable water containers from use in British Columbia.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

R31 PEARL LAKE WATERSHED

Comox-Strathcona RD

WHEREAS the Pearl Lake watershed is one of the few remaining Vancouver Island old growth watersheds in the Georgia Strait Basin;

AND WHEREAS Pearl Lake is a major source of the Oyster River, which supports a community water system and a highly successful salmon enhancement project;

AND WHEREAS the Pearl Lake valley is contiguous with Strathcona Provincial Park:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government acts to preserve the Pearl Lake watershed and include it in Strathcona Provincial Park.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

**R32 DEREGULATION OF
COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING**

Comox-Strathcona RD

WHEREAS the Canadian Radio Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) is considering that "it might be appropriate to eliminate the regulatory requirement that a community channel, if offered, be distributed as part of the basic service (Ref. 2007-10, Paragraph 73);

AND WHEREAS community programming is an important asset to our communities and one that supports our citizens in a variety of ways by giving them access to local news, events and views and is an important element of communications in our communities;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Canadian Radio Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) be informed as soon as possible that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities is not in favour of the proposal to deregulate community programming, but is in favour of the CRTC continuing to protect community programming by maintaining the current regulations

which mandates that a community channel, if offered, be distributed as part of the basic cable service.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

R33 COMMUNITY BASED MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT

Metchosin

WHEREAS the Capital Regional District Family Court and Youth Justice Committee has developed an integrated identification, diagnosis and mental health management service Pilot Projects to be delivered to children and youth at Rock Heights Middle School (S.D. #63) and Belmont Secondary (S.D. #62);

AND WHEREAS the Union of British Columbia Municipalities passed resolution B153 in 2006 to encourage the development of mental health services along the lines of the Pilot Projects proposed by the Capital Regional District Family Court and Youth Justice Committee:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities request the Ministries of Education, Health and Children and Family Development work together to fund the Community Based Mental Health Pilot Projects developed by the Capital Regional District Family Court and Youth Justice Committee.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

R34 PUBLIC PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

Lake Cowichan

WHEREAS it is recognized that public education is a function of the school district;

AND WHEREAS it is desirable and necessary that school districts simply concentrate on the provision of good quality public education;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government be petitioned to transfer the ownership and operation of properties presently owned by the school districts to the municipalities in which these are located;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the use of required properties for education facilities by the school districts be achieved by lease agreements between the municipalities and the school districts so that the latter can concentrate on their mandate of providing excellent public education in the most cost effective and efficient manner.

The Resolution, as amended, then read:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government be petitioned to transfer the ownership and operation of properties presently owned by the school districts to the local governments in which these are located;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the use of required properties for education facilities by the school districts be achieved by lease agreements between the local governments and the school districts so that the latter can concentrate on their mandate of providing excellent public education in the most cost effective and efficient manner.

ON MOTION, was NOT ENDORSED as amended

R35 MANUFACTURED HOME PARKS

Cowichan Valley RD

WHEREAS Manufactured Home Parks are a unique form of affordable housing that offer a lifestyle for residents who enjoy a community atmosphere, yet the infrastructure in many of the older Manufactured Home Parks is failing and in need of significant upgrades to meet present day environmental standards;

AND WHEREAS there are various restrictions placed on Manufactured Home Park owners with respect to raising funds to pay for upgrades to infrastructure:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Province provide incentives to new and existing manufactured home park owners so that this form of affordable housing will attract new investment dollars and permit the upgrading of existing manufactured home park infrastructure.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

R36 MANUFACTURED HOME PARK TENANCY ACT

Nanaimo City

WHEREAS the province, through the BC Housing and Policy Branch commissioned a study on the redevelopment of manufactured home parks and the displacement of tenants who lived in these parks;

AND WHEREAS the study recommended that the Province amend the *Manufactured Home Park Tenancy Act* in order to increase the base level of compensation for displaced manufactured home tenants from a 12-month pad rental, which is currently required:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (AVICC) and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) urge the Province to amend the *Manufactured Home Park Tenancy Act* in order to increase the compensation for displaced manufactured home park tenants.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

**R37 INCLUSION OF BC FERRIES IN
OMBUDSMANS MANDATE**

Sunshine Coast RD

Whereas the Provincial Government has exempted BC Ferry Services from the oversight provisions of the *Ombudsman Act*;

AND WHEREAS the *Ombudsman Act* provides British Columbian's an important avenue by which to register complaints of administrative unfairness by a public agency and BC Ferry Services receives substantial public funds:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Province be urged to include BC Ferry Services in the oversight provisions of the *Ombudsman Act* to allow an avenue for impartial investigations of complaints about the administrative actions of the agency.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

LR1 SOCIAL SERVICES

Nanaimo City

WHEREAS senior governments are recording record surpluses as a result of significant cuts to social services that our citizens expect as fundamental services to Canadian society;

AND WHEREAS local governments being the government most accessible to our citizens, are obligated to carry out the social services that senior governments have abandoned;

AND WHEREAS the City of Nanaimo has taken all reasonable steps within its powers to facilitate the creation of affordable housing for those on low or fixed incomes:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Nanaimo hereby requests the financial assistance of the Province of British Columbia and the Government of Canada in the acquisition and/or creation of housing stock suited to the needs of those furthest from prosperity.

The Resolution, as amended, then read:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial and federal governments work with local governments to create a province-wide funding program to support affordable housing initiatives.

ON MOTION, as amended, was ENDORSED

LR2 TSOLUM RIVER PARTNERSHIP

Comox

WHEREAS salmon runs in the Tsolum River have declined significantly since the late 1940's;

AND WHEREAS it has been determined that the main reason for this decline has been copper leaching from an abandoned mining operation on Mount Washington:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities supports the Tsolum River Partnership's proposed remediation efforts to further prevent copper leachate from entering the Tsolum River.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

WHEREAS only two percent of the 1883 Esquimalt and Nanaimo (E&N) Railway land grant on south-eastern Vancouver Island, which encompasses 23% of Vancouver Island, has been set aside for the protection and control of community drinking watersheds, the conservation of wildlife, the preservation of one of the most endangered old growth ecosystems in BC, and for public enjoyment and use for the approximately 87 percent of Vancouver Island's population that live within the E&N land grant lands and where there is a compelling need for increased access to recreational land as well as clean water and safe, locally grown food dependent on sustainable land use planning;

AND WHEREAS forestry licensees paid reduced taxes on their private lands as a result of entering into tree farm licences, and entered into a social contract with British Columbians, in return for sole access to public timber, with an objective of stable employment in dependent communities, and now being allowed to sell this forest land for development, is a breach of that social contract which was entered into with a Tree Farm Licence contract and would require compensation to the public and a stringent examination and scrutiny of the original contract for the historic E&N land exchange as to the intent, legality and conditions of the land transfer and the status of the elements of that agreement so that the terms of the contract can be presented to and be understood by Federal, Provincial, Local Governments and the public:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, THAT the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities requests as an urgent matter, that the Federal and Provincial Governments declare a moratorium on the sale and land transfer of all land currently zoned as Forest or Resource Land and a moratorium on development approvals within those forest lands within the original E&N land grant area, especially those in the CDFmm (Coastal Douglas-fir, moist maritime biogeoclimatic zone), so as to enable the federal and provincial lawmakers the opportunity to create appropriate legislation to enable the public to control and manage decisions within the private forest land areas within the E&N lands that ensure that all land use, especially where sensitive ecosystems are concerned, are orderly, sustainable, biologically defensible and that this legislation be made in the public interest so that the protection of community drinking water and wildlife corridors can be achieved through the acquisition of community drinking watersheds in these lands to fully protect the drinking water, air and livability of the region.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

WHEREAS the province has implemented several 'product stewardship' programs for specific waste materials as part of its commitment to the 'Three R's of reduce, reuse and recycle;

AND WHEREAS the toxicity of household batteries creates a significant environmental risk in landfills and is a concern for local governments;

AND WHEREAS there is a modest voluntary recycling program for rechargeable household batteries but no program at all for non-rechargeable household batteries;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities urge the Ministry of Environment to require producers to take responsibility for their product by setting up a comprehensive product stewardship program that includes all household batteries and services all communities of the Province.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

LR5 TRANSPORTATION

Central Coast RD

WHEREAS the North Coast Ferry Advisory Committee passed a motion at their regular meeting on April 3, 2008, recognizing the critical importance of BC Ferries obtaining an additional 'Blue Water' capable vessel as an essential component of their business continuity plan;

AND WHEREAS a replacement vessel for the Queen of Chilliwack that currently provides BC Ferries Route 40 'Discovery Coast' service is required by new Transport Canada regulations effective in 2012, and current industry timelines for the construction or procurement of an appropriate vessel for Route 40 dictate that an immediate purchase order is required to meet the 2012 deadline;

AND WHEREAS it is recognized that the social and economic benefits derived from BC Ferries Route 40 extend beyond the Central Coast region to include all tourism providers in British Columbia:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities lobby all applicable BC Government Ministries to immediately provide BC Ferries with the resources necessary to procure an appropriate replacement vessel in order to ensure the continued provision of Route 40 Ferry Service to the Central Coast Region.

ON MOTION, was ENDORSED

INSTALLATION OF NEW EXECUTIVE

Mayor Causton introduced the 2008 Executive and extended congratulations to them:

President	Mayor Barry Janyk, Town of Gibsons
First Vice President	Mayor Christopher Causton, District of Oak Bay
Second Vice President	Director Barbara Price, Comox Valley RD
Electoral Area Representative	Director Mary Marcotte, Cowichan Valley RD
Directors at Large	Councillor Barry Avis, Town of Qualicum Beach
	Councillor Kyara Kahakauwila, District of Metchosin
	Chair Joe Stanhope, Nanaimo RD
Past President	Director Rod Sherrell, Mt. Waddington RD

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

Incoming President Mayor Barry Janyk made his remarks via video. Mayor Janyk thanked everyone for their support and outlined his plans for the coming year and spoke of the many issues facing AVICC members that the Executive would be focusing on.

CONVENTION CLOSING

The Convention adjourned at 11: 55 a.m.

Certified Correct

Eydie Fraser
Executive Coordinator

**ADDRESS BY UBCM PRESIDENT
DIRECTOR SUSAN GIMSE**

Thank you very much Rod for those kind words of introduction. I want to begin by acknowledging the work of you and AVICC. It certainly has been enjoyable working with Rod on the Executive this year.

I am a huge fan of our Area Associations and I really enjoy the perspective that they bring to the UBCM Board table. This year I have held quarterly meetings with the 5 Area Association Presidents so that we could all share information and see how we could further strengthen our relationship.

I am really pleased to be here today. I am even more pleased to be able to introduce all of the UBCM Executive and some of our staff. For the first time ever... your Conference and our Executive meeting are occurring at the same time. Could the UBCM Executive members and staff please stand up?

We have just had our April Executive meeting in Victoria this past week, so our Board members have used this opportunity to piggy-back on your AVICC Conference to get a good feel for the issues facing Vancouver Island and our Coastal Communities.

I would also like to draw your attention to the fact that we have 3 life members here this morning. I would like to acknowledge the contributions that Mayor Frank Leonard, Brenda Binnie and Richard Taylor (Jim Abrams) have made to UBCM over the years.

This is the second year that we have chosen to have our April meeting in Victoria rather than Richmond. I can tell you that our committee and our Board meetings had full agendas... Our schedule was hectic... but we accomplished a lot.

We used our time in Victoria to gain access to a wide variety of Cabinet Ministers and senior staff. Many of our Committees scheduled meetings with Provincial Ministers who are responsible for key files that affect local governments.

And that is really what UBCM is all about... we address issues that we face as local governments everyday.

Advocacy is the core of our operations.

We are first and foremost an advocacy organization. Yes, we deliver some very valuable programs on your behalf, but at the heart of the matter... we are here to make sure that your concerns and interests are addressed at the Provincial level.

In order to be successful, we need to maintain good relationships with senior levels of Government.

At UBCM we have worked hard to develop trust and good working relationships with the Province. We know this is essential.

So that's not to say that we don't sometimes disagree with the Province... because we certainly do! But we hold true to the conviction that we need to be able to have access to government. And we are committed to continuing this.

Here are some examples of our ongoing work that you might be interested in:

First Nations - New Relationship

Local Governments across BC are generally familiar with the Treaty process. In some places treaty negotiations are at an advanced stage.

But recently Local Governments have been expressing concerns with their lack of involvement in New Relationship negotiations.

They are not opposed to the Provincial initiative... but our membership rejects being left out of the discussions.

UBCM presently has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Province respecting our role in treaty negotiations. We plan to renew this... and have requested that this MOU be expanded to define local government's role in the New Relationship.

We are currently having discussions with the Province to achieve this. Yesterday we had a very positive meeting with Minister De Jong and he recognizes the value of including local government in the process.

Environment Initiatives... I don't need to tell you that this is a busy area these days. Here are a few of the initiatives that we are involved in:

We have agreed to participate in the development of the Provincial Brownfields Strategy. It has not been completed... but I would note that the Province has announced a \$10 million remediation fund to support such a strategy.

We are key partners in the development of this strategy and will be working on rolling it out in the coming months. There is already work underway on building capacity for local governments to deal with brownfields in their communities.

