

Report on the Budget 2011 Consultations

*Select Standing Committee on Finance
and Government Services*



NOVEMBER 2010



November 12, 2010

To the Honourable
Legislative Assembly of the
Province of British Columbia

Honourable Members:

I have the honour to present herewith the First Report of the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services for the second session of the 39th Parliament.

The Report covers the work of the Committee in regard to the Budget 2011 public consultations.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Committee,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Les'. The signature is stylized with large loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

John Les, MLA
Chair

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Composition of the Committee

Members

John Les, MLA	Chair	Chilliwack
Doug Donaldson, MLA	Deputy Chair	Stikine
Norm Letnick, MLA		Kelowna – Lake Country
Don McRae, MLA		Comox Valley
Michelle Mungall, MLA		Nelson – Creston
Bruce Ralston, MLA		Surrey – Whalley
Bill Routley, MLA		Cowichan Valley
John Rustad, MLA		Nechako Lakes
Jane Thornthwaite, MLA		North Vancouver – Seymour
John van Dongen, MLA		Abbotsford South

Clerks to the Committee

Kate Ryan-Lloyd, Clerk Assistant and Acting Clerk of Committees

Susan Sourial, Committee Clerk

Research Staff

Josie Schofield, Manager, Committee Research Services

Kathryn Butler, Morgan Lay, Byron Plant and Polly Vaughan, Committee Researchers

Terms of Reference

On May 27, 2010 the Legislative Assembly agreed that the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services be empowered:

1. To examine, inquire into and make recommendations with respect to the budget consultation paper prepared by the Minister of Finance in accordance with section 2 of the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act* and, in particular, to:
 - a. Conduct public consultations across British Columbia on proposals and recommendations regarding the provincial budget and fiscal policy for the coming fiscal year by any means the committee considers appropriate, including but not limited to public meetings, telephone and electronic means;
 - b. Prepare a report no later than November 15, 2010 on the results of those consultations.

In addition to the powers previously conferred upon the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, the committee shall be empowered:

- a. to appoint of their number, one or more subcommittees and to refer to such subcommittees any of the matters referred to the Committee;
- b. to sit during a period in which the House is adjourned, during the recess after prorogation until the next following Session and during any sitting of the House;
- c. to adjourn from place to place as may be convenient; and
- d. to retain personnel as required to assist the Committee,

and shall report to the House as soon as possible, or following any adjournment, or at the next following Session, as the case may be; to deposit the original of its reports with the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly during a period of adjournment and upon resumption of the sittings of the House, the Chair shall present all reports to the Legislative Assembly.

Executive Summary

On May 27, 2010, the Legislative Assembly approved a motion instructing the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services (the Finance Committee) to conduct public consultations across British Columbia on the *Budget 2011 Consultation Paper*. The terms of reference specified that the Finance Committee was to make public its report no later than November 15, 2010.

To carry out its mandate, the Finance Committee conducted 17 public hearings across British Columbia, including three videoconferencing hearings to enable people in small rural communities to express their budget priorities. During the consultation process (September 14 to October 15), the Finance Committee received 1,294 submissions (223 oral presentations, 373 written submissions and 698 on-line survey responses).

This report makes 59 recommendations that reflect the public's budget priorities. Since health care and education remain top priorities for many British Columbians, 22 recommendations relate to these core services. The Finance Committee recommends that government continue to allocate resources to health care innovations and illness prevention, and for community health services and nutrition programs.

Key recommendations for the education system include reinstatement of the annual capital allowance for colleges and universities, and the annual facility grant for maintenance of schools. The provincial government is also asked to consider reinstating a needs-based grants system to encourage under-represented groups to pursue post-secondary education. More supports for early learning initiatives, programs for children and youth with special needs, and an expansion of child care spaces to assist working families are also recommended.

For community services, the Finance Committee recommends reviews of how community gaming grants and social service contracts are awarded and administered. It also proposes that additional resources be allocated for friendship centres and transition houses. Support for innovations, such as social entrepreneurship and social impact bonds, is also suggested to assist community-based services.

To strengthen environmental protection, the Finance Committee recommends more funding for conservation, wildlife habitat and species protection, and resource management enforcement. Increases in the operating budgets of Agriculture and natural-resource ministries are also proposed.

In regard to tax priorities, the Finance Committee recommends some HST transition measures – relating in particular to the impact of the harmonized sales tax on the small business sector and the housing industry. Also included in this section of the Report are proposals for adjustments to tax credits for the film industry and for consideration of a new home renovation tax credit.

Finally, the Committee endorses the government's fiscal plan and recommends that the return to balanced budgets be accelerated, if circumstances permit.

Budget 2011 Consultation Process

On May 27, 2010, the Legislative Assembly approved a motion instructing the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services (the Finance Committee) to examine, inquire into and make recommendations with respect to the budget consultation paper prepared by the Minister of Finance in accordance with section 2 of the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. The Finance Committee was empowered to conduct public consultations across British Columbia on proposals and recommendations regarding the provincial budget and fiscal policy for the coming fiscal year and required to produce its report on those consultations by November 15, 2010.

The Budget 2011 Consultation Paper

On September 15, 2010, the Minister of Finance, Hon. Colin Hansen, appeared before the Finance Committee in Vancouver and presented the budget consultation paper. This year's paper, "Building B.C. For Your Family", outlined the government's fiscal priorities. It also contained two questions designed to seek the views of British Columbians on their priorities for the next provincial budget.

Fiscal priorities

The budget consultation paper identified some of the recent actions taken by the provincial government to stimulate the economy. These initiatives include: investing in infrastructure projects, opening Canada's Pacific Gateway, lowering taxes, strengthening partnerships, leading climate action, and supporting young families. After highlighting existing levels of funding for health, education and social services, the paper noted that 86% of all new spending will be directed towards the core services of health and education.

The fiscal and economic forecast, included in the budget consultation paper, indicated no available revenues in the current fiscal year but anticipated that \$650 million will be available in 2011/12. The updated five-year fiscal plan forecasts deficits in 2010/11, 2011/12, and 2012/13 and then a surplus of \$490 million in 2013/14. Economic growth is expected to be 3.1% in 2010/11, drop to 2.2% in 2011/12, and plateau at 2.8% in 2012/13 and 2013/14.

Budget consultation questions

This year the budget consultation paper asked the public to respond to two questions. The first was a broad question asking British Columbians to identify what was most important to them. The second was a multiple-choice question asking people to indicate their priorities if the government had additional resources:

- Fund new programs and services?
- Reduce the debt?
- Cut personal income taxes?

Consultation methods

The budget consultation process took place from September 14 to October 15, 2010. During these four weeks, traditional methods of obtaining public input were combined with innovative technologies to enhance opportunities for public participation. In addition to conducting public hearings and issuing a call for written submissions, including on-line survey responses, the Finance Committee also conducted video conference sessions and accepted audio and video digital files – the second year these methods have been used to solicit input from the public.