Sewerage System Regulation... Our UBCM Committee that is working on this has received excellent feedback from our membership on this matter... and has identified 17 action areas for follow-up with the Province. UBCM has devoted staff resources to this file for the past 2 years.

Having said this, there have been some changes agreed to by the Province, but not enough to reflect the view of our membership. So we will keep working on this one.

In addition... our Sewerage System Committee has advocated that a communications plan be put in place to inform the membership of the status of work by the Province on each of the 17 initiatives.

Climate Action Charter...Local Governments have recognized the importance of this Charter, and to date, 113 members have signed on.

In keeping with the Climate Action Charters that many of you have signed, we have established a joint Green Communities Committee with the Province... and it is up and running. 3 working groups have been appointed and will begin meeting this month. They recognize the diversity of our membership and the fact that one size does not fit all. They are structured around the following themes:

- i. Large Communities
- ii. Small Communities, and
- iii. Defining and measuring carbon neutrality

All are working under tight timelines and will report out at Convention.

TILMA ...Once again we have strong direction from our membership on this subject. We signed a Consultation Agreement with the Province last summer... and continue to negotiate with Provincial officials over TILMA's application to local governments.

We also continue to involve Donald Lidstone as our advisor on this file.

Stay tuned on this one - we will have more details to report in the coming months. TILMA is due to take effect on local governments on April 1, 2009 ...so there must be clarity on the impacts to local governments prior to that time.

Fiscal Imbalance... Again this is another area where we heard from you and received several resolutions. And what you are saying to us is that local governments need Long-term... Predictable sources of funding.

UBCM has met with the Premier, Minister Taylor and Minister Chong and conveyed your concerns.

Here is the feedback that we have received: "*UBCM needs to make the case to support this request.*"

This is where we are focusing our efforts at present. We have engaged a consultant, Peter Adams, to conduct research and provide some advice to our Executive on how best to make the case.

We see this as a long-term initiative... but we know that you have immediate financial needs...and we have asked the Province to consider a wide variety of revenue opportunities for local government in the short to medium term.

Public Health Act

We have been involved in the development of a new Public Health Act. During all of our consultations we have been guided by UBCM policy including a resolution passed at the 2007 Convention.

I recently met with the Minister to review the progress made to date...and there has been some good progress. I reminded the Minister of the positions of our membership.

The legislation was tabled in the Legislature on Wednesday of this week... and we did not get everything that we had asked for.

One thing that I can say is that we worked hard with both the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Community Services to find solutions. The final result may not be what we wanted... but it is way better than where we started.

That's what consultation is about – the opportunity to put forward your interests and work to resolve them. While getting our way 100% of the time would be fantastic – sometimes less is often more realistic.

Municipal House... I am so pleased to announce that construction has started.

We had an opportunity to receive a full briefing at our meetings this week on the construction of Municipal House in Victoria.

We have all faced challenges of completing capital projects in the present construction climate... and appreciate that there are always surprises along the way. After some initial delays, it is good to see the foundation beginning to take shape for UBCM's new home in the Capital.

I'm really proud to say that it will be a GOLD LEED building that is in keeping with the green agenda that our local governments are pursuing. As representatives of local government our Executive felt that it is important to walk the talk.

I have also invited our 5 Area Associations to consider donating a piece of art to Municipal House... and we have received a favorable response. I think this is a great opportunity to show case the spirit, beauty and history of the regions of our Province.

Infrastructure Programs

Last Fall the Prime Minister and Premier signed the Building Canada Agreement. This agreement provides a framework for programs in BC. The next big step for us is to secure a signed Communities Component Agreement... which will lock in new infrastructure funding for our membership.

I can tell you that our Executive and staff are spending a lot of time on this... and to date we feel that our positive working relationship with the Ministry of Community Services has served us well.

There is no final agreement yet... but we are hopeful that Canada and BC will be able to finalize something in the coming months. I should also tell you that we are further ahead in BC on this file than most other Provinces in Canada.

Gas Tax Extension

Let me end with some great news. Recently I signed an Agreement on behalf of UBCM... along with Minister Ida Chong and Minister Lawrence Cannon... to extend the Gas Tax Agreement from 2011 - 2014. This is positive news indeed.

It is one thing to receive a promise but it is quite another to turn that promise into a written agreement that will deliver over a billion dollars for BC local governments.

What this means is that every local government in the AVICC will be able to count on stable, long term funding. The Gas Tax program has delivered some big projects to your members – things like

- *the E&N Rail Trail development in Victoria...*
- *and the upgrades for the Nanaimo RD's Pollution Control Centres.*

But the strength of the program is that every local government benefits.

- *Port Alberni can replace aging sewage aerators;*
- *Qualicum Beach can add new ultra violet water purification;*
- *Campbell River can implement its Smart Growth strategy for Quinsam Heights and Nunn's Creek, and*
- *Powell River can improve the energy efficiency of the arena with Free Heater technology.*

Once again we are the first Province in Canada to secure an extension of the Gas Tax Agreement.

And we owe a great deal of thanks to the Premier for inviting us to the table at the onset of this program... and ensuring that local government interests and priorities are heard.

I have had these Area Association meetings penciled in on my calendar for a long time. I really value the work that you do... and I am a big believer that strong, grassroots, Area Associations lead to a strong UBCM.

Thank you for inviting me here today. I also want to recognize that these events don't just happen without a lot of work... so congratulations to the organizing committee and your staff.

We look forward to seeing all of you in Penticton this September.

ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
HONOURABLE IDA CHONG

Good morning. Thank you very much Rod for your warm welcome and introduction. I hate to say it but I think I've been around long enough that I see so many familiar faces in the room that if you make a slip up in my bio they might correct you. As I say so many of you I have known over the years and I do want to say its great to see everybody once again. I know he's probably going to be introduced but I would like to acknowledge my colleague Charlie Wyse but he's a good guy and we've had good exchanges as well I know there are many of you who I have met with over the last number of weeks and months. Even so its great to see all of you here. I'm so appreciative to acknowledge that we're gathered on the traditional territory of the Coast Salish people.

One of the best parts of my job as you know is being able to go out and meet with all of you in your communities. To have that face to face with you and your council because I know at some of these Area Associations meetings not everyone comes to them and its difficult because of home situations or work situations. So sometimes only a select few of you are able to attend but when I get into your communities I do try and set up time to meet with you and your council and give you more than the fifteen minutes at UBCM and spend an hour or so with you and I find it really interesting because you all do spend the time putting an agenda together that gives me a real good synopsis of what is going on in your communities. So when programs are designed to provide more opportunities for you and your community to meet the challenges that they are designed with your smaller and sometime more rural communities in mind as well as some of our larger communities.

Since I've been Minister since 2005 I think I've traveled to just about all parts of the province. I know here on the Island I've definitely been to Port Alice, Port Hardy, Sechelt, Gibsons, certainly Ladysmith, Nanaimo and Tofino, Courtenay, Qualicum Beach, Parksville. I know I'll miss out some of the towns but that there are a few more that I'm going to be out and about and visiting. By going into your communities, driving on your roads, looking at the accessibility and seeing how your communities have grown and changed over the number of the years really gives me a better idea so when I get back to my office in Victoria to speak to staff and they see one of your applications coming in I actually have a better understanding of what it is and what the challenges are that are facing you.

Before I get into my notes I would like to acknowledge that we have some new people who have been elected since last AVICC because of a number of by-elections. That was one in Mount Waddington and that was Heidi Solteau. I haven't met her yet. Nice to you here Heidi at your first AVICC. Another by-election was in Powell River and I don't know if Councillor Patricia Aldworth is here. I actually met Patricia in a different life when I was a Councillor. It's nice to be able to catch up and meet up with her again. I would to remember and know all of you have already, is our past member is Brenda Swanson from Mount Waddington Regional District who I know was it was very much a shock to all of us when we lost her last fall. I know that her work and her spirit lives

on and will be remember. So to all of you again, thank you for really striving to make your communities the best places to live, the best places to work, to see investment and to really enjoy. We all know it takes hard work, takes good planning and that to is a challenge because I know we are facing fewer and fewer planners around the province and it takes good leadership and support and that's where you come. It's why our government is committed to working with you constantly to improve the way we can work with you.

In addition to a number of the annual grants you have been receiving, as you know from time to time there are new grants and new funding programs that we introduce. The idea of those is to be specific on where we want to move as a province and obviously in your communities. We want to ensure that there are opportunities that you can seize upon. I can since 2005 since I became the Minister I have seen unprecedented opportunities for funding programs that have taken place and that you as leaders have taken advantage of. Sometimes much more so and more aggressively than expected. I can tell you that when I see all the applications come in we are always over subscribed. That's not a bad thing but it means that you all have ideas in your communities on what you want to see happening. More importantly the ideas that you have and some of them have been really incredible are ones that are leaving legacies in your communities. I think when you get elected to public life you want to see things happen, you want to make changes and you want to leave legacies and that to is important. Some of those legacies are because of the programs that we are introducing are to ensure you have greener, more sustainable places to live. Some of the other programs as you know are more established and they will still need to continue. So I will commit to you as I have in the past that I will continue to work as your Minister of Community Services with my provincial colleagues, the other Ministers to secure more funds for programs that they may be providing. I know you've seen more dollars for flood protection for those who have experienced serious concerns in that area. We see more dollars going into unique sports facilities, more dollars for emergency planning, for health promotion. I will continue to work with those Ministries or others that may bring forward programs that you need to access. I also will continue to work with the Federal Government. Regardless of who is in Ottawa we have always made a commitment here in BC with our government to work with the Federal government to secure whatever funds that could be made available to this province to get access to our fair share and then to ensure that we act upon it quickly and not be one of the last ones to sign on to a deal. Sometime it changes along the way. We feel that if we are working co-operatively with our federal colleagues it means that we will benefit in the long run because those dollars come back that much quicker. Certainly on your behalf I will work to make sure that the programs do meet your objectives and this is where I need your help from time to time if you think those programs aren't meeting your objectives. If we need to tweak them, or make them better, maybe conditions should be placed upon and I know that's hard to believe because I know you like to see unconditional grants but if you do think a program is better served by having specific conditions placed then I need to hear from you. You can discuss it at AVICC or at UBCM or amongst yourselves in smaller groups and forward those on to me. I'm always willing to hear from you.

Over the past number of years I have seen over \$500 million dollars in additional provincial support flow to our BC communities. With the Gas Tax dollars that we just

signed close to \$2 billion dollars flowing through in the Gas Tax funds coming into your communities which has been specifically for green infrastructure and enhanced public transit. Back in 2005 you may recall when I was at UBCM we signed an agreement for \$635 million coming into the BC communities. Recently I in Kelowna and we've extended that agreement which was due to expire in 2010 and it will now go to the year 2014 and I know you are probably all aware of four more years of Gas Tax money and it's a billion dollars. The reason I wanted to let you know why we signed so quickly was because first of all we wanted to make sure nothing would change that would jeopardize the billion dollars to BC communities but also to ensure that the agreement we had in place with the Federal government would still stay intact. You may recall it is one of the provincial federal gas tax agreements across the country. We're the first province to ensure that the money went directly through to UBCM as your provincial municipal organization. That hasn't happened across the country. We were concerned that there may be a thought that they change back to the traditional way which it would go to the provincial government before it gets to you. I'm sure you've seen the benefit of it going through to UBCM and then out to you. We are really happy that we were able to sign on to that and sometimes it's more important to talk about its been able to accomplish more than just the dollars. That along with the BC Community Water Improvement that we also introduced in 2005. I have seen so many projects and I wanted to highlight them because when you see them or hear about them it may spark something in your community that you think you need and as I know some of you are facing challenges with small staffing resources and you may want to get someone working on it. So in Campbell River I know there is a cutting edge technology to improve drinking water because of our \$2.6 million dollar investment. I know in my own community of Saanich through LocoMotion there is going to be more bike paths and walkways leading to greener, healthier communities. LocoMotion dollars were provided in about \$550,000 dollars. In Port McNeill you are going to have better storm drainage and better protected fisheries habitat as they received the maximum of \$400,000 for their Towns for Tomorrow. Nanaimo, Victoria, Campbell River, Port Alberni, Ladysmith are all the communities now who are putting in their Spirit Squares and are going to work towards having a public town square that is going to highlight festivals, social activities and in particular I hope highlight some of the stories that you'll be telling as we celebrate BC 150 because I know there are many stories to be told in your community about what has happened there. We have been able to of course look at our smaller communities benefiting from some of these programs but the doubling of the Small Community Grants and Regional District Grants I think is the most significant for some of our smaller communities. As some of you will know in that program about \$25 million dollars a year was going to small communities around the province, \$2 million dollars around the province to regional districts. So it's a \$27 million program. In 2005 the Premier committed to doubling that by the year 2009 and he left it up to me on how we would do that, whether it would be doubled in the year 2009 or whether I wanted to phase it in. Of course being an accountant, incrementally phasing it in means incrementally there are more dollars for you. So I went to Treasury Board and said I would like to bring a quarter of it in each and every year so those three years in between you would get those dollars each year. I'm glad to say that the third year of that will be in place this year so you'll be receiving extra dollars. For those communities who may received than what they think because your towns are growing because it is based on a formula and it's also based on other communities that may be coming on board. I know generally most of you have received more dollars but definitely more

than what you received in 2005. That's also really critical in some of your communities and those are unconditional grants for you to decide what to do with those dollars. If you decided to use those dollars as your share of other programs that we have that require you to have matching dollars so be it. They are your unconditional dollars. In each and every case we will be looking at our programs and this may mean revising them to ensure that we are meeting some of the more important objectives ensuring that you do have greener communities, which is a very major commitment on the part of our government on your part. You will know that the LocoMotion Grants were designed to do that. Our Towns for Tomorrow will be again geared towards more of those kinds of applications. With the Green Cities awards and we're encouraging you to submit applications. Last year we received applications from every category except for one group. The applications close at the end of next week. I'll just quickly remind you, it's next Friday. Last year Nanaimo Regional District was an award recipient and other finalists were from the Capital Regional District on Salt Spring Island and Ladysmith were finalists. I know there are many green initiatives that you are doing here on the Island. It's important that as an association you support each other but more importantly that you apply. What I would like to say though is the one category that we did not receive any applications were the under 1,500 population category and I know that there are a few on the Island. So just imagine if you were the only one that applied you would have received \$25,000 dollars for your small community of 1,500 and I think that's substantial. As I go around to every Area Association I'm going to remind them of that and I'm hoping there will be applications although by the time I get to the other Area Associations applications will have closed. So you still have time if you haven't put in your application.