Public hearings presentations

Starting on September 15 and ending on October 15, 2010, the Finance Committee held 17 public hearings in various communities across the province. The schedule included three half-day hearings via video conferencing to hear oral presentations from witnesses in the communities of Smithers, Nanaimo and Haida Gwaii (September 24), but no witnesses presented in Haida Gwaii; Golden, Creston and Fernie (October 6); and Merritt, Vernon and Port McNeill (October 8).

The Finance Committee issued a media release announcing the locations of the hearings, which was posted on its website on September 1, 2010. Newspaper advertisements were also placed in regional newspapers. All public hearings' dates and locations are listed in the schedule of meetings on page 3.

The Finance Committee heard 223 oral presentations. The arts community, educators, community-based health and social services, businesses and industry associations were all well represented in this year's hearings. All the witnesses who made presentations at the public hearings are listed in Appendix A.

Written submissions

This year 373 written submissions were received by e-mail, fax, regular mail and video. As is the practice of the Finance Committee, advertisements describing the consultation process and calling for submissions were placed in daily and community papers across the province. A complete list of written submissions received from individuals and organizations is provided in Appendix B.

On-line survey responses

The public also had the opportunity to respond electronically to the two questions contained in the Budget 2011 Consultation Paper. Of the 698 respondents who used the on-line survey form posted on the Finance Committee web site, 47 were organizations. Their names are listed in Appendix C.

Meetings schedule

June 3, 2010	Organization Meeting	Victoria
September 15, 2010	Minister's Briefing	Vancouver
	Public Hearing	
September 16, 2010	Public Hearing	Surrey
September 21, 2010	Public Hearing	Lake Country
September 22, 2010	Public Hearing	Penticton
September 22, 2010	Public Hearing	Kamloops
September 23, 2010	Public Hearing	Cranbrook
September 23, 2010	Public Hearing	Castlegar
September 24, 2010	Video conferencing hearing Smithers and Nanaimo	Victoria
September 28, 2010	Public Hearing	Whistler
October 4, 2010	Public Hearing	Fort St. John
October 5, 2010	Public Hearing	Prince George
October 5, 2010	Public Hearing	Terrace
October 6, 2010	Public Hearing	Courtenay
October 6, 2010	Video conferencing hearing Golden, Creston and Fernie	Victoria
October 7, 2010	Public Hearing	Victoria
October 8, 2010	Video conferencing hearing Merritt, Vernon and Port McNeill	Victoria
October 15, 2010	Public Hearing	Abbotsford
October 25, 2010	Deliberations	Victoria
November 3, 2010	Deliberations	Victoria
November 8, 2010	Deliberations	Victoria
	Adoption of Report	

Snapshot of the Public's Budget Priorities

During the budget consultation process, the Finance Committee received a consistent message from the public that spending on programs and services is a top priority for Budget 2011. Additional resources for new, as well as existing, programs and services was the dominant theme voiced at the public hearings and expressed in both the written submissions and on-line survey responses.

The on-line survey results reveal the following ranking for program spending in response to the first question posed in the budget consultation paper: *What's most important to you?*

- Health (275 responses)
- Education (192 responses)
- Social services (69 responses)
- Environmental protection (65 responses)
- Housing (52 responses)
- Arts funding (51 responses)
- Other

While the on-line survey is not a scientific poll, the coding of responses enabled a tally to be compiled of responses to the second question: *What are your priorities if the government had additional resources?*

- Fund new programs and services (299 responses)
- Reduce debt (247 responses)
- Cut personal income taxes (122 responses)
- Other priorities (30 responses)

Given the importance British Columbians attach to program spending, this Report focuses on summarizing public input on health, education, services for children and youth, community services and then the management of the province's natural resources. The public's views on tax priorities are also presented.

British Columbians' Priorities for Health Services

It is clear from the input received by the Finance Committee that funding for health services remains a top priority for British Columbians. At the same time, some witnesses stressed that the health care budget must be effectively managed if core services are to be protected. Accordingly, this year the public input was dominated by calls for innovations in the delivery of health care services and recommendations for preventative health strategies designed to better manage chronic disease and improve health outcomes.

Health care spending

In Vancouver, the BC Chamber of Commerce urged government to consider that the current fiscal situation highlighted the need for all spending needs to have measurable outcomes and consistent review to ensure value for taxpayers. The BC Chamber also stated in the strongest possible terms that there should be no significant increases to health care spending without reform of the system and specific measurable outcomes, a position also supported by citizens:

"We must realize that simply pouring more money into that seemingly insatiable black hole of health care spending is not the answer.... The BC Chamber recommends, starting in fiscal 2011, adopting a smart spending program that introduces a coordinated approach to government spending by ensuring increases are limited to no more than the rate of growth in GDP across all government spending, including health care...." (John Winter, BC Chamber of Commerce, Vancouver public hearing)

"Start limiting health care spending increases now please!" (Craig Harrold, Surrey, On-line survey 471)

The Finance Committee also received some submissions requesting that government continue to explore ways in which advances in technology can be used to reduce health spending. Below are examples of the range of suggestions we heard on this topic:

"Investments in health IT should be sustained and protected. eHealth can help manage future demands in the health system by creating efficiencies, improving access to medical care, engaging citizens in the management of their own health, and enabling better management or prevention of chronic conditions. Health information technology is critical to the future sustainability and effectiveness of the health system." (Kim Logan, TELUS, On-line survey 574)

"Electronic health records are CRUCIAL in order to provide more appropriate, cost-effective care. There is an incredible amount of time wasted having information passed from doctor to specialist to others. In my specialist's office they are still using BINDERS to track appointments!!!" (Janis Magnuson, Naramata, On-line survey 196)

“Seamless integrated healthcare information management systems across enterprises in regions with electronic health records, throughout the continuum.” (Barbara Carroll, Kelowna, On-line survey 237)

“GS1 Canada encourages the government to capitalize on its initial investment in the Canadian Healthcare Supply Chain Project by making the standardization of the healthcare supply chain a top priority in this budget, thus supporting sustainability of the healthcare system through generation of much-needed efficiencies.” (Alicia Duval, GS1 Canada, Written submission 319)

“Over the past three years alone our members companies have invested more than \$180 million in this province in their health innovation sector. While we are proud of this level of private capital investment in the province, especially during a very challenging economic period, our ability to continue to contribute to the province’s medical research and life sciences sector will be more and more dependent on the direction BC takes in embracing innovation in the knowledge economy.” (Sharon Dean, Canada’s Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies – BC Regional Committee, Victoria public hearing)

Health care innovations

Primary care and patient-focused funding

At the Victoria hearing, the British Columbia Medical Association (BCMA) reported to the Finance Committee that decades of accumulated evidence show that a strong primary-care system is the best way to ensure value in the health-care system. Two initiatives to find better ways to manage patients with diabetes and congestive heart failure have saved BC’s health care system \$85 million.

Support was also expressed for patient-focused funding (PFF). This new funding model announced by government will shift resources away from providing global budgets to hospitals and move toward a system that provides incentives to manage health care expenditures. Here is a summary of the input we received from the BCMA and others on health care innovations:

“Health care remains the largest financial commitment by the provincial government. Therefore, we must continue to look for innovative ways to ensure those dollars achieve the best overall results possible for patients and taxpayers. That requires both courage and the commitment to pursue new ways of doing things within our public health care system.”

“In the last few years new programs in primary care are dramatically improving care and outcomes while also reducing or avoiding costs. With that in mind I will outline our three priorities for Budget 2011. First, we must continue to support and expand innovations in primary care that improve quality and outcomes. Second, we need to take that scale of change and innovation into our hospitals. Third, perhaps most importantly, we must work much harder on prevention.” (Dr. Ian Gillespie, BC Medical Association, Victoria public hearing)

“While health care is already a priority for government, we need new, innovative ways of utilizing funds. One example is the concept of regional medical centres providing limited primary care services.... These types of centres will help reduce the pressure on hospitals, especially in areas of BC with a large population of seniors. Financially it will be short term-pain (capital expenditures) for long-term gain.” (Peter Hann, Parksville, On-line survey 348)

“Continued support for innovation in the way the health care system operates to increase the focus on patient care....” (Maureen McDermid, Richmond, On-line survey 499)

Another message the Finance Committee heard with respect to primary health care was the need to examine ways to effectively utilize the professional expertise and scope of practice of all health professionals – family doctors, nurse practitioners, dental hygienists, dietitians. Working as part of a multidisciplinary team, they can alleviate cost pressures by managing common acute and chronic illnesses and offering preventative health education and planning. Here is a sample of the input:

“I would like to see health care costs controlled.... One way this can be done is by increased use of nurse practitioners.” (David Flater, Okanagan Falls, On-line survey 227)

“I would like government to address health care spending effectiveness. One way to do this would be to increase the use of nurse practitioners and triage centres at hospital emergencies, to reduce clogging emergency with non-essentials.” (Alan Campbell, Penticton, On-line survey 272)

Illness prevention

Organizations representing the medical profession and the healthy living sector, as well as citizens, advocated for investment in a range of prevention services. Here are some of their suggestions:

“British Columbia needs to develop a lifetime prevention plan for British Columbians — a series of health services and recommendations individually tailored to each person during their lifetime. For the best chance of success, the cornerstone of this approach must be that patients are clear partners in the development and implementation of that plan.” (Dr. Ian Gillespie, BC Medical Association, Victoria public hearing)

“Despite the difficult financial times BCHLA would urge the government to continue to invest in integrated and collaborative approaches to health promotion and chronic disease prevention.” (Mary Collins, BC Healthy Living Alliance, Written submission 71)

“A provincial diabetes-specific strategy, with the addition of a secondary prevention strategy, is urgently required to effectively prevent or delay diabetes among high-risk groups, reduce the rates of secondary complications among people living with this disease, and address the escalating health costs associated with treating these complications.” (Connie Abram, Canadian Diabetes Association, Written submission 35)

“Focus on illness prevention (free health club memberships, free nutrition classes).” (Ashish Anand, Vancouver, On-line survey 314)

Community health services

Patient resources

The Alzheimer Society of British Columbia appeared before the Finance Committee requesting funding for the continued expansion of First Link, an early intervention initiative funded as a partnership with the Ministry of Health Services and the Vancouver Island Health Authority. The Society reported that this initiative is an effective strategy for improving the health and well-being of people with dementia and their caregivers, and for managing the substantial impact of dementia on the health care system.

During the Lake Country public hearing, the Finance Committee heard a request from BrainTrust Canada recommending a \$2 million annual allocation from the BC government to establish an Acquired Brain Injury Innovation Fund. The fund would provide grants to projects that have a direct positive impact on the development of community services to people with acquired brain injury; fund applied research; and be used to develop effective prevention, educational and enforcement strategies to reduce the rate of brain injury. The proposal was endorsed by provincial and local brain injury organizations, as well as concerned citizens.

The Parkinson Society of BC came before the Committee seeking support for the 11,000 people with Parkinson's disease in BC. Its specific request was for additional staffing resources (\$500,000 per year) at Pacific Parkinson's Research Centre at UBC to significantly improve the services to patients and decrease wait times. The Centre anticipates that by funding these additional positions, individuals with Parkinson's will be able to transition through the stages of the disease in a more effective way, reducing the number of hospital visits, need for long-term care facilities, and referrals to other specialists, thereby reducing associated costs to the health care system.

The Finance Committee also received a plea from the Vancouver Coastal ALS Centre to recommend that government make up the annual shortfall of \$130,000 to maintain the current level of service to people living with ALS throughout British Columbia. Below are the four specific requests:

"We ask the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services to recommend the continued expansion of First Link province wide as a solution to early intervention and a way to support British Columbians affected by dementia." (Jim Mann, Alzheimer Society of BC, Surrey public hearing)

"There is no policy in the province related to long-term support for people with brain injury. There are no cross-ministry tables to discuss the issue, and there is really no data.... What we're requesting is the Committee's support for and recommendations around an acquired brain injury innovation fund – a \$2 million annual allocation to develop evidence-based research and treatment." (Doug Rankmore, BrainTrust Canada, Lake Country public hearing)

“What brings me here is a proposal of \$500,000 a year so that the Centre can hire five additional staff members.... It’s going to help patients. It’s going to reduce wait times and allow more people to visit the Centre.” (Alexandra Rice, Parkinson Society of BC, Vancouver public hearing)

“We are asking the Province of BC to provide financial assistance in the amount of \$130,000 per year to sustain the current services provided at the ALS Centre.” (Wendy Toyer, ALS Society of BC, Abbotsford public hearing)

Hospice societies

As in previous years, the Finance Committee received submissions from non-profit societies providing end-of-life services in the province. Citing recent studies that indicate wide popular support for end-of-life and palliative care services, the Prince George Hospice Society expressed its frustration with the current funding framework. It noted that while BC has designated palliative care as a core service in the provincial health care program, funding is allocated to hospices at the discretion of the regional health authorities and is vulnerable to funding fluctuations from BC gaming, resulting in an uneven distribution of funds across the sector. The Prince George Hospice Society stressed that end-of-life and palliative care is an important and cost-effective part of the health care continuum, and needs to be recognized as such with stable targeted funding.