The area that was spoken about last year at UBCM and I know the Premier is going to speak about this when he arrives this afternoon is about the monumental challenge that we're all facing and that is climate change. You will know that through discussions with UBCM and through to your Area Association we are wanting to ensure that each and every one of us can do our part to help reduce our carbon footprint. What can we do to help our communities and our citizens reduce their footprint? So those of you signed onto the Climate Action Charter I want to say thank you. Last year at UBCM I think there were about 60 or 70 who came up to the podium and shook the Premier's hand. The Charter is about your commitment to be carbon neutral in your government by the year 2012. As a provincial government we're going to get there by 2010. It's your commitment to measure and report greenhouse gas emissions. So far of the 188 local governments, which is 160 municipal governments and 28 regional districts, of 188 of you 114 have now signed on. So thank you because that's really great. We're over the halfway mark and it means a few more others will I hope sign on. You know who you are so I'm not going to read a long list. If you know of communities that are still wondering if they need to sign on I ask you to encourage them because I'd like to see 100% sign on by next UBCM and I think that would be a wonderful success story and that's one that we would share across the province and across the country and tell other provinces that they too can do something. That would set us apart again, yet again British Columbia as a leader. You know that with whets happening with climate change the Minister of Finance has brought in legislation. A revenue neutral carbon tax is coming in but at the same time in the next two

months we should all be receiving our \$100 carbon dividend and that's for every woman, man and child. That is designed to help those individuals mitigate whatever additional costs may come because the carbon tax will not be coming in until after that so the dollars are given to you ahead of time. We've estimated about \$1.8 billion dollars will be collected. And again its designed to go back to individuals, to businesses and be returned to British Columbians through personal and business tax accounts and to re-invest in finding ways to reduce our carbon footprint and at the same time reduce our energy consumption and also water. What it means for Vancouver Island it what I want to say here, is that we have roughly 760,000 people on Vancouver Island that means \$76 million dollars here on Vancouver Island. \$76 million dollars is a large injection for Vancouver Island and if the individuals decide to use it to mitigate costs, great and if they use them for other personal choices I hope that you will see that filter down in your community in terms of economic activities that can take place. Again I just want to remind you that this is an area that we continue to work with UBCM on as well to understand how to measure greenhouse gases.

I think its important as we grow as a society we do think differently about how our communities are adapting and I want to thank those communities around here who have taken advantage of the dollars that have been set aside to UB and that was in 2004 for our Age Friendly Cities and I want to put a plug in for Saanich because there are some councillors here. Saanich embarked on an age friendly project through the World Health Organization. Alert Bay was invited to participate as a rural community and I believe Lumby as well in the interior. It is important as we are seeing aging populations. Right now one in seven over the age of 65. That is going to change to one in four. We all have to think about how we are designing our buildings, how we're designing our walkways, our pathways, our community recreation centres, on how we are going to ensure our citizens can access those places and feel safe when they do. I know you are able to do that and I am confident you can.

I just want to very quickly mention to you the Canada BC Infrastructure fund. The municipal infrastructure fund that was put in place and you have all applied for. You will note we had about \$220 million dollars worth of projects that we were able to support. We had \$1.2 billion dollars requested so it was over subscribed close to five to six times more than what was available. We had to certainly choose those projects that ranked the highest. Of course those that dealt with public health and environment always rank the highest and the program was 60% would go to green and 40% to non-green. So the 40% went to some things like roads in your communities and upgrades there. They too had an evaluation that tried to look at things like energy consumption, reduction on that and water use. I don't expect that the criteria will change much from that when we announce Build Canada fund when that eventually is signed off. My staff have been in negotiation with Ottawa but it will be very likely that we will look at those applications and will have a very focused target in those areas. So we will wait to see what happens in our next negotiations with the federal government. I am pleased to tell you that we are one of the first provinces again out of the gate and we hope to have that fairly quickly,

Finally the last part is the public transit and I know that is important to all of you. The Public Transit Capital agreement that we had with the federal government also has allowed us to put some dollars into your community. I know there are community buses that are occurring in places that never had them before. I was on Salt Spring Island recently and for those from Salt Spring that are here will know that they got two new buses and I heard people saying they were just going to completely give us their cars now there was a bus system in place. As we look at community buses in your communities I think we need to keep in mind on the most obvious routes and opportunities there but also again this goes back to our Age Friendly communities, are they in routes where your seniors are able to utilize that. I see communities that are now building out where they've got a heavy concentration of seniors in the area and when they all give up their cars they are going to need some way to get back into town if they are out of town to visit their doctors, to pick up their prescriptions, to visit others that they need. So again I hope you will think about that.

At the end of the day I just want to say thank you for all that you are doing. I do want to continue to hear from you. I want to hear if there are barriers to your success. I want to tell me what you think is holding you from moving forward, what's holding you back. UBCM has brought forward some wonderful ideas and I will continue to work with them and its great that UBCM for the first time has attended AVICC because they were here for an Executive meeting so these are the avenues we can work with you. Again with the programs in other Ministries, even in the Ministry of Education where they've opened Strong Start centres. Those too you can speak with me if you think we need improvements in those areas. I just want to say that in 217 days something is happening around the province, local government elections so its only 217 days away. I know some of you are still making of your minds but let me just say that for those of you who are preparing and gearing up for it I will offer now my very best wishes for your success and however those results may be I do want to say we will be producing a brand new candidates guide. That should be out at the end of June, a new voters guide as well. Please take an opportunity to review those materials when they come out. For those of you who are not seeking re-election I want to thank you for the service you have provided. Some of you have certainly served more than one or two terms and some of you are into the decades. Thank you for all that you have done. For those of you who are returning or seeking re-election, again I wish good luck as well. Its always an exciting time during an election and more so when you feel that you've just put your foot into the water and feel that you have more things to do and that you want to continue on. It's a great time to be a politician in this province. Things are happening in your local governments, things are happening in our provincial government and if we continue to work the federal government level I think we'll continue to make things happen for all us.

Thank you very much and have a great convention.

Q: Mayor Teunis Westbroek

For some of who won't be back here at next AVICC thank you for your sincerity and a job well done. I want to give you some feedback on holding us back on

some of these grants and I want to thank you on behalf of Qualicum Beach for the grants we received recently on our Spirit Square but also on these trails. We've put in a number of trail applications and some of these applications are very restrictive and I think a policy maker you have good intentions but when it comes down to the bureaucracy they are very restrictive. For instance our second or third choice was selected instead of our number one choice and it would have been less expensive so we ask you that you look at what the bureaucracy is doing with the regulations.

Q: Councillor Vic Derman

Not long ago an arm of your government chose to release lands from some of the Tree Farm Licenses without involvement of local government and perhaps with quid pro quo on behalf of the residents of the province opening up some area for development that are entirely inconsistent with the provinces own intentions for climate change initiatives. In response to that the Capital Regional District passed bylaws to try and regain control over the development process and it's my understanding that it is your Ministry that is responsible for confirming provincial support for those bylaws. It hasn't happened to this point. Could you let me know when that file might be addressed.

Minister Chong

Yes I understand my staff has advised came into the Ministry of February so it has been about five or six weeks. Ordinarily bylaws that come through to me whether they are boundary extensions for that matter, if they are routine and there is no controversy they are passed and put forward fairly quickly. Sometimes it only takes a week, sometimes a couple of weeks. Bylaws that are presented to me that have areas of divergent opinion or views will require more time and the staff review that before forwarding it to me because they are obliged to ensure that if there are any concerns that they are duly dealt with before they bring them forward to me. Because this has gained some public attention over the last while I have asked staff where it is and they have advised me that they have not concluded their review but they would provide those to me as soon as they have concluded them. Part of the obligation of course when there are issues that are raised that they can determine especially when it comes to adequate consultation whether adequate consultation has taken place, in some cases where there are First Nations issues, whether First Nations have been consulted and have had an opportunity to provide their views. Sometime when we send out letters to other provincial agencies to see if they have any areas of concern so these are all the places that we have to make sure we have covered off on before I do sign off on. Some people write back very quickly and say there is no problem, I don't have any issues. Others say I have an issue and could you provide us some time to present our issue. At that point staff would hold that back before they present it to me. There is a process that is in place. It's a process that is applied to all of our bylaws that are presented to me and come forward as an Official Community Plan change or a Growth Strategy through a regional district. Those are similar to some of the items we look at when we have a boundary extension. I know sometimes people would like deadlines on these things but when you're dealing with other agencies or other interests it would be unfair to limit their opportunity to limit their input.

Q: Counillor Bruce Lloyd

Would it not be fair to accuse of double speak when you speak about the \$100 per resident that you're sending to our town when by my rough calculation you are removing two to three times that amount from our community with the carbon tax. Really I think its double speak in that sense, would you agree?

Minister Chong

No

Q: Director Tony Bennett

One of the concerns facing the rural areas that are non-serviceable is of course the septic regulations that the government had recently adopted. We're seeing problems with those regulations systems that have recently been certified are failing. The cost is prohibitive for replacing existing fields in the neighbourhood of \$20,000 plus. We understand the need in new developments have those systems put into place and understand that is a cost of development. Any homeowners who live out in rural areas the costs are prohibitive and I was wondering if the Minister will be looking at with the Ministry of Health a review of the septic regulations as they stand and also providing some assistance to property owners looking at replacing the existing failing systems?

Minister Chong

I can certainly raise that with the Ministers and perhaps you can provide me with more information. I know we are looking at the sewerage regulations and we've been working with UBCM on that and that is still in process right now but if that review does not cover what you refer to then we certainly can have a look at that.

ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE GORDON CAMPBELL
PREMIER OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Thank you Rod and thank you all for staying instead of going out and playing golf on a beautiful day today at spectacular Bear Mountain. I want to start by recognizing that we're in the traditional territories of the Coast Salish First Nations. I think its really a critical component of our economic and social future that we continue to reach out to First Nations across the province and I actually wanted to say thanks to all of you in local government for the work that you are doing to rebuild the relationships and to build partnerships with First Nations throughout and across this great island of Vancouver Island. It makes a big difference.

I want to be sure that you notice that we have some of our MLA's here. Murray Coell joins us from Saanich North and the Islands, Ida Chong who I know you chatted with earlier today. Ida is the Minister of Community Services. I saw John Horgan here earlier this morning. I know that Ron Cantelon is coming. Stan Hagen sends his apologies; he can't be here this afternoon. I also noticed that former MLA Rick Kasper joins us today.

It's interesting over the last little while as I've been traveling on Vancouver Island I've been struck by three specific numbers. 150, 40 and 113. One hundred and fifty is that we're celebrating our 150th anniversary and of course British Columbia as a province began on Vancouver Island in this particular part of our province and when you have a 150th anniversary I do think its important for us to think back, to learn the lessons that we have to learn and to recognize that actually this is a time for us to project into the future what we want to become as a province, what you want to become as a critically important region of our province on Vancouver Island. Local government has a very important part to play in that.

That brings me to my second number forty. Many of have been involved in elected office for some time and those of us who have at the local government recognize that there are some people in our province that have made an enormous contribution, year in and year out. They keep focused on the goals of their communities, the goals of their region and the goals of their province. They're able to raise themselves up above the local boundaries that sometimes confine us and say how do we do better for everyone that is in British Columbia, throughout the province whether its in resource communities, whether its in the major urban regions, there is a voice that has been speaking on behalf of local government for forty years and that is none other than your own Gerry Furney. Now I can tell you the first time I did a major tour of all of Vancouver Island was fifteen years ago and I don't know how many of you have actually had the opportunity to go to Zeballos and to Port McNeill and Port Hardy and Victoria and Port Alberni and all of the communities in between on Vancouver Island. But as I did that I was fortunate because I arrived in Port McNeill and there was the Mayor of Port McNeill. How many people have actually been to Port McNeill? That's very good Gerry, excellent. How many of you moved out of Port McNeill. That's too bad Gerry, you lost one there. I didn't think I was going to stay too long. But for those of you who have been there and that is most of you, just imagine getting a three and a

half hour tour of Port McNeill by the Mayor. I saw where some of the institutions had their garbage. It was spectacular. I just want to say that you haven't lived on Vancouver Island until you've had Gerry Furney take you on his personalized here's the place we're going for fish and chips tour of Port McNeill. I want to thank Gerry for giving me that gift so early in my Vancouver Island endeavors. Thank you very much for that Gerry. I also Gerry would like you to come up so I can just give you this as recognition of your service.