The Abbotsford Hospice Society also requested \$7.5 million in capital funding to build an adult residential hospice in Abbotsford. The Society pointed out that community support for the project has been significant and emphasized that a portion of this funding should be provincially based to reflect the government’s support for end-of-life care. Here is a sample of the input we received:

“Some 97 percent of respondents to a survey identified a leadership role for provincial government to adequately fund hospice palliative care. According to this report, the four western provinces have designated palliative care as a core service of the provincial health care program, with a separate budget line. Somehow, Prince George Hospice Society has been left out.” (Donalda Carson, Prince George Hospice Society, Prince George public hearing)

“We understand that the struggle continues as to how to spend health care dollars and that there are many competing priorities to consider while in your planning process. Our submission today reinforces the concept that hospice care is a cost-effective way to ensure that public funding is spent effectively.” (Debbie Lehmann, Abbotsford Hospice Society, Abbotsford public hearing)

“Two new programs that would save a great deal of money in the long run would be fairly subsidizing caregivers in the home so that the infirm and elderly could remain at home instead of going to expensive facilities, and bringing in a pharmaceutical drug public health plan.” (Eileen Wttewaall, Salt Spring Island, On-line survey 636)

Healthy living initiatives

Prevention programs

The Finance Committee received several submissions applauding the government's continued commitment to primary prevention programs, and advocating for continued investment in proactive measures to enable British Columbians to take the necessary actions to live healthier lives. For example, the Campaign to Control Cancer joined the World Health Organization in recognizing ActNow BC as a promising best-practice approach in health promotion and chronic disease prevention programming. ActNow aims to support and encourage all British Columbians to increase physical activity, to eliminate tobacco use, to eat healthy foods and to make healthy choices in pregnancy. ActNow's approach is to focus on key risk factors for chronic disease and to lead and take integrated action to reduce these risk factors.

The submission of the BC Healthy Living Alliance recommended that the Ministry of Education, in partnership with local school boards, invest in and support coordinated approaches to health and wellness education in schools. Another provincial coalition made the case for curbing excessive drinking. Here is a sample of the public input on prevention programs:

"We have the knowledge to cut cancer's mortality rate by more than half over the next generation. Healthier lifestyles, improved screening and diagnostic processes and access to safer, more effective treatments are all part of the solution. The provincial government has made noticeable gains in the area of cancer control over the past few years, with programs such as ActNow BC, and we hope it will continue to do so...." (Jayne Akizuki, Campaign to Control Cancer, Surrey public hearing)

"The World Health Organization has identified a health-promoting school environment as one of five key strategies for addressing growing trends in obesity and overweight. Healthy eating and physical activity skills and knowledge should be instilled in children at an early age so that they have the necessary tools to make healthy choices throughout their life. While we are aware of the ever increasing demands on the school curriculum we feel that many of these lessons can be incorporated into the current curriculum." (Mary Collins, BC Healthy Living Alliance, Written submission 71)

"Prior to the Olympics, a great deal of funding was spent on active living, healthy eating, tobacco cessation and community support. Continue to prioritize this and connect prevention with the health care system. Ensure that preventative measures are targeted at lower-income people, as it is well documented that communities are only as healthy as their most vulnerable." (Donna Lee, Richmond, On-line survey 130)

"Our most important recommendation is to increase the price of high-alcohol-content coolers, ciders and beers to reduce alcohol-related harms." (Lembi Buchanan, BC Coalition for Action on Alcohol Reform, Victoria public hearing)

Nutrition programs

The Finance Committee also received several submissions recommending the reinstatement and increased funding for health and nutritional program initiatives. In particular, the BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program, a collaborative program of ActNow BC, with funding from the ministries of Health Services, Education and Agriculture, was singled out as a valuable program meriting additional funding. This program is administered through the BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation, a non-profit association dedicated to working with educators to bring BC's agriculture to students, and currently 1,090 BC public schools are participating in the program.

Noting the program's popularity and remarkable success, proponents would like to see reinvestment in the program, maintaining that it is a very effective way to provide nutritional education in the classroom. Their endorsements are presented below:

"The British Columbia Agriculture Council has long held the view that we are missing opportunities to address health concerns through more direct linkages between agriculture and food production. The School Fruit and Vegetable Program is one initiative that has been very successful in making this connection, and it's important that we properly fund this so that it covers all schools in the program." (Garnet Etsell, BC Agriculture Council, Abbotsford public hearing)

"Nutritional education in the classroom is not only getting rave reviews and accolades; it is a very effective way to help families improve their future health." (Joe Sardinha, BC Fruit Growers' Association, Penticton public hearing)

"More money should be spent on life style education - we're too fat and too idle....Please mandate physical exercise in the school system and provide guidance on healthy eating habits. If there are any more vending machines with junk food left in the school system, please get rid of them." (Inger O'Hanlon, Gibsons, On-line survey 439)

The Finance Committee also received some submissions voicing concern about the link between the consumption of soft drinks and poor diet, increasing rates of obesity and risk for diabetes. Presented below are some suggestions we received to deal with this problem:

"There is very strong and convincing evidence linking sugar-sweetened beverages with excess weight gain, both in children and adults.... We know from our experience with tobacco that simply informing the public, while necessary, is not going to be sufficient to dramatically change people's behaviour. We need to have other forces, such as taxation or some sort of price disincentive to the purchase of these products." (Dr. Tom Warshawski, Childhood Obesity Foundation, Vernon video conference session)

"I recommend the government consider taxing junk foods including candy bars, fast food, soda pop drinks, chips, salty and sugary snacks. It is ridiculous that a bottle of soda pop sells for less than bottled water." (Michael Saufferer, Kelowna, On-line survey 78)

Conclusions and recommendations

The Finance Committee shares the witnesses' concerns about the increasing proportion of the provincial budget allocated to health care spending. Accordingly, we support the case for utilizing advances in health technology and would even venture to suggest that cost savings resulting from their application to medical procedures be a topic of discussion in the upcoming negotiations on the fee schedule between government and the BCMA.

We also support the requests for targeting additional resources for recent innovations in health care, such as the emphasis on primary care in the community with multidisciplinary teams, patient-focused funding in the hospital setting and illness prevention. We recognize that community health services provide valuable supports for patients with debilitating diseases, and that palliative care performs an important function in the health care system. Healthy-living initiatives are also cost-effective.

Health services recommendations

The Finance Committee recommends that the provincial government:

1. Continue to increase the annual investment in the provision of health services, keeping increases in health care spending in line with the average growth of the provincial economy.
2. Seek to identify and resolve with the BCMA any significant inequities in the fee schedule, in advance of compensation negotiations.
3. Continue to dedicate funds to scale up successful pockets of innovation in the public health care system, such as the primary-care discipline of family practice and patient-focused funding.
4. More fully utilize the expertise and scope of practice of all health care professionals – dental hygienists, dietitians, nurse practitioners – around the province, particularly in rural BC.
5. Examine the costs and benefits of advancing a lifetime prevention plan for British Columbians.
6. Provide resources for Alzheimer Society of BC's First Link program, Acquired Brain Injury Innovation Fund, Pacific Parkinson's Research Centre, and Vancouver Coastal ALS Centre.
7. Acknowledge the importance of end-of-life services within the medical care structure and provide equitable support to in-home hospice care, hospice houses and palliative care facilities across the province, recognizing the valuable contributions made by volunteers in this area.
8. Continue to help people stay healthy by expanding the nationally acclaimed ActNow program; by increasing health education within the K-12 system and beyond; and by offering incentives and assistance to quit smoking, to stop the use of illicit drugs, and to curb excessive drinking, by exploring the revision of the liquor tax structure to tax according to alcohol content.
9. Reinvest in health and nutrition promotion programs, particularly the BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program.
10. Engage in a dialogue with British Columbians about measures to reduce the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, such as pop, fruit drinks, energy drinks and vitamin waters.