I would just like to read this out. *"On behalf of the people of British Columbia the province proudly recognizes the outstanding contribution to municipal government by Gerry Furney during his forty years of public service to Port McNeill as a Councillor and a Mayor. As a compelling and persuasive voice within the Association of Vancouver and Coastal Communities Mr. Furney has been instrumental in bringing together municipal government and the province of British Columbia in a long standing spirit of partnership, mutual respect and understanding. Mr. Furney's accomplishments reflect a deep-rooted sense of home and a calling to community service underscored by undaunted personal integrity. He has established a legacy that will continue to benefit communities on northern Vancouver Island and serve as a model for others. The province is pleased to recognize Gerry Furney's role in keeping Port McNeill and northern Vancouver Island vibrant, sustainable and prosperous."* Thank you very much Gerry.

To think back when Gerry was first on council in Port McNeill, I'm just going to use this because it shows how much the Island has changed and yet how much it stays the same in spite of those changes that roll across the Island decade after decade. It's pretty amazing to think there are four of those decades that have come in and out since Gerry started. But to think about the opportunities that are in front of us is always critically important issue as we look at the future of the Island and I think yet again Gerry Furney was always someone as we mentioned in that proclamation who never lost sight of the fact that actually the way for us to do the best we can do was through partnerships. It's through recognizing that local government brings to the table an understanding that is of critical importance to us really accomplishing our goals and our objectives. We can set overall provincial objectives and we do but as we set those objectives we have to recognize in different parts of the province there will be different ways we can pursue those goals and achieve those objectives.

We've tried over the last number of years to create a number of different kinds of programs that will respond to the individual needs of local communities in British Columbia. I know that you have all benefited from these in some way or another. The Spirit Square program was really about trying to establish a centre in communities, a place where communities could come together in the traditional sense. A kind of commons where we could not just celebrate our good news but we could gather together and talk about the challenges we face and find solutions. The LocoMotion program was about trying to establish a new way of looking at how we design our communities for the future that we want to create in British Columbia. The Towns for Tomorrow program was trying to say to ourselves how do we deal with those smaller communities, sometimes because of the vastness of the challenges we face and because of the scale sometimes those smaller communities didn't have the resources they needed even for the first steps of infrastructure development that is wanted so we established the Towns for Tomorrow program. Olympic Live Sites was a way of trying

to say we want every community in the province large and small to be able to benefit the coming of the Winter Olympics in 2010.

All of those things were really trying to find ways to build partnerships with local government. I think its really important for us, Gerry has been doing this for forty years and he's still here and he's still offering suggestions of how we can do better. It's important I think for all of us to recognize this job is never done. There isn't a time where you can say good, we've done that. We've got to constantly pursue improvement. We've got to constantly pursue new ways and approaches to meeting the challenge and sometime they're daunting challenges we have but also to take advantage of the great opportunities we have when we live in a place like Vancouver Island. You know sometimes we think too small about this place. I was in four communities a week ago Friday and what struck me was how large Vancouver Island is. Its important I think to recognize to fully benefit we have to bring together all of the communities on Vancouver Island. We have to bring together not just Vancouver Island but the province in pursuing our objectives and our goals. We have to do it openly. I can tell you this, this is not I think for any of you a news break, but you don't get any smarter when you get elected to the provincial legislature. There are a lot of us in the provincial legislature who started in local government and we don't want to lose track, we don't want to lose the context that local government gave to us as we were elected and we come to provincial office. We want to try and build partnerships where we are reinforcing what you would like to do. That doesn't mean we don't have provincial objectives we're trying to pursue but we want to be open to here's what would work best.

Just in the first four programs that I mentioned, over the next few months you'll get a note from Ida and myself and that notes is going to say to you, here are the things we were trying to do with this program, not how did it work for us but how did it work for you? How could we make it better? Where are the areas of partnership that you think we can bring some focus and to drive an agenda forward on behalf of you in your communities? I want to talk about a couple of communities on Vancouver Island that I think have done a particularly good job of creating vision for where they want to go that allows us to come to the table with them to help compliment the investments they're making and the vision they have. Maybe we're complimenting it with the federal government; maybe we're doing it just with the province and the community alone. Maybe we're doing it with the province, community and non-market organizations and societies. But you can't get any of these partnerships built if there is not a comprehensive picture of where you want to go.

Let me start with Nanaimo. Gary Korpan and his council came to me a couple of years ago and said you know here's what we want to do, here's where we want to go. It was an array of programs and opportunities they were trying to tap into and I asked them to try and bring that together in one comprehensive package that they could say to government this is what we want. Just so I'm clear with everybody, I know one of the things that everybody wants, I'm just guessing but think it can be summed up in two words – more money from the province. I get that but you know when I deal federally if all the province every do with the federal government is to say send more money we don't build literacy for us about what we're trying to do nor literacy for them which I think is a critical thing for us about what we're trying to do. So Gary and his council

came forward and said here all the things that we would like to try and accomplish and they included initiatives around homelessness and mental health and addiction services. They were doing that with local community with a local society. We were able to invest in a partnership with them on that. They said we want to pursue new goals and objectives for our airport that we think are critically important to the mid Island region of the province. We were able to help them with that. They said now we have the Vancouver Island Convention Centre and we want to move that ahead and we want to make sure as we move that ahead we are actually reflective of the new environmental standards that the province is doing. We were able to help with that. They have other objectives that they want to meet. They work with the Snuneymuxw First Nations to make sure that this happens because this compliments our economic strategy. They have the Malaspina University College. They have some goals and objectives that they have set for the college as a potential University that they told us about. One of the critical things is that we need to hear from you about what it is that you are trying to accomplish. We can't read those specifics of those plans unless your leadership of those of you who are in this room tells us these are all the things we are trying to do. We can put the tools that we have, we will not say I can almost guarantee you Ida or Murray or any other Minister or myself can say, "sure whatever you want" but I can tell you we can work together with you to accomplish your goals if you're willing to work with us in that regard. I actually want to take my hat off to the City of Nanaimo because I think the City of Nanaimo has a real vision of what they want to do for the mid Island. They are driving an economic agenda, a social agenda, a community agenda which I think will be exemplary not just on Vancouver Island but in the province of British Columbia. I want to take my hat off to you Gary and to all of your council for the great work that you have been doing. You've done great work for everyone you serve.

The other day I was in Port Alberni with Ken. Is Ken in here? We were talking about the Spirit Square and Ken said "this is what we're doing and this is where we're going and this is what we hope to do in Port Alberni and here are the things that we're working with our industry here" and you know already Port Alberni has seen the benefit that are coming from that. They work directly with the First Nations. There were First Nations leaders and chiefs that were there and again because Ken and his council have the kind of vision that they need to survive and move the agenda forward we were able to be a positive contributor to the agenda. We want to keep doing that and I want to congratulate you Ken for the work you are doing in Port Alberni. Thank you so much for that.

As we look at these partnerships I think it's really critically important for us to notice that this is a great huge asset that you live on. This is a great green Island. This is an island that Conde Nast looked at they've said this is America's greatest island to visit. I sure you sit here because you have to go to Council meetings as I used when I was on Council and you find out what your problems are, what your great assets are. You are one of the best places in America to visit that is called an Island. You can be at the forefront of that and you can build on that agenda. You can build on that agenda with new approaches, whether its to forestry or to energy, whether its to community development or community shaping. All of those things are going to be part of what you can show people who come to Vancouver Island. You have already made big steps in that regard. You're still making steps; we're always making progress in that regard.

But you are actually doing that. Oh sorry, I see Charlie here. Hi Charlie. Charlie Wyse is here from Cariboo South. Part of Vancouver Island I hadn't recognized in the past but nice to have you here. I think what is really critically important about this is you have this exceptional region of the province and in many ways this is a region that British Columbians haven't discovered yet. Just think of that. When British Columbians hear the term Vancouver Island what do you think they see in their minds eye? I heard it. Okay ferry lineups. What else do they see? No I don't think they see ferry fares but I appreciate the thought. What else do they see? They see the parliament buildings and they may see beauty. I actually think generally speaking they see the parliament buildings. It is one of the most recognized images in the province. You know why I think that because when we have visitors to British Columbia and they'll see me, actually its not as much when they're actually standing on Vancouver Island but when they're in Vancouver and I'll say how was your trip? They say "oh it was really good, really enjoyed this and I liked that, I can't believe how good your wines are from here, I've already been to Victoria Island." Have you ever heard that Victoria Island? Well it seems to me what we have to do is make a bigger vision of this. How many people have heard of the West Coast Trail? A lot of people still haven't heard of the North Coast Trail. When I came to Vancouver Island the first time I did a tour I had never been to Port Hardy. Port Hardy is at the northern part of the Island. You know there are people who say Campbell River is the northern part of the Island. They haven't driven to Port Hardy from Campbell River. This is a big place. It's about half the size of the country of Ireland. Now a lot of people don't know this but Gerry Furney was thrown out of Ireland and that's why he has come to Vancouver Island. It's half the size of Ireland. It already has major, major assets going for it and as we look to the future I think we actually have to envisage those assets and what we want Vancouver Island to be in the long term. And we will only be successful in reaching that vision and those goals if we work together. We don't do it if we're having major fights about it at every opportunity we get. We have to do it by saying here's our unified vision for this region. There will be differences of how you get there in the region but we have to unify that. Just like we have to have a unified vision for the province of British Columbia. It's not about one group of British Columbians against another. It's about all British Columbians sharing and how we move forward and Vancouver Island is a way to bring that to the table for us. So when we think of Vancouver Island and when you think of it I want you to think of this great green island that you have in the middle of this great ocean called the Pacific and recognize that you are the front door to the Pacific in so many ways. You are the front door in so many ways. You are the front door of where we can be.

I've talked to you in the past about an aging population. I can tell you I'm looking a little older now than I was fifteen years ago when I took my first tour of the Island. And I would hazard to say that Gerry is a little older now than he was forty years ago. We're all getting older and we've talked in the past about shaping our communities and designing our communities around making them better places for older people. That does not mean they are not capable of contributing. Older people are contributing an enormous amount to the social and economic and vibrant life that we have in British Columbia. But we do have to recognize that there are changes and approaches, as you get older. When I was a kid I used to play football. I used to be out there getting beaten around the head and shoulders on a regular basis. You know I haven't thought about going and playing tackle football for some time. In fact what know is the fastest

growing pastimes in Northern America today are gardening, golf and bird watching. Now that's a demographic shift. That's just the tip that shows us the changes that are taking place. Older people are less mobile in some ways. How do we design our communities so that they still have access to the services they require? As my Mom got older my Mom decided to leave her single family home. Because of the neighbourhood she lives in there were no other choices than single-family homes. And frankly we hadn't thought of the choices that you have to provide so that you can stay in your social unit. My Mom got to the point when she couldn't drive. Even when she could she was living in a different place. She was living in a place where you know the baker used to say "Hi, Mrs. Campbell would you like a cookie with your bread?" and she say "Oh no I couldn't do that, I wouldn't want to touch a cookie, look at me I need to lose weight". The baker would say "Fine Mrs. Campbell" and she would get home and there would always be a cookie with her bread and it disappeared on a regular basis. That's a social network. Your church is part of a social network. The community infrastructure you have is part of a social network. That's what your communities do from the smallest to the largest. People have social networks. We have to try and find a way that our social networks are designed to meet the needs of those older people in a way that reinforces the quality of life that they have, to provide transit services where older people need it. We're investing significant additional new dollars in transit. We know that older people use transit in a far larger proportion than people that aren't as old. We also know that if we design our communities old people live with young people. Older people will live with families and that enhances their quality of life but we all have to think about this. I can tell you that one of the challenges we face locally and in terms of all of us and I include myself as someone who has been in local government, this is not meant to be a critique is that we have actually built some pretty sprawling communities. We actually in some places build communities where people don't have a choice but to have a car. Now that doesn't mean we won't have communities where people need cars. It means we have to provide choices for people. Again just my experience in local government in 1992 or 1993, I don't recall which year we re-zoned part of Vancouver which used to be called the Downtown South which is now called Yaletown. We took 25 million square feet of commercial space; we replaced it with 25,000 million square feet of residential space. There were a lot of people who didn't agree with that. They thought we wrong, they thought we were hurting downtown. At the time we said we want to provide people with the choice of walking to work. People said that is nuts. People will never choose to walk to work. Today in downtown Vancouver 62% of every trip is people walking. That couldn't have happened if we didn't make the opportunity for people to choose. So one of the things I think we all have to try and do is re-envision what our communities look like when we put them together, how we plan them. No-one in this room I'll bet ever said I'm running for Mayor or Council because I think its time for us to have a great sprawling community of Ladysmith, you name it Port Hardy. All of you want to have great vibrant communities that are comprehensive and are there. We have to actually be willing to test our assumptions. One of the assumptions we've always had is that we had to stick with the zoning principles that were established in the 19th century for the 21st century. We can move beyond that but we can only do it when we work in partnership. Working in that partnership will reduce the impact we have on the environment and will increase the social cohesion that we have in the province and in our communities. We will actually increase opportunities for families to decide to

locate in particular communities and provide people with an array of choices up and down this great Island called Vancouver Island.

You've always been in the lead on this. I think you should all know this. We recognize your leadership. We want to help you build on your leadership. At local community level throughout Vancouver Island people have goals and objectives and we want to try and assure you meet them. Sometimes we'll set a goal for ourselves and it will take some time to get there so you probably remember this and I remember this. There was a time when local government came to the province and they said we'd really like to have a share of traffic fines. Gerry do you remember that? Anybody else here remember that? In 2004 we actually announced that we would provide 100% of all traffic fines to local government. We decided we would do that so you could use those resources for crime prevention, for policing, for imaginative new approaches that you could take in your community that would help create safer, healthier communities for all of us to live in. I'm please to tell you today that this years contribution as a result of that will be \$8.8 million dollars to the municipalities of the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities. That means that for a city like Victoria \$2.2 million dollars, for a town like Sechelt \$85,000 thousand dollars, for Courtenay \$280,000 dollars. You will all know what you got in terms of the contributions that are being made. I'm not making this announcement so that you think that we think the job is done. We think the job has begun and you should know this. Without local government, without UBCM suggesting that that is what we should do it probably would not have been done. I think the first time I ever met with Gerry Furney we were in a local government-financing meeting and I think it started about then. My guess is about 1991, maybe 1990. It took awhile to get there but we got there. We're making real progress in terms of the federal government with the Gas Tax coming down here. It goes straight to the UBCM and straight through to local government. Those are important initiatives. They happened because of you.

So I'm here today to tell you as we celebrate our 150th anniversary I think we should all look forward to the next 50 and 150 years. I invite you to think about what you would like Vancouver Island to be, your community to be and how you would like the province to help you accomplish those goals and objectives. I know if we don't set the goals, if we don't have a vision we won't achieve it. Whether you are a small community on Vancouver Island or a large one, whether you are thinking regionally or locally let me simply ask you to think about and imagine what you want your community to be. And not give up because if it seems beyond reach today because we haven't started reaching for it. We can reach for it together. We can be successful together. In 671 days we will be hosting the world to the 2010 Olympic and Para Olympics. It is an enormous opportunity. When those people come to the Olympic and Para Olympic games they are going to, believe it or not discover British Columbia for the first time. Not for the last time but for the first time. Three billion people are going to be watching the opening and closing of the Olympics. Thousands of media people are going to spread out, not just in Vancouver and Whistler. They are going to spread across this province discovering British Columbia. One of the first places they're going to stop is this great place called Vancouver Island. We can take advantage of that opportunity for you to build on your opportunities whether they are in tourism, whether they are in technology, whether they are in research and learning, whether it is showing off how we can have sustainable communities built in a great environment.

All of those things are on our doorstep if we decide to work together. The fact of the matter is we actually are. You actually are an exemplary place for people to come. It doesn't mean you don't have challenges, it doesn't mean we won't have hurdles we have to jump over but I can't think of a better place to live in the world than the province of British Columbia. I'm sure you can't think of a better place to live than on Vancouver Island. I'd like you to know that we want to work with you, we want to open new roads to partnership, and we want to open new opportunities for the people that live here. We want young people to see their future here. So today as you have your meeting and over the next couple of days let me simply ask you to do something that is often a challenge for those of us in public life. Lets think long term. It's probably even more difficult for you guys to think long term with your elections coming up in November. Lets think long term, that not just you. We have them coming up next year. Lets think long term and let's do something that my generation at least has not done very effectively. Lets think about not just our kids lets think about our grandkids. Lets think about the world we want to give them. Lets think about the world we want to create for them. Lets have the courage to say to people this is where we believe we can go together. Lets do what is right for 2050, for 2070. Lets take this opportunity of the 150th anniversary celebration of this place to build a better place. A place where there is new relationships with First Nations, a place where we reduce our impact on the environment, a place where we provide for the social infrastructure and cohesion that people need, a place where our communities deal with the sick whether mentally ill or physically ill, a place where we reach our to one another and we do what's best in the common interest and the common purpose that we share in British Columbia. Vancouver Island has a history of that. I know you will be an example that others can follow in this province.

Let me close by reminding you of this whatever you can do or dream you can do begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. We want to give you the power to pursue your goals and I know that you will work for the citizens that you serve and give them the power they need to do the best they possibly can for themselves as we build a better province and lead Canada into the Pacific century.

ADDRESS BY THE LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION
CAROLE JAMES

Thank you so much and thank you for the very warm welcome. I always put the names of my kids in the introduction, as it's the only time they get any recognition because I never see them otherwise. So it's nice to just be reminded and I know all of you know that in your busy schedules as well. I want to say a huge thank you to the Executive, to Rod and to AVICC to welcoming me and for the incredible work that you do as an Association. You may know I head off to all the municipal regional association meetings during this time of year. I manage to get to all of them but I hold a special place for AVICC as an Islander and someone who has lived in a coastal community and knowing you are the oldest of all the municipal associations so a huge thank you to all of you for your hard work.

I'm joined today by a number of members of my caucus, my Island and Coastal Communities Caucus and I know that you will agree with me that they are an incredibly outspoken team talking about your issues and making sure that they raise the issues up in the legislature and I'd like to introduce a few of them today. Some of them I know joined you yesterday and some of them are here again today. So first I'd like to introduce John Horgan, the MLA for Malahat-Juan de Fuca, Maureen Karagianis, MLA for Esquimalt-Metchosin. I'm not sure if Rob Fleming is here, he was here yesterday. Is Claire Trevena here this morning, I think she was here yesterday as well? Nicholas Simons from Powell River-Sunshine Coast, Scott Fraser from Qualicum. I'm glad they each brought their cheering sections with them. There's Rob Fleming just walked in from Victoria-Hillside. Always the MLA's that know how to get recognition. I'm not sure if Doug Routley is here and I know that Leonard Krog was here with you yesterday at lunch as well. I also want to introduce and I know you will have spent some time over the weekend with an MLA who is not from the Island but we kind of adopted him on the Island and that's the MLA for Cariboo South and my municipal affairs critic Charlie Wyse. We call Charlie landslide Charlie because he won by two votes on election night but we know he's going to win by many more in the next election.

I've had the pleasure of attending AVICC conferences over the last number of years and I look forward to attending many more. We all know that elections are in the air, yours in November and ours just over a year away. I want to take a little time this morning to talk about the direction that I believe that British Columbia needs to be heading. That is a direction that is built around the principles that guide my leadership. Fiscal responsibility, compassion and a focus on the priorities of average families. An inclusive open and optimistic vision that supports people and supports communities. These are the fundamental principles that I bring to my job and that I'll bring to government if British Columbians give me their trust in the next election.

As many of you know I started my politics at the ground level. I began getting involved in James Bay a community in Victoria, a very activist community, as some of you may know. I got involved in my children's school, onto School Board and then got involved at the provincial level. At every point in that journey I've always been

grounded by the community that I call home and I've never forgotten that it is in our communities that real wisdom resides and you know that better than anyone. It's in our communities where the solutions to the biggest challenges can be found. It's those very basic principles that are my constant touchstone. When we lose sight of that, when politicians lose sight of that they lose their way. We drift away from the people we were elected to serve. I have to tell when I look across the aisle right now at the government that is what I see. I see that after seven years in power the government has become disconnected from the everyday British Columbians that it serves and as a result we see people feeling ignored, feeling abandoned particularly those living in small communities affected by the crisis in our forest industry. People see a government that doesn't have a second thought about spending hundreds of millions dollars on the Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre and they rightly ask themselves why isn't more being done to support our communities that are going through one of the worst forest downturns that we've seen in our history? You know when questioned about those job losses the Transportation Minister in the legislature said boo hoo as though the coastal communities and forest communities were just whining and to me that is an example of what we've seen from this government when it comes to the concerns that are being raised.

I want to just give you another recent example that is causing lots of debate and concern across this province and that's the government's announcement on the new gas tax. Now everywhere I travel in British Columbia whether it's small remote communities, whether it's northern communities, whether it's island and coastal communities I haven't met a single person who hasn't said that they're concerned about the future of our planet, who hasn't told me that they're incredibly concerned about climate change. Every British Columbian wants to make a difference and every British Columbian realizes they have to do their part and there is a cost to saving our environment. I have to tell you in fact most British Columbians came to that conclusion far ahead of when the Premier did. This was a Premier who was fighting the Kyoto Accord, who just a couple of years ago made a statement that British Columbia could do nothing to impact global warming. So I've seen British Columbians leading the way on this issue but I also know that the people of this province believe deeply in fairness. They tell me that the burden needs to be borne fairly by British Columbia if we're really going to meet our targets and reduce our carbon footprints. People are telling me that they want to be included in these important decisions. They want to be consulted and they want to be heard. That way every British Columbian will feel ownership. We'll all feel we're part of the solution. When I take a look at the Premier's gas tax it doesn't meet those very basic tests. For over a year he developed his plan for the gas tax in secret with no input from the people it's going to impact and now when I travel the province I hear the growing concerns from the municipalities and regional districts and school boards, businesses and families who have real concern about the extra cost this is going to put on them. I hear anger and resentment from people about the way the tax was implemented. Very little consideration given to the everyday realities that people are facing in this province. In smaller communities I hear from people scratching their head when they hear the Finance Minister say that we all have choices. We all have choices to change our behavior; she's going to use her \$100 to buy a pair of running shoes so she can walk to work. Well that's great for the Finance Minister and it's great for some of us who have that choice to walk to work. But lots of people in small communities don't have the option. If you live in Port McNeill and you have to drive to

Nanaimo to see a specialist you still have to make the drive. You don't have the choice to do something different to see that specialist and now that trip is just going to cost you more. Well the government didn't talk to those people about the gas tax. I spoke last week at the BC School Trustees Association and I heard from a number of School Boards that they are really concerned that they will have to look at cuts to classrooms to pay for the additional gas tax. Well the government didn't consult with them nor provide money to assist them with the shortfall that they are going to face. People who are already working in the coastal forest industry that is hard hit are wondering if the gas tax is going to mean more layoffs for them. Well the government didn't look at the impact of the gas tax on their lives. Commuters ask how the tax is going to change their behavior when the government itself has allowed transit fares to climb as much as 50% in some communities. No one asked how this tax is going to help them when they can't afford to use transit. As community leaders many of you are already asking how you are going to manage municipal budgets that are already stretched from down loading. No one came and consulted you about this tax and everyone is starting to ask why consumers are paying the cost and big polluters, the big emitters aren't paying anything. In fact in this last budget we saw the largest subsidy in our history given to the oil and gas industry. Now when the future of our planet is at stake perhaps these flaws would be excusable if the gas tax actually reduced emissions. I think everyone would understand an additional tax if we could show that it was actually going to work. But even here the Premier's gas tax fails. According to the province's own budget, the government's own numbers fuel consumption is expected to rise by 2% per year over the next three years. So even the government bringing in a gas tax is budgeting for an increase in the use of gas and the use of fuel. By the government's own admission at best the tax will achieve a 2% reduction by 2012. Even the government's own climate change advisor Mark Picard says that he has absolutely no idea if the gas tax is going to reduce emissions. The importance for his he says is symbolic. Well I have to tell you I think we need more than symbols to save this planet. We need a climate change plan that is tough on the big polluters and gives people the incentives they need to change their behavior that reflects the need for fairness that is critical to building a public consensus for change. It's important that we all take part in the change that is needed and that's not going to happen if you're not included in the discussion and resentment builds and anger builds from the public. If people see this as just another government tax that is going to make it harder on their budget then they aren't going to buy in.

And I worry about that because I've seen it before with this government. We've seen symbols or slogans out there everything from The New Relationship with First Nations to the Heartland Strategy to the Conversation on Health, just a few of the government's slogans. I think British Columbians deserve more. They deserve a government that actually delivers as much as it promises. This government promised to revitalize the coastal forest industry but I don't think it would take much to talk to many of you in this room to know that it hasn't delivered on that. We see forest land being handed to big forest companies like Western Forest Products without consultation and with no return to the public. Raw logs are then shipped off that land by the truckload. First Nations aren't being consulted, communities aren't being consulted and destructive logging practices are destroying watersheds and polluting our rivers and streams. As we all know those are crucial resources.

I want to give you another example of this government's inaction that I'm sure has been talked about this weekend. As many of you know in November the Capital Regional District passed a bylaw to down zone the lands surrounding Shirley and Jordan River. They did that based on their community's beliefs and their community's needs to prevent an explosion of residential development, which is opposed by their residents. Well that bylaw is stalled on the Minister of Community Services desk, which is allowing Western Forest Products to do an end run around the community, around the leaders elected by the community and put up for approval the subdivision of the property. Well this is simply unacceptable. The government's gift to Western Forest Products and its continued failure to protect community interests is in keeping with what we've seen on their approach on forestry. Island and coastal communities deserve so much better.