British Columbians' Priorities for the Education System

As in previous years, the Finance Committee received numerous submissions focused on topics related to the education system. Two main themes emerged from the pre-budget consultations: first, the need for funding to upgrade the facilities of both post-secondary institutions and school districts, and second, the need for increased access to professional and trades training. This emphasis on education and training was also evident in the submissions relating to K-12 education, with requests to fund regional student transition coordinators. In terms of more specific issues, post-secondary institutions were greatly concerned about the unintended consequences of their inclusion in the government reporting entity. Students were looking for the removal of financial barriers to post-secondary opportunities. School districts requested more flexibility in program delivery.

Post-secondary education

GRE accounting standards

As post-secondary institutions are considered to be controlled by government, the Auditor General of British Columbia has determined that they should be included in the government reporting entity (GRE) and hence the Summary Financial Statements of the Province, in order to be consistent with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles or GAAP. If excluded from the reporting entity, there will be a reservation in the Auditor General's audit opinion.

Universities and colleges explained to the Finance Committee that inclusion in the GRE restricts their access to capital. Other unintended consequences of GAAP include restrictions on the use of surplus funds and enforced restrictions in program expenditures. Here is what the post-secondary sector had to say on this topic:

"In last year's report the Committee recommended an examination of the unintended consequences of the application of generally accepted accounting principles and practices to universities and colleges with respect to financing of capital projects. Government took heed of your recommendation and committed in the February 2010 throne speech to introduce legislation that will permit universities to opt out of the government reporting entity, the GRE, thereby avoiding the unintended consequences of the generally accepted accounting principles.

"Preliminary discussions have taken place on the parameters for such legislation, but we are very concerned that if this legislation is not in place for the next fiscal year, there will be significant negative consequences for public universities. In addition to delaying capital construction programs, the requirement for universities to balance their consolidated budgets annually, including any medium-term losses in their investment portfolios, will necessitate cutting operating budgets and therefore services to students." (Dr. David Mirhady, Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC, Vancouver public hearing)

"Our only way to be compliant to the accounting requirements will be either to cut programs or services." (Jim Reed, BC Colleges, Victoria public hearing)

“We want to ensure that the Committee understands that adoption of these accounting standards will create financial and reporting challenges for our institutions in the coming years, and although we will do whatever we reasonably can to mitigate impact on high quality program delivery, negative impacts are inevitable.” (Ruth Wittenberg, BC Association of Institutes and Universities, Written submission 160)

“One challenge is that public sector accounting standards do not permit the deferral of government grants issued specifically for the procurement of capital assets. The timing delay between the recognition of revenue and the depreciation expense of the assets will result in very significant non-cash annual deficits. Under our current mandate, which prohibits annual deficits, we will be required to reduce programs and services to cover these non-cash deficits which result solely from accounting entries.” (Dianne Teslak, College of the Rockies, Cranbrook public hearing)

“We've expanded our international education in the hope, of course, of bringing in considerable revenue and also to increase the global awareness of our students. However, at the same time, we fear that the changes in government administrative and accounting policies that limit the use of surplus funds will restrict our ability to use the revenues effectively to meet the needs of students.” (Dr. Jan Lindsay, North Island College, Courtenay public hearing)

Annual capital allowance

This year the Finance Committee received several submissions from post-secondary institutions calling on government to reinstate the annual capital allowance. Currently colleges and universities have to defer regular maintenance on infrastructure. Below is a sample of their concerns:

“The reduction in the annual capital allowance, the funding for cyclical maintenance, will become a real issue for TRU in the near future. The recently completed facilities audit indicated that TRU will need to invest considerable funds to maintain its core assets and improve the environmental sustainability of our facilities. British Columbians have made a significant capital investment in TRU and this investment must be protected.” (Karl deBrujin, Thompson Rivers University, Kamloops public hearing)

“Government needs to start to restore the annual capital allowance back to pre-2009 levels. Our aging infrastructures require care and attention to remain viable.” (Marilyn Luscombe, Selkirk College, Castlegar public hearing)

“In 2009 and 2010 we received a \$1.4 million reduction to our annual capital allowance funding, and it's really important for us to see that restored so we can continue to pay for the ongoing operation and maintenance of our campus.” (Kaleigh Milinazzo, University of Northern British Columbia, Prince George public hearing)

“At the earliest opportunity we want government to start to restore the annual capital allowance, which was cut by 75 percent last year. We use it to maintain our infrastructure. So deferring maintenance can be done in the short run, but in the long run, we'll just build up problems which will be even more expensive to fix.” (Peter Lockie, Camosun College, Victoria public hearing)

Student financial aid

As in previous years, the Finance Committee received a number of presentations seeking to reduce the financial barriers to post-secondary education. In particular, students, faculty and staff asked the Committee to consider recommending that government reduce the interest rate on student loans:

“When interest is taken into account, those who are forced to borrow to finance their education actually end up paying more than those who can afford it upfront. This means that young British Columbians are starting off in the hole with \$27,000 of debt. What does that really mean? It means that young people are waiting to buy a car, to buy a home or maybe to start a family because they have debt to pay off.” (Nimmi Takkar, Canadian Federation of Students – BC, Abbotsford public hearing)

“We recommend the immediate creation of a system of provincial needs-based grants and the elimination of interest on the provincial portion of student loans to make attending post-secondary education a reality for low-income people in this province.” (Krystal Smith, Thompson Rivers University Students Union, Kamloops public hearing)

“Our recommendations presented today – reducing tuition fees, increasing institutional funding, eliminating student loan interest and offering more non-repayable student aid – are not final solutions to the issues facing our post-secondary system, but they are indeed a start.” (Amanda Lepholtz, UBC Students’ Union Okanagan, Lake Country public hearing)

Presenters also requested the establishment of a provincial system of upfront needs-based grants, targeted at under-represented groups who are having trouble escaping the cycle of poverty:

“Develop a more comprehensive approach to improving the affordability of post-secondary education for students, an approach that would include expanded student support services and a restoration of the student grant program.” (Cindy Oliver, Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC, Surrey public hearing)

“North Island College is the front-line provider of education for people living in the north Vancouver Island region as well as the central mainland coast. This is an area that includes a high percentage of traditionally under-represented groups, such as aboriginal, differently abled and first-generation learners. We have seen the demand for post-secondary education growing as the knowledge economy grows and baby boomers retire.” (Dr. Jan Lindsay, North Island College, Courtenay public hearing)

“Aboriginal citizens make up a large and growing segment of our regional population. The 21 First Nations communities in our college catchment area need and want to increase participation and successful completion of post-secondary education and training programs.” (Ray Gerow, College of New Caledonia, Prince George public hearing)

Professional programs

At the Vancouver hearing, the Finance Committee heard a presentation requesting that the government provide additional funding for residency positions. The Society of Canadians Studying Medicine Abroad reported that as of July 2009, there were 91 Canadians who had studied medicine overseas and were finishing their residency in Canada, but only one was in British Columbia. The Society also referenced the 2010 throne-speech commitment to increase access to residencies for Canadians who have received their medical training overseas, and stressed the need for taking action.