Last February I outlined a plan to re-vitalize our forest industry that will support coastal communities through the tough economic times. My plan talks about listening to communities. It talks about re-investing in the land base. It talks about reforming the outdated tenure system to tax raw log exports to keep logs and the jobs in our coastal and island communities. But it's not simply the forest industry where government is failing to live up to its commitments. You will all remember back just a couple of years ago the government promised there would be 5,000 long term care beds and they also pledged health care where and when you need it. Another slogan if it came to anything. In fact the government hasn't delivered here either. British Columbians are still waiting for the beds, emergency rooms are grid locked. Every senior in our province deserves to live in dignity and everyone deserves timely health care in their communities. I was pleased last fall to table a Private Members bill in the legislature that would establish an independent seniors advocate for seniors in this province. It would ensure British Columbians have access to the inspection reports when they looking for long term care. Just as an aside many of you will remember back last fall when concerns were being raised about a facility in Victoria just behind the legislature ironically and concerns that had been lodged by licensing about that facility and reports that were kept secret from families and people who were looking for care at that facility. That same week a restaurant in Victoria had some health care inspection concerns and that report was published on a website. So if you wanted to go for dinner that night you could find out on a website whether there were any health inspection reports on a restaurant but you couldn't find out for a long term care facility for your relative or your family member. Well that's simply wrong and I've introduced legislation that would in fact make sure those inspections were public. We're also saying to the government "Get on with actually building the long term care beds which would relieve congestion in hospitals and emergency rooms."

One of the other promises that we heard this government make was to make life more affordable for families. Well again they haven't delivered. We've seen increases in ICBC premiums, hydro rates, ferry fares and all have gone up dramatically and over a quarter of a million British Columbians still make less than \$10 an hour. By 2011 fares on some ferry routes will have increased 100% since 2003. That is way above any cost of inflation. Now my Ferries critic Gary Coons is out holding public hearings and some of you may have seen him in your communities talking to people about the impact those increases are having on businesses, on tourism and on the family budget. I've committed to restore accountability and transparency to BC Ferries and we're going to

continue to press the government to keep fares as low as possible on these routes that form part of the BC's highway system. To help British Columbians with rising costs I also tabled a bill last year to give BC's lowest paid workers their first raise in more than seven years by increasing the minimum wage to \$10 an hour.

We've also seen the government make a number of promises to all of you. They promised to listen to municipalities but in fact they have given themselves the right to override your decisions over water resources and they're pushing private power projects that actually threaten crown land without again any consultation or any discussion with any of you. We've committed to repealing the law that allows government to override your decision and I've called for a moratorium on any new IPP approvals until your consulted about the impact and until we truly look at the environmental impacts that occur in that process. I said a few weeks ago that some of you will have watched the Pitt River project and all of the public outcry that happened during that project. I said it shouldn't take 1,200 people to show up at a meeting and Fire Marshall had to shut down one meeting because too many people showed up to force the government to do the right thing. It shouldn't take little kids standing up at a microphone with pictures of their park and concern to actually be heard by this government. We need actually a transparent process that puts people first that puts you as community leaders first to be listened to on these important decisions in your communities. That's just few of the practical policies that I've outlined that we will bring forward in the next election and over next year I look forward to visiting a number of your communities to hear about what you are looking for from your government, whatever your political stripe. I know that everyone in this room shares the same goal, to serve our communities and to make sure that we have a better life for all of our constituents. That's what matters the most. I'm a firm believer and I know from the leadership I provided in other organizations and other groups and at local government that we can achieve great things by finding common solutions to our common challenges, by staying connected to our communities, by staying connected to the core values that we share, compassion, fairness and effective government. I learned those things working at the grassroots in my community and I carried them with me throughout my public life.

I want to conclude by saying thank you to all of you. Thank you for the service you provide in your communities, for the hard work and many hours that you put in making sure that your community voices are heard and I look forward to working with all of you to make sure they are heard at every level. Thank very much for this chance to be hear today.

Q: Director Leigh

I would like to know why the government is imposing health care solutions on the North Island that aren't working for our communities and why after we have gone through an extensive consultation with VIHA and we have rescinded our support for a P3 regional hospital that the Health Minister and VIHA continue to push this regional hospital unto us when we have said resoundingly that we want our two hospitals upgraded and 19,000 people signed a petition that was presented to the legislature saying that very thing. We're just being completely ignored and I'd like to know why?

A:

Thank you to your communities for speaking out because I think they've done an incredible job of trying to be heard. I think this government has their own description of consultation and I think their version of consultation is we'll come and tell you what we're going to do and we tell you why it's good for you. That's really what they believe consultation is instead of coming to you ahead of time and saying "This needs fixing, let's sit down and talk together about what we can do to fix it" and I think that's the frustration I've certainly seen in your community. You know I've been up and toured both ends and toured both hospitals and talked to people about the challenges and lots of good solutions came forward, lots of practical ideas came forward. What I was so impressed by was the fact that the community came together not to say we don't want this but to say here are some solutions and ideas to fix it yet they were still ignored. I think it's a lack of respect for community voice and lack of willingness to understand and listen to people. I think it's what happens with government who get out of touch after they've been in power and I certainly see it right now with this government.

Q: Councillor Bruce Lloyd

I'd like to say I appreciate your criticism of the carbon tax and how it is being implemented. I'm not a supporter of yours but I certainly appreciate that criticism. We are hurting in the small towns and we don't need anymore of it. I wanted to address the IPP's and hope that you are going to bring us a balanced approach. I've been involved in an IPP re-connection a few years back. I believe in the IPP program and I see some ideology criticisms by the various environmental groups and even some NDP policies so I think there is some overkill in some of your policies but I think there is some credible criticisms regarding things that are being passed as run of the river aren't really run of the river and you realize the difference. I believe in run of the river but the erosion of that concept I would just ask if you would tell if you are very aware of those and if your party is still in favour of the run of the river and that you just want to refine it?

A:

I'm glad you raised that issue because in fact it is one of the reasons that we've called for a moratorium. We want the government to go back and take a look at the approval process. Some of you may know, most of you probably know that right now there is no provincial oversight. Each project gets looked at as an individual project so if you have some rivers that have two or three projects on it there is no cumulative assessment done on the impact that may have on the river if you have three projects on one river for example. That's a missing piece. The cost estimates of what the costs to the consumer and businesses will be is not taken into account on comparing the project to other projects. Yes I've been very clear about that in fact. We're not opposed to run of the river. New Democrats in fact started a couple of run of the river projects and there are opportunities in this province where there will be good clean power but what the governments doing right now and I think you described well. I don't describe it as run of the river but I think it's kind of like gold rush days where they've opened up and said come on in, take our rivers, take our land and we'll buy back the electricity at huge costs later on. Those are my concerns and yes I think it's take a look at a real assessment process that will ensure that the right projects move ahead and the ones that aren't going to be good don't get any further.

Q: Councillor Burger

PRESENTATION BY
JONATHON RAYNOR, DIRECTOR, THIRD PARTY ENGAGEMENT
MINISTRY OF ABORIGINAL RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

Good morning. So what did you poor people do to deserve this on a Sunday morning, listening to a sermon on The New Relationship? I can see the golf links are calling you so I'll try to keep this as short as I can. I'm Jonathan Raynor. I work the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation and my title is Director of Third Party Engagement. I deal a lot with third parties around the province and also with local governments.

The presentation that I'm giving today looks at four basic areas around The New Relationship. I want to explain first of all what The New Relationship is and why it was considered necessary both by the provincial government and by First Nations. I'll talk a bit about the overarching vision that is guiding the BC government's relationship with First Nations in British Columbia and also about some of the critical elements that are needed to move the agenda forward and how The New Relationship is being put into place. I'm going to end the presentation by providing some examples of what's been happening over the past three years.

In March of 2005 the government of British Columbia and the First Nations Leadership Council which represents the aboriginal leadership in British Columbia and it consists of three political organizations: The Union of BC Indian Chiefs, the First Nations Summit and the BC Chapter of the Assembly of First Nations. They got together in a series of meetings and as a result of those meetings were prompted by a court case; the Haida court case, which happened at the end of 2004. They sat down to talk about how are we going to move forward with the implications of the Supreme Court decision has for British Columbia in terms of accommodating and consulting with First Nations. Out of those meetings came this document called The New Relationship. It's based on the principles of mutual trust; recognition and mutual respect of aboriginal rights and title. The document is a fairly short document and can be found on the Internet. Some of you probably have already read it but it commits both parties to reconciling aboriginal crown titles and jurisdictions and working together to achieve strong governments, social justice and economic self-sufficiency. The New Relationship really represents an unprecedented level of cooperation and dialogue between senior governments and the aboriginal leadership. It's really the foundation for a partnership.

There are several reasons for this new approach but really at the basis of this it's the recognition and acknowledgement that really change was needed and it wasn't happening very fast. The historic aboriginal crown relationships in British Columbia created a landscape of socio-economic disparity between aboriginal and non-aboriginal British Columbians. This is really the legacy of colonialism that we're dealing with. There is a widespread recognition that we need to close the gap and deal with the issues of education, health, housing and infrastructure in First Nations communities and economic opportunities, all of which are sub-standard to non-aboriginal Canadians. Given these factors we need to find other ways of partnering with First Nations and really The New Relationship is that other way.

There have been a string of court decisions that created a lot of uncertainty out there and it has been hugely costly for us and as I mentioned the Haida court case, the decision from the Supreme Court has been probably the most far reaching on how we conduct business in British Columbia with First Nations. The case directs governments to consult with First Nations whenever their rights or title might be affected by government decisions. It goes beyond that as well. It directs governments to actually accommodate First Nations whenever they are impacted. So we now have this obligation to consult with First Nations when decisions have the potential to impact First Nations rights and title but it's actually created a huge consultation gridlock out there. It slowed down land use decision-making and it was affecting virtually every aspect of the government's business. The objective of the treaty process is to bring certainty to the land base and I'm sure you've heard that over and over again over the past fifteen years but in fifteen years of negotiating treaties we've really made very little progress. You're aware the Twassassen and the Ma-Nulth final agreements have been ratified by the provincial governments and also the First Nations but they're waiting for ratification from parliament in Ottawa. We don't know when that will happen but once it does it will still be a couple of years before the treaties are actually implemented. Beyond that we have about 47 other groups that are negotiating with the provincial and federal governments and that is going to take a long, long time. Another factor is that about 30% of First Nations in British Columbia who aren't even part of the treaty process. So in both the treaty case it will be years before we settle treaties and with the First Nations that aren't in the treaty process we still have to do business on the landscape. We're dealing with issues around their traditional territories, around their culture and so we need to find ways of dealing with those issues and being able to make decisions and make sure the provincial economy progresses.

The goals of The New Relationship are to restore, revitalize and strengthen communities and families, to eliminate the gap in the standards of living with other British Columbians. To achieve First Nations self determination by allowing them to exercise their jurisdiction in their communities over the use of the land and resources and to ensure that lands and resources are managed in accordance with First Nations laws, knowledge and values. And that resource development is carried out in a sustainable manner and finally to revitalize and finally to revitalize and preserve First Nations culture and languages to ensure that no First Nations language become extinct. The common theme of all of these goals is that really the intention of The New Relationship is to build healthy communities.

The New Relationship is about how we do business with First Nations in B.C. It's based on the premise that B.C. will realize it's potential when First Nations are partners in the socio-economic development. Working together will take us away from the Courts and to a cooperative problem solving relationship. Government intends to build on that cooperation through the development of mutually beneficial land and resource arrangements and the sharing of the benefits from those resources. In order for The New Relationship to move forward there has to be a framework put in place and the challenge is to identify what the tools are that will facilitate the implementation of The New Relationship. There have been a number of concepts that have been tossed around between the First Nations leadership and the provincial government. There is an ongoing dialogue. This is a discussion that has by no means been completed. It's going

on at very high levels at the Deputy Ministers level and the First Nations Leadership Council, the Premier is involved and various other Ministries. We're looking at ways of making The New Relationship work.

This consultation framework that needs to be put in work to enable the First Nations provide input on decisions that may affect their right. What this consultation framework is intended to ensure that the process whereby the First Nations can provide us advice, can engage us in discussion and help us make these decisions. That it actually meets B.C.'s legal obligations. Involve First Nations in shared decision-making. They have to be involved early in the process. They have to be involved systematically throughout the process and also in meaningful ways. In the past this has not been the case. Now we have direction from the Courts that we have to consult we have to make sure that we have the process real solidly founded and it has to be very, very meaningful. When we look at some of the policies that we're developing and how the consultation will take place. You can go from a letter out to First Nations saying that we're dealing with this initiative in your territory and requires just a simple nod from them and a yes. It might not have much impact on their rights and title. But when we get into initiatives where it does and it very, very what we call deep consultation and takes considerable consultation, which requires considerable time and effort. You have to establish new institutions to allow First Nations to organize themselves to participate and communicate with provincial agencies. This isn't so much duplicating a bureaucratic process but it's really looking at ways of establishing practical and effective consultation. We have to figure out ways to share the benefits from resource development impacting aboriginal rights. This really gets to the predictability – what is it we're aiming towards? How can we make it predictable so there is some certainty on the landscape and also to make it affordable for all British Columbians?

There are the persistent issues of developing capacity within the First Nations communities. They are overwhelmed by a lot of the day to day requirements right now and to add on another layer of how do we consult, how do we accommodate them to get involved in this decision making process so we're looking at ways of developing some permanent skills within the First Nations communities.

Finally the dispute resolution so it's replacing the court challenges with a more efficient way or resolving the arguments. What we're really looking at here is some certainty around the decision making process.

I'm going to talk about some of the examples that are out there of The New Relationship agreements that have taken place and these examples are broken into four different areas. First of all is the reconciliation and reconciliation means righting historic wrongs? It's a critical piece of the new relationship and it comes up all the time in a lot of the discussions we've been having. Some of the examples are the Songhees and Esquimalt settlement agreement. This one you have probably heard of. It resolved a 150-year-old claim on the land on which the legislature sits. There used to be First Nations communities on that land and the land was taken for the construction of the legislature. There is the Tseska Dene and Paudachat Nation Reconciliation agreement is up in the Northern part of the province. It addresses the impact of the flooding of the communities and some of their traditional territories and culturally important lands relating to the construction of the Bennett Dam and creation of the Williston Reservoir.

The third one is on the legislative murals in the rotunda. The four paintings that date back a long time the first Nations have found these painting very offensive and the murals are being covered up at the moment. If you go into the rotunda you'll see that there are curtains covering the murals. We're dealing with the First Nations Leadership Summit to talk about a process for replacing the murals and what approach to take.

On the social side there are a number of major initiatives as well. There is the First Nations Health Agreement signed in June of 2007. It's a first in Canada and the goal is to improve the health and well being of First Nations in British Columbia. It essentially deals with closing the gaps in health to ensure that First Nations are fully involved in the decision-making regarding the health of their peoples.

The First Nations Education Act, which formally recognizes the First Nations power to make laws over education on their own lands and to run schools where their children are taught. There is \$50 million dollars which the federal government devolved to the provincial government to manage with First Nations to address some of the issues around housing for aboriginal people who live off reserve but still have a high need for housing. In regard to industry training there are a number of different initiatives around training for aboriginal people. Some of the good examples are an initiative with the Association of Mineral Exploration BC that supports the First Nations participation in B.C.'s mining and mineral sector. This is a mobile training unit that goes out to some of the isolated First Nations community to provide skills training for the aboriginal youth and also addresses some of the Labour needs for the mining industry. There is also an integrated Emergency Planning Program, which involves the federal government, provincial government, First Nations as well as municipal governments. It's trying to get everyone together to make sure that the decisions on any type of emergency response are coordinated.

On the economic front there are many, many different initiatives that are taking place. A lot of agreements have happened. I'm not going to go into any detail, probably the Forest and Range Opportunity agreements I'm sure everyone is very familiar with those. There are about 150 of them in place right now. I just wanted to list some of them to show The New Relationship really reaches across all the Ministries and line agencies. So you've got Aboriginal Tourism Strategy which is being led by the Ministry of Economic Development, there is the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Resources with oil and gas opportunities, the Ministry of Environment and the Wildlife Act so it pretty well covers the whole spectrum of government.

I couldn't end this presentation without talking a little bit about treaties. The Twassassen and Ma-Nulth agreements both received royal assent in the legislature and they are now waiting in line in Ottawa for discussion through parliament and the federal ratification and these are the first agreements under the BC Treaty Commission Process. We're hopeful that there will be a number of other agreements coming up in the next year or two years. We've got mandates that include several of them, probably about eight or nine all together so we're making fairly good progress but still it's going to take time. The ultimate goal for the provincial government is still to get treaty with all the First Nations in British Columbia because treaty achieves full reconciliation. In the meantime and until treaties happen we still have to be able to develop our business and The New Relationship is a more pragmatic approach of incremental agreements

leading to long term permanent agreements. So treaties are the permanent agreements and The New Relationship is the incremental way of getting those permanent agreements so we're always hopeful. The New Relationship also allows us to find some innovative approaches to deal with some of the issues of the non-treaty First Nations.

Just to sum up I'll leave you with a few thoughts on The New Relationship. The driving force behind The New Relationship is partnership with First Nations. Working together will reduce uncertainty, litigation and conflict for all British Columbians designed to resolve outstanding issues and include First Nations in decision-making processes and bring certainty to the landscape. The New Relationship doesn't supersede treaties. Treaties are still the ultimate goal but The New Relationship expands the options and tools available. The New Relationship is a permanent and integral part to how the B.C. government now conducts its business with First Nations.

Q: Director Shugar

Our Regional District is a little bit cynical about this new relationship because we're the old relationship that's been dumped. We have been asking for many years for an LRMP and have negotiated with the province to try and get that. We have had that process basically eliminated and been replaced with something called an SLRP, a Strategic Land and Resource Plan and with the LRMP there were flaws certainly where First Nations were brought in at the end of the process. The new SLRP now has First Nations and provincial government at the beginning of the process with absolutely no place for local government and the rest of the citizens. This is a real mistake. Basically the province has moved local government from the process of dealing with resources on crown land and I wonder how that is going to eliminate conflict and how that is going to bring resolution and reconciliation between the aboriginal and non-aboriginal community.

A:

I'm not sure whether I can answer that question. I know that this is a huge challenge for the province. We get criticized on all fronts, we're criticized from the First Nations communities as well that having a new relationship three years ago that they are seeing very little impact in their own community. We hear what local government is saying. All I can do is take that back and provide you with some reassurances at some point that local Government Issue will be taken into account. Actually we're working at the moment, I'm not sure if this actually addresses your specific needs here but our Minister has agreed to re-negotiate the Memorandum of Understanding that the provincial government and the UBCM signed a number of years ago to broaden the scope of that MOU to include the new relationship so there may be some ways of looking at the participation of local government in The New Relationship so that is very much on our radar.

Q: Councillor Day

My question is in regard in coming up to agreement in principle in the Capital Regional District we have thirteen municipalities and the traditional territories of several native bands overlap and in coming up with AIP the lands from a single municipality may be all that is left to be identified. To remove the lands from that one municipality to settle the debt that is perhaps owed collectively or to come with an agreement I'd like to see

how you might address the tax burden from removing lands from a municipality from one municipality to settle for all.

A:

I'm not sure but I will take that back. The issue of compensation once the treaties are in place there is a community adjustment fund that has been set up. It still has to be addressed at the Cabinet level but there is a process in place where if communities, third parties are impacted by the treaties there will be some sort of adjustment made for them.

Q: Chair Brian Lande

We're from the Central Coast Regional District and we're a very unique part of the province and we are quite isolated. In the last number of years, I've lived in the Central Coast for close to forty years and I've noticed a definite need for change within the native community but I think it's really gone the other way. For instance we had an LRMP process earlier on, there was \$120 million dollars put into a fund for litigation coming out of it and because of properties being taken out of the industrial base that was supposed to be divided among all the communities. When the final agreement was signed there was nothing for the communities through the C333 the fund it was supposed to come from. There was nothing for our communities. There was another fund set up for our communities to help us adjust of \$60 million dollars. That's been taken off the table now and we're left with nothing. I just see so many inequities that are taking place within that system. All of a sudden we're the totally have nots and I realize that there was need for change. I've lived in the community with our native people and they are good people but it's just the change that is taken place and it's not in our benefit for our community.

A:

I think with all of these issues I know that having lived with fifteen years of treaty negotiations where we sort of started off trying to deal with a lot of really important issues that affect First Nations communities. At that point fifteen years ago there was hope that was going to resolve all these issues but I think initially we expected very naively that we might have treaties in place in five years. Of course we've learned our lesson but we're looking at ways of dealing with those issues in a more pragmatic approach and knowing that we have the direction from the courts that we have to deal with those issues. No one has come up with any great solutions yet so there is still that real struggle of how do we deal with all this? We know that we've been directed by the courts to address the issues of First Nations. The Constitution recognizes and affirms aboriginal rights but what does that actually mean? Although The New Relationship has only been around for three years for some people it seems to be a long time it doesn't seem as though it's actually resulting in anything. It's still out there as far as how do we deal with these issues and how do we make sure that it's equitable for all communities? Financially we have to deal with third party groups, with compensation issues, with local governments and how it's going to affect the tax base and the land. It's a real struggle.

Q: Mayor Gary Korpan

About five or six years we felt we were frozen out of the treaty process but we went and talked to the Premier and the Minister responsible at the time Tom Christensen and

they realized that particularly dealing with our First Nations that any treaty or agreements are going to require the cooperation of the neighbouring service providers and they readily encouraged us to make arrangements and protocol agreements were signed with our First Nations and we have been having an ongoing working relations at a staff and political level and we've made major progress. I would encourage all my colleagues here to go and sit down with your First Nation counterparts and walk together. It's nice to double-team the senior levels of government. When you walk in and you have your First Nations with you it lends a lot of clout to the issue because the issues for them are the same as they are for you. You know quality of life, sustainability and economic development. The positive examples that have been occurring in Nanaimo are a result of people remembering their neighbours and good friends and they can do a lot better together than fighting each other.

A:

I really appreciate your bringing that up Gary. I think when we talk about The New Relationship agreements a lot of people think of it as being strictly between the provincial government and the federal government and First Nations. It actually comes right down to the local level. It's neighbours working together and there has been a tremendous amount of progress on the local front through a lot of relationship building initiatives. UBCM certainly has them through the community-to-community forum programs, there are some other initiatives as well but a lot of it comes right down to neighbours working together. A plea from would be do sit down and talk to your First Nation counterparts. There is a lot of good work going on out there and there are tremendous opportunities out there as well so it has to come from the bottom up as well as from the top down so hopefully somewhere we'll meet in the middle.

ADDRESS BY THE LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION
CAROLE JAMES

Thank you so much and thank you for the very warm welcome. I always put the names of my kids in the introduction, as it's the only time they get any recognition because I never see them otherwise. So it's nice to just be reminded and I know all of you know that in your busy schedules as well. I want to say a huge thank you to the Executive, to Rod and to AVICC to welcoming me and for the incredible work that you do as an Association. You may know I head off to all the municipal regional association meetings during this time of year. I manage to get to all of them but I hold a special place for AVICC as an Islander and someone who has lived in a coastal community and knowing you are the oldest of all the municipal associations so a huge thank you to all of you for your hard work.

I'm joined today by a number of members of my caucus, my Island and Coastal Communities Caucus and I know that you will agree with me that they are an incredibly outspoken team talking about your issues and making sure that they raise the issues up in the legislature and I'd like to introduce a few of them today. Some of them I know joined you yesterday and some of them are here again today. So first I'd like to introduce John Horgan, the MLA for Malahat-Juan de Fuca, Maureen Karagianis, MLA for Esquimalt-Metchosin. I'm not sure if Rob Fleming is here, he was here yesterday. Is Claire Trevena here this morning, I think she was here yesterday as well? Nicholas Simons from Powell River-Sunshine Coast, Scott Fraser from Qualicum. I'm glad they each brought their cheering sections with them. There's Rob Fleming just walked in from Victoria-Hillside. Always the MLA's that know how to get recognition. I'm not sure if Doug Routley is here and I know that Leonard Krog was here with you yesterday at lunch as well. I also want to introduce and I know you will have spent some time over the weekend with an MLA who is not from the Island but we kind of adopted him on the Island and that's the MLA for Cariboo South and my municipal affairs critic Charlie Wyse. We call Charlie landslide Charlie because he won by two votes on election night but we know he's going to win by many more in the next election.

I've had the pleasure of attending AVICC conferences over the last number of years and I look forward to attending many more. We all know that elections are in the air, yours in November and ours just over a year away. I want to take a little time this morning to talk about the direction that I believe that British Columbia needs to be heading. That is a direction that is built around the principles that guide my leadership. Fiscal responsibility, compassion and a focus on the priorities of average families. An inclusive open and optimistic vision that supports people and supports communities. These are the fundamental principles that I bring to my job and that I'll bring to government if British Columbians give me their trust in the next election.

As many of you know I started my politics at the ground level. I began getting involved in James Bay a community in Victoria, a very activist community, as some of you may know. I got involved in my children's school, onto School Board and then got involved at the provincial level. At every point in that journey I've always been

grounded by the community that I call home and I've never forgotten that it is in our communities that real wisdom resides and you know that better than anyone. It's in our communities where the solutions to the biggest challenges can be found. It's those very basic principles that are my constant touchstone. When we lose sight of that, when politicians lose sight of that they lose their way. We drift away from the people we were elected to serve. I have to tell when I look across the aisle right now at the government that is what I see. I see that after seven years in power the government has become disconnected from the everyday British Columbians that it serves and as a result we see people feeling ignored, feeling abandoned particularly those living in small communities affected by the crisis in our forest industry. People see a government that doesn't have a second thought about spending hundreds of millions dollars on the Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre and they rightly ask themselves why isn't more being done to support our communities that are going through one of the worst forest downturns that we've seen in our history? You know when questioned about those job losses the Transportation Minister in the legislature said boo hoo as though the coastal communities and forest communities were just whining and to me that is an example of what we've seen from this government when it comes to the concerns that are being raised.