Committee members also heard requests to increase the number of spaces available to train other medical professionals, such as occupational therapists and speech pathologists. Child development associations voiced concerns that not increasing the number of spaces would make waitlists for services even longer. Here is what we heard on this topic:

“The recommendation is that the size of the physiotherapy and occupational therapy training programs and speech language pathology program should be increased at appropriate universities across the province, similar to what’s happened with the faculty of medicine at UBC, UVic and the University of Northern British Columbia, where we’ve seen doubling in the size of the program.” (Bruce Sandy, BC Association of Child Development and Intervention, Abbotsford public hearing)

“We have had challenges with our recruiting over the past number of years because there’s such a drastic shortage of pediatric therapists in the province. There are around 30 seats at UBC for occupational therapy and speech therapy. Physiotherapy was just recently increased. Out of those who graduate every year, maybe one or two or three go into pediatric therapy and stay in the province.” (Lorraine Aitken, Comox Valley Child Development Association, Courtenay public hearing)

“There are a number of program and policy issues that require thorough and thoughtful consideration by the Standing Committee in the run-up to the 2011/12 provincial budget. One is northern health care and education. We request that the Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services recommend a focus on physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy as priority areas for additional educational programming over the next few years.” (Tim McEwan, Initiatives Prince George, Prince George public hearing)

Last year the Finance Committee recommended that the province examine the feasibility of establishing an engineering program at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC). At the public hearing in Prince George, this proposal was raised again, with some presenters suggesting this program could be a partnership between UNBC, northern colleges and the wood design and innovation centre planned for Prince George. Here is a sample of the suggestions we received:

“Please ask that a good portion of those funds (\$600 million) be dedicated to education in the north, especially technology and engineering at our university.” (Albert Koehler, Northern Technology and Engineering Society of BC, Prince George public hearing)

“Education and skills development in Prince George and region are key foundations. A robust civil society and sustainable business environment both require people with the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to contribute to the central and northern parts of British Columbia. Such people must be educated in the north if they are to appreciate and stay in the north. To build on past successes, we recommend development of civil and mechanical engineering at UNBC, of civil and mechanical or mining technologies at CNC and greater participation in science and mathematics courses in the K-to-12 system.” (Roy Spooner, Prince George Chamber of Commerce, Prince George public hearing)

“We ask that the Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services recommend that the province, in partnership to the greatest extent possible with the federal government, provides capital and operational funding for the wood design and innovation centre and that this include support for civil and mechanical engineering disciplines.” (Tim McEwan, Initiatives Prince George, Prince George public hearing)

Trades training programs

The Finance Committee received submissions from educators, industry representatives and unions requesting that government expand and enhance apprenticeship opportunities. Currently apprenticeships are coordinated through the Industry Training Authority, and presenters suggested the organization will need additional capacity to assist workers transition into the trades as baby boomers retire. Here is a sample of their requests:

“Ironically, at a time when we're trying to respond to some of the increased demands, particularly in the trades area, and we know that this looming skills issue is there, we're facing a potential significant cut in trades training funding for this next year. We're really asking for attention to be given to that.” (Jim Reed, BC Colleges, Victoria public hearing)

“It's probably counterintuitive for most people to think that when we're in a downturn in the economy, we should focus our efforts on education and training in the trades sector, but that is exactly what we need to be doing in this province in order to ensure that we have a sustainable workforce and that we're also able to meet the needs of the major projects as they come along.” (Murray McLachlan, BC Construction Association, Victoria public hearing)

We urge Finance Committee members to take note of the coming cuts projected at the Industry Training Authority. When federal Labour Market Agreement funding ends, the province must step up to fill the gap and ensure that investments in trades training continue.” (Wayne Peppard, British Columbia & Yukon Territory Building & Construction Trades Council, Written submission 20)

“On the productivity front we recommend that the government invest in our universities and our colleges and in training and apprenticeship opportunities for young people. As we all know, education and skills training increase productivity and fuel long-term economic growth.” (Darryl Walker, BC Government and Service Employees Union, Abbotsford public hearing)

“The formal training that does exist is prohibitively expensive, and it’s not eligible for funding assistance because forestry is considered “seasonal” work by the Industry Training Authority. We recommend government review its training policies in regards to forest workers, and develop programs and funding support to remove financial barriers and attract entrants to the industry.” (Mary Anne Arcand, Central Interior Logging Association, Written submission 295)

Adult literacy projects

During the pre-budget consultations, literacy groups informed the Finance Committee that the economic downturn has made it increasingly difficult for individuals who do not have adequate literacy skills to find work or get retraining. Therefore they claimed that the coordination of and investment in adult literacy programs is more important than ever and involves a range of service providers, including post-secondary institutions, school district continuing education centres, and community groups. Their suggestions are presented below:

“By increasing the support for the work of community literacy programming, you are working to address a root issue, affecting 25% of the population who are actually the major users of social funding.” (Jane Boulton, Bulkley Valley Literacy Coalition, Written submission 367)

“Literacy is one of the pillars upon which our society stands. Without a healthy, literate population, every aspect of life in our communities is affected: poverty, homelessness, crime, employment and mental and emotional well-being.” (Barb Hagan, Project Literacy Kelowna, Lake Country public hearing)

“Adult literacy aid is necessary. Find out why some adults have not learned to read; try to remedy that situation as Sweden has done.” (Marilyn Hansen, Summerland, On-line survey 115)

K-12 education

Flexible program delivery

The province’s school trustees and local boards of education urged the Finance Committee to consider recommending more flexibility in program delivery to take into account the uniqueness of each district. The Peace River North Board of Education, for example, described the process required to get approval for its proposal to partner with the City of Fort St John and utilize available space in the Enerplex sports facility. This is how the suggestions were framed:

“Flexibility at the local level is very important because one size doesn’t fit all. When we have structures that compel all districts in the same way — and then you look at the uniqueness of every district in the province — one size doesn’t fit all. I think the more flexibility at the local level, the more boards of education are going to be able to do within their limited budgets.” (Connie Denesiuk, BC School Trustees Association, Penticton public hearing)

“The Enerplex is a joint partnership where we're putting a school for about 250 students in this building that was constructed by the city, which has two ice arenas, a speed-skating oval and a running track. It's a beautiful facility, and it was underutilized in some of the space. It took us basically three years to get some recognition that it was an innovative project that would meet the learning outcomes. That took time, effort and money to travel down...to convince people to make a decision on it. It was well accepted locally and quite reasonable in the approach, and dealing with 21st Century Learning. We're really proud that we've got it at this point, but we had to jump through a whole bunch of hoops to get it, and that was really time-consuming. In the end, we got that project approved because it was an alternative to full-day kindergarten.” (Doug Boyd, Peace River North Board of Education, Fort St John public hearing)