I want to just give you another recent example that is causing lots of debate and concern across this province and that's the government's announcement on the new gas tax. Now everywhere I travel in British Columbia whether it's small remote communities, whether it's northern communities, whether it's island and coastal communities I haven't met a single person who hasn't said that they're concerned about the future of our planet, who hasn't told me that they're incredibly concerned about climate change. Every British Columbian wants to make a difference and every British Columbian realizes they have to do their part and there is a cost to saving our environment. I have to tell you in fact most British Columbians came to that conclusion far ahead of when the Premier did. This was a Premier who was fighting the Kyoto Accord, who just a couple of years ago made a statement that British Columbia could do nothing to impact global warming. So I've seen British Columbians leading the way on this issue but I also know that the people of this province believe deeply in fairness. They tell me that the burden needs to be borne fairly by British Columbia if we're really going to meet our targets and reduce our carbon footprints. People are telling me that they want to be included in these important decisions. They want to be consulted and they want to be heard. That way every British Columbian will feel ownership. We'll all feel we're part of the solution. When I take a look at the Premier's gas tax it doesn't meet those very basic tests. For over a year he developed his plan for the gas tax in secret with no input from the people it's going to impact and now when I travel the province I hear the growing concerns from the municipalities and regional districts and school boards, businesses and families who have real concern about the extra cost this is going to put on them. I hear anger and resentment from people about the way the tax was implemented. Very little consideration given to the everyday realities that people are facing in this province. In smaller communities I hear from people scratching their head when they hear the Finance Minister say that we all have choices. We all have choices to change our behavior; she's going to use her \$100 to buy a pair of running shoes so she can walk to work. Well that's great for the Finance Minister and it's great for some of us who have that choice to walk to work. But lots of people in small communities don't have the option. If you live in Port McNeill and you have to drive to

Nanaimo to see a specialist you still have to make the drive. You don't have the choice to do something different to see that specialist and now that trip is just going to cost you more. Well the government didn't talk to those people about the gas tax. I spoke last week at the BC School Trustees Association and I heard from a number of School Boards that they are really concerned that they will have to look at cuts to classrooms to pay for the additional gas tax. Well the government didn't consult with them nor provide money to assist them with the shortfall that they are going to face. People who are already working in the coastal forest industry that is hard hit are wondering if the gas tax is going to mean more layoffs for them. Well the government didn't look at the impact of the gas tax on their lives. Commuters ask how the tax is going to change their behavior when the government itself has allowed transit fares to climb as much as 50% in some communities. No one asked how this tax is going to help them when they can't afford to use transit. As community leaders many of you are already asking how you are going to manage municipal budgets that are already stretched from down loading. No one came and consulted you about this tax and everyone is starting to ask why consumers are paying the cost and big polluters, the big emitters aren't paying anything. In fact in this last budget we saw the largest subsidy in our history given to the oil and gas industry. Now when the future of our planet is at stake perhaps these flaws would be excusable if the gas tax actually reduced emissions. I think everyone would understand an additional tax if we could show that it was actually going to work. But even here the Premier's gas tax fails. According to the province's own budget, the government's own numbers fuel consumption is expected to rise by 2% per year over the next three years. So even the government bringing in a gas tax is budgeting for an increase in the use of gas and the use of fuel. By the government's own admission at best the tax will achieve a 2% reduction by 2012. Even the government's own climate change advisor Mark Picard says that he has absolutely no idea if the gas tax is going to reduce emissions. The importance for his he says is symbolic. Well I have to tell you I think we need more than symbols to save this planet. We need a climate change plan that is tough on the big polluters and gives people the incentives they need to change their behavior that reflects the need for fairness that is critical to building a public consensus for change. It's important that we all take part in the change that is needed and that's not going to happen if you're not included in the discussion and resentment builds and anger builds from the public. If people see this as just another government tax that is going to make it harder on their budget then they aren't going to buy in.

And I worry about that because I've seen it before with this government. We've seen symbols or slogans out there everything from The New Relationship with First Nations to the Heartland Strategy to the Conversation on Health, just a few of the government's slogans. I think British Columbians deserve more. They deserve a government that actually delivers as much as it promises. This government promised to revitalize the coastal forest industry but I don't think it would take much to talk to many of you in this room to know that it hasn't delivered on that. We see forest land being handed to big forest companies like Western Forest Products without consultation and with no return to the public. Raw logs are then shipped off that land by the truckload. First Nations aren't being consulted, communities aren't being consulted and destructive logging practices are destroying watersheds and polluting our rivers and streams. As we all know those are crucial resources.

I want to give you another example of this government's inaction that I'm sure has been talked about this weekend. As many of you know in November the Capital Regional District passed a bylaw to down zone the lands surrounding Shirley and Jordan River. They did that based on their community's beliefs and their community's needs to prevent an explosion of residential development, which is opposed by their residents. Well that bylaw is stalled on the Minister of Community Services desk, which is allowing Western Forest Products to do an end run around the community, around the leaders elected by the community and put up for approval the subdivision of the property. Well this is simply unacceptable. The government's gift to Western Forest Products and its continued failure to protect community interests is in keeping with what we've seen on their approach on forestry. Island and coastal communities deserve so much better.

Last February I outlined a plan to re-vitalize our forest industry that will support coastal communities through the tough economic times. My plan talks about listening to communities. It talks about re-investing in the land base. It talks about reforming the outdated tenure system to tax raw log exports to keep logs and the jobs in our coastal and island communities. But it's not simply the forest industry where government is failing to live up to its commitments. You will all remember back just a couple of years ago the government promised there would be 5,000 long term care beds and they also pledged health care where and when you need it. Another slogan if it came to anything. In fact the government hasn't delivered here either. British Columbians are still waiting for the beds, emergency rooms are grid locked. Every senior in our province deserves to live in dignity and everyone deserves timely health care in their communities. I was pleased last fall to table a Private Members bill in the legislature that would establish an independent seniors advocate for seniors in this province. It would ensure British Columbians have access to the inspection reports when they looking for long term care. Just as an aside many of you will remember back last fall when concerns were being raised about a facility in Victoria just behind the legislature ironically and concerns that had been lodged by licensing about that facility and reports that were kept secret from families and people who were looking for care at that facility. That same week a restaurant in Victoria had some health care inspection concerns and that report was published on a website. So if you wanted to go for dinner that night you could find out on a website whether there were any health inspection reports on a restaurant but you couldn't find out for a long term care facility for your relative or your family member. Well that's simply wrong and I've introduced legislation that would in fact make sure those inspections were public. We're also saying to the government "Get on with actually building the long term care beds which would relieve congestion in hospitals and emergency rooms."

One of the other promises that we heard this government make was to make life more affordable for families. Well again they haven't delivered. We've seen increases in ICBC premiums, hydro rates, ferry fares and all have gone up dramatically and over a quarter of a million British Columbians still make less than \$10 an hour. By 2011 fares on some ferry routes will have increased 100% since 2003. That is way above any cost of inflation. Now my Ferries critic Gary Coons is out holding public hearings and some of you may have seen him in your communities talking to people about the impact those increases are having on businesses, on tourism and on the family budget. I've committed to restore accountability and transparency to BC Ferries and we're going to

continue to press the government to keep fares as low as possible on these routes that form part of the BC's highway system. To help British Columbians with rising costs I also tabled a bill last year to give BC's lowest paid workers their first raise in more than seven years by increasing the minimum wage to \$10 an hour.

We've also seen the government make a number of promises to all of you. They promised to listen to municipalities but in fact they have given themselves the right to override your decisions over water resources and they're pushing private power projects that actually threaten crown land without again any consultation or any discussion with any of you. We've committed to repealing the law that allows government to override your decision and I've called for a moratorium on any new IPP approvals until your consulted about the impact and until we truly look at the environmental impacts that occur in that process. I said a few weeks ago that some of you will have watched the Pitt River project and all of the public outcry that happened during that project. I said it shouldn't take 1,200 people to show up at a meeting and Fire Marshall had to shut down one meeting because too many people showed up to force the government to do the right thing. It shouldn't take little kids standing up at a microphone with pictures of their park and concern to actually be heard by this government. We need actually a transparent process that puts people first that puts you as community leaders first to be listened to on these important decisions in your communities. That's just few of the practical policies that I've outlined that we will bring forward in the next election and over next year I look forward to visiting a number of your communities to hear about what you are looking for from your government, whatever your political stripe. I know that everyone in this room shares the same goal, to serve our communities and to make sure that we have a better life for all of our constituents. That's what matters the most. I'm a firm believer and I know from the leadership I provided in other organizations and other groups and at local government that we can achieve great things by finding common solutions to our common challenges, by staying connected to our communities, by staying connected to the core values that we share, compassion, fairness and effective government. I learned those things working at the grassroots in my community and I carried them with me throughout my public life.

I want to conclude by saying thank you to all of you. Thank you for the service you provide in your communities, for the hard work and many hours that you put in making sure that your community voices are heard and I look forward to working with all of you to make sure they are heard at every level. Thank very much for this chance to be hear today.

Q: Director Leigh

I would like to know why the government is imposing health care solutions on the North Island that aren't working for our communities and why after we have gone through an extensive consultation with VIHA and we have rescinded our support for a P3 regional hospital that the Health Minister and VIHA continue to push this regional hospital unto us when we have said resoundingly that we want our two hospitals upgraded and 19,000 people signed a petition that was presented to the legislature saying that very thing. We're just being completely ignored and I'd like to know why?

A:

Thank you to your communities for speaking out because I think they've done an incredible job of trying to be heard. I think this government has their own description of consultation and I think their version of consultation is we'll come and tell you what we're going to do and we tell you why it's good for you. That's really what they believe consultation is instead of coming to you ahead of time and saying "This needs fixing, let's sit down and talk together about what we can do to fix it" and I think that's the frustration I've certainly seen in your community. You know I've been up and toured both ends and toured both hospitals and talked to people about the challenges and lots of good solutions came forward, lots of practical ideas came forward. What I was so impressed by was the fact that the community came together not to say we don't want this but to say here are some solutions and ideas to fix it yet they were still ignored. I think it's a lack of respect for community voice and lack of willingness to understand and listen to people. I think it's what happens with government who get out of touch after they've been in power and I certainly see it right now with this government.

Q: Councillor Bruce Lloyd

I'd like to say I appreciate your criticism of the carbon tax and how it is being implemented. I'm not a supporter of yours but I certainly appreciate that criticism. We are hurting in the small towns and we don't need anymore of it. I wanted to address the IPP's and hope that you are going to bring us a balanced approach. I've been involved in an IPP re-connection a few years back. I believe in the IPP program and I see some ideology criticisms by the various environmental groups and even some NDP policies so I think there is some overkill in some of your policies but I think there is some credible criticisms regarding things that are being passed as run of the river aren't really run of the river and you realize the difference. I believe in run of the river but the erosion of that concept I would just ask if you would tell if you are very aware of those and if your party is still in favour of the run of the river and that you just want to refine it?

A:

I'm glad you raised that issue because in fact it is one of the reasons that we've called for a moratorium. We want the government to go back and take a look at the approval process. Some of you may know, most of you probably know that right now there is no provincial oversight. Each project gets looked at as an individual project so if you have some rivers that have two or three projects on it there is no cumulative assessment done on the impact that may have on the river if you have three projects on one river for example. That's a missing piece. The cost estimates of what the costs to the consumer and businesses will be is not taken into account on comparing the project to other projects. Yes I've been very clear about that in fact. We're not opposed to run of the river. New Democrats in fact started a couple of run of the river projects and there are opportunities in this province where there will be good clean power but what the governments doing right now and I think you described well. I don't describe it as run of the river but I think it's kind of like gold rush days where they've opened up and said come on in, take our rivers, take our land and we'll buy back the electricity at huge costs later on. Those are my concerns and yes I think it's take a look at a real assessment process that will ensure that the right projects move ahead and the ones that aren't going to be good don't get any further.

Q: Councillor Burger

An area of great concern for us and I suspect many in this room is our ongoing issues with infrastructure. In our community we're falling behind about \$2 million dollars a year and that is despite looking at continuous increases with our property ratepayers. I wonder what your government would do differently with respect to correcting some wrongs that we've seen with regard to the downloading with this huge infrastructure deficit that we all face.

A:

I think you described the first place that it has to stop and that is downloading. That's the beginning under this government which to push the costs down onto you and not provide any funding to follow. Having served on school boards for years that's the really the job of school boards these day is to take the download costs and then cut programs and take the blame for it in our communities. Many of you are facing the same issues around having to increase property taxes, having to face heat for download of cost to government. I think that's the first one is to not download some costs without the funding to follow. The second one is infrastructure grants and looking at how municipalities ensure they have the resources to address those concerns in their communities. You know you are the people closest to the communities, you know best the kinds of priorities that need to be set in your communities and kinds of challenges that you face and I think it's important that you are given the resources you need to be able to set those priorities and get on with addressing them. It's part of the reason I raised the gas tax as an issue. You know all of you are being told you have to be carbon neutral by a certain date. Those discussions have not been inclusive of people in municipalities and regional districts. They have not had discussions on the cost pressures that that is going to put on you and I worry that is one more place that you are going to have to pick up the cost without the kind of support. I think setting the principle of not downloading without the dollars to follow and then providing more funds on infrastructure grants is going to be critical for municipalities and regional districts to manage.