Annual facility grant

The Finance Committee heard concerns from several local school boards about the deferment of the annual facility grants in 2008/09, which echoed those expressed in submissions last year. The grants, which provide school districts with resources to undertake roof replacements, electrical system upgrades, mechanical system upgrades and asbestos abatement, were partially reinstated last fiscal year. This year school trustees requested the full amount be reintroduced. Here is what they said:

“Maintenance and upgrading for our schools have been exacerbated by the annual facility grant that is not sufficient to meet the cost for necessary upgrades and general maintenance in order to expand the life of our aging buildings. Without these sufficient upgrades, the district's ability to finance major energy retrofits to become carbon-neutral is further compromised, requiring the district to incur additional expenses to cover carbon offsets.” (Sharel Warrington, Prince George Board of Education, Prince George public hearing)

“At a minimum annual facility grants should be reintroduced at previous levels and should be aligned with the fiscal year for school districts to prevent erroneous identifications of balances as surpluses.” (Linda McPhail, Richmond Board of Education, Vancouver public hearing)

“The Vancouver School Board's aging stock of buildings is at risk of accelerated deterioration due to minimal maintenance levels. Our ability to carry out necessary and preventative work has been hampered not only by insufficient funding but from last year's abrupt cancellation of the annual facility grant and the subsequent only partial restoration where it was spread over two years. Levels must be increased and must also be stable and predictable.” (Patti Bacchus, Vancouver Board of Education, Vancouver public hearing)

Regional student transition coordinators

One proposal that caught the attention of committee members came from regional student transition coordinators who help integrate college and secondary school activities, with the goal of improving transition rates to post-secondary institutions. Their pilot project was provided with onetime funding in 2008, and the Finance Committee was asked to recommend continuing this funding. The coordinators framed their request as follows:

“Although the benefit of smooth student transitions is recognized and evident, school districts and postsecondary institutions are bound by individual mandates and separate funding systems. Regional transition coordinator positions are at risk of elimination due to school district and post-secondary funding challenges. Regional partnerships are seeking funding for their regional transition coordinator positions. We request that the Finance Committee recommend that government provide funding in the amount of \$50,000 to each region of the province to support transition of youth from secondary to post-secondary education options.” (Bob Thompson, Kelly Knister, Troy Marshall, Regional Student Transition Coordinators, Written submission 303)

“Restoration of funding support for regional transition coordinators who liaise between school districts and post-secondary institutions is critical to maintain and expand support for high school students aiming to enter the skilled trades and further their skills development before and after graduation from high school. There are many challenges involved in brokering partnerships between the K-12 education system and both the Industry Training Authority and colleges.” (Brian Conrad, Moyie, On-line survey 672)

Conclusions and recommendations

The Finance Committee is very concerned about the unintended consequences of the strict application of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles to the province’s post-secondary institutions. In our considered opinion, the government should be encouraging colleges and universities to seek innovative financing opportunities rather than erecting roadblocks to impede development.

We are also persuaded that there is a case for reinstating the annual capital allowance. Another priority we support is reducing financial barriers that often prevent under-represented groups, such as low-income families, children of parents with little or no post-secondary education, and Aboriginal and rural families, from having the opportunity to study and train at the province’s colleges and universities. There is also the need to allocate additional resources to increase the spaces available in professional and trades training programs and to enhance the coordination of adult literacy projects.

Turning to K-12 funding, we believe there is an urgent need to give school trustees and senior administrators more flexibility to manage their programs. The annual facility grant also remains an important priority. As well, we are persuaded of the merits of educational initiatives focused on the transition into the post-secondary sector. In addition to funding positions for regional coordinators, we ask government to consider making the Passport to Education program available at an earlier age.

Education system recommendations

The Finance Committee recommends that the provincial government:

11. Urgently review the application of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) to universities and colleges, since existing policy is denying post-secondary institutions the opportunity to access outside capital, in particular for programs and infrastructure not typically funded by government.
12. Start to restore the Annual Capital Allowance allocation for post-secondary institutions back to pre-2009 levels.
13. Reduce financial barriers to post-secondary education by lowering the interest rate charged by StudentAid BC on student loans, and by establishing a provincial system of upfront needs-based grants targeted at people who are having trouble escaping the cycle of poverty.
14. Urgently and significantly increase access to postgraduate medical training positions for Canadians studying medicine abroad.
15. Build on the success of the distributed model used for the northern medical program to expand spaces for occupational therapists and speech pathologists in various regions around the province.
16. Examine the feasibility of establishing an engineering program at UNBC appropriate for the North.
17. Work with all sectors and the Industry Training Authority to expand and enhance apprenticeship opportunities.
18. Enhance coordination of adult literacy programs and provide additional resources to service providers, as required.
19. Help school districts to meet their unique needs by providing more flexibility in management and program delivery.
20. Treat the K-12 annual facilities grant as a high priority for funding in the 2011/12 Budget.
21. Provide ongoing funding for post-secondary transition coordinators on a full-time basis, province wide, especially in those areas with historically low enrolment rates; and create a pool of incentive funding for pilot projects that will allow better integration of college and secondary school activities, with the goal of improving transition rates to post-secondary institutions.
22. Consider extending the Passport to Education Program to cover Grades 6 to 10 to encourage younger students and their parents to consider post-secondary options, including trades training programs, at an earlier age.

British Columbians' Priorities for Children and Youth

Reflecting the government's focus on early learning and families, the Finance Committee received several requests to expand early learning initiatives. Other public input included calls for additional resources for services for children and youth with developmental disabilities and their families, and for more child care services for working parents.

Early learning initiatives

Submissions received from early-learning proponents, service providers and school districts applauded the government's commitment to early childhood learning and care, but believe that more can be done. They all stressed that investing in the early years is a wise social and economic investment. Proponents expressed their support for current initiatives and suggested the following improvements:

"In order to address our service shortage, we need to make sure parents have access to healthy child and parent check-ins on about a monthly basis, especially during the first 18 months of a kid's life. And we need to put in place, after parental leave ends, a system of early learning and care that facilitates those who want or need to be in the paid labour market to be there and to know that their kids are in quality environments." (Dr. Paul Kershaw, Human Early Learning Partnership at UBC, Abbotsford public hearing)

"Through StrongStart locations in our schools, partnerships with local pre-school providers and our "Inspirations 44" Full Day Kindergarten program, our School District has shown leadership and innovation in early learning. Our experience reinforces our belief that the Full Day Kindergarten initiative has great merit in giving students the best possible beginning to school." (John Lewis, North Vancouver School District's Presidents' Council, Written submission 151)

"What we're hoping to recommend to all of you is that the ministries of Children and Family Development and Education receive funds to support all early learning initiatives — including group infant-toddler care, group child care and school-age care as well as the StrongStart programs, the Ready, Set, Learn programs and the full-day kindergarten." (Lynn Proulx, West Kootenay Early Years Initiative, Castlegar public hearing)

"Most important to us is the healthy development of children in their early years (ages 0-6)." (Eve Layman, Community Action Toward Children's Health, On-line survey 426)

"Given that early childhood is increasingly identified as the time of life when education and care is most critical, we believe an integrated system of early childhood education would be a wise investment." (Dr. Enid Elliot, Greater Victoria Regional Child Care Council, Victoria public hearing)

Children and youth with disabilities

Early intervention and autism services

The Finance Committee also received requests that the government consider dedicating additional funding for children with special needs and autism. Parents and child development centres in many regions of the province called for increased funding to reduce waitlists for early intervention therapy services and school-aged therapies. The Early Intervention Therapy program targets children before they enter the school system providing their families with access to screening, assessments and therapy services such as speech-language pathology and physiotherapy. School-aged children and youth have access to a similar program that provides occupational and physiotherapy services. This is how parents and some child development centres expressed their requests:

“Our recommendation is that the BC government should, as a start, double the resources available to the Ministry of Children and Family Development contracted provincial early intervention therapies — including physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech language pathology — from \$30.7 million to \$61.4 million.” (Bruce Sandy, British Columbia Association of Child Development and Intervention, Abbotsford public hearing)

“To bring early intervention therapy services up to a level on a per-child basis that was available ten years ago, we recommend that the province doubles the size of this program provincially at a cost of \$30.7 million.” (Darrell Roze, Child Development Centre of Prince George and District, Prince George public hearing)

“We would really like to see additional funding for all the early intervention therapies but, in particular, speech-language pathology and occupational therapy.” (Lorraine Aitken, Comox Valley Child Development Association, Courtenay Public hearing)

At the lower mainland hearings, parents also expressed concerns about the waitlists for the Supported Child Development program that provides support services to children, families and child care centres so that children with additional needs can fully participate in child care settings. The program serves children from birth to age 12 and provides services in some communities for youth aged 12 to 19. A sample of their requests is shared here:

“We would like to see the funding of this Supported Child Development program increased to keep pace with the demand for services. The wait-lists need to be eliminated across the province.” (Wendy Seet, Vancouver public hearing)

“There were almost 80 families in Burnaby and over triple that in Vancouver on wait-lists for supported child care services to provide consultation and staffing support so that their children with special needs can be included in child care settings and before-school and after-school care.” (Cynthia Stark, Surrey public hearing)

Supports for youth with disabilities

The Finance Committee received considerable feedback on the gaps in services for youth with special needs transitioning into adulthood. Some organizations highlighted the lack of services available during the time period between when a young adult finishes high school and when, at 19, they qualify for Community Living supports. We heard a call for additional resources for the STEPS Forward program that integrates young adults with developmental disabilities into post-secondary settings. Several written submissions requested more funding for Community Living BC and some on-line surveys asked for more support for people with disabilities. Here is a sample of the input:

“The issue around transition for kids moving out of school is a critical one and needs to have specific funding to make sure school boards do that. At the moment there's a very good program and plan in place, but that's not being backed up with funding.” (Tim Stainton, BC Association for Community Living, Vancouver public hearing)

“We request that the upcoming provincial budget includes a reserve fund for the implementation of enhanced funding and services to all children and adults with Down syndrome.” (Rosalie Newell-Wagner, BC Down Syndrome Centre Society, Written submission 159)

“There needs to be a program that is developed with an investment of funds to meet the appropriate service level for children over the age of 12 and provide a continuum for them to be successful into adulthood.” (Helen Armstrong, North Okanagan Child Development Centre, Vernon video conference session)

“Honour the spirit of the Memorandum of Understanding regarding the smooth transition from children's services to services for adults.” (Liz Barnett, North Vancouver, On-line survey 696)

“A transition gap exists between the age of graduation and when they're eligible — if they're eligible — for the Community Living BC program through our agency. There is a need for support and funding to assist 18-year-olds, who are no longer children but aren't yet adults.” (Traci Fontana-Wegelin, North Island Community Services Society, Port McNeill video conference session)

Child care services

Over the course of the pre-budget budget consultations the Finance Committee heard a number of presentations on how to meet the demand for child care services in BC. Social service organizations, school districts and university organizations, unions and parents expressed a need for affordable child care and out-of-school care spaces that accommodate the needs of working parents. Notably the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC presented a plan, which was developed in partnership with Early Childhood Educators of BC, that encourages the creation of integrated child care, early care and learning and out-of-school programs. We have included a sample of their requests:

“An integrated system of early care and learning in BC is consistent with the principles that have been presented to this Committee over the years. The dollars must go into integrated programs.” (Sharon Gregson, Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC, Surrey public hearing)

“We recommend the upcoming budget contain a significant investment in a comprehensive early learning and care plan for children now under five.” (Adrienne Montani, First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition, Vancouver public hearing)

“Priority of funds should be spent for supporting childcare services which help parents work and go to school.” (Susie Myers, South Slokan, On-line survey 158)

“We urge the provincial government to invest in quality out-of-school programs...to enhance current supports offered to young families.” (Carrie Wagner-Miller, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada – Pacific Region, Written submission 246)

Conclusions and recommendations

The Finance Committee is persuaded by the argument that investments in early learning are beneficial to society and cost-effective in the long run. We see the role of government as providing leadership in the development of “smart family policy”, with a variety of partners from the private and public sectors. We also propose that serious consideration be given to allocating additional resources for children and youth with disabilities, and for the development of seamless child care.

Children and youth recommendations

The Finance Committee recommends that the provincial government:

23. Provide additional funding for expansion of school-based early learning initiatives (eg StrongStart BC, neighbourhood learning centres); encourage more partnerships with parents, government and business; expand health check-ins for infants and toddlers in existing facilities, and allow flexibility for home visits, as needed; and provide leadership and initiate partnerships with all levels of government for funding, services and capital projects to decrease childhood vulnerability.
24. Improve resourcing to address any delays for early intervention therapy and autism services in order to facilitate the transition of children with special needs into the K-12 system.
25. Facilitate a seamless transfer of services and for youth with special needs transitioning into adulthood, and ensure sufficient resources are available to provide supports for adults with developmental disabilities and their families.

Investigate the feasibility of providing seamless child care to address the needs of working parents.

British Columbians' Priorities for Community Services

As in previous years, the Finance Committee received input from a variety of community-based social services and arts organizations. Their resounding message was that British Columbians rely on and value the services provided by the non-profit sector and the arts community. Repeatedly, the submissions highlighted the substantial economic impacts of the respective sectors and the growing demands both their staff and volunteers face. Many people who completed on-line surveys prioritized the funding of new community programs, while others stressed the need to restore funding to existing programs, including arts groups. Calls for additional resources focused on artists and performers, victims of domestic abuse, urban Aboriginals, and those seeking affordable housing. Innovative strategies to encourage non-profit success, poverty reduction and community economic development were also presented. Submissions on community safety were also received.

Community gaming grants

Representatives from the arts and social services answered the Finance Committee's call for submissions and recommended that the government restore funding and reexamine the way it funds and allocates community gaming grants. In particular, they questioned the exclusion of arts, culture and sports groups for adults. Here is a representation of the submissions we received:

"The general public has supported the on-going expansion of gaming, often reluctantly, because they were repeatedly assured by politicians and government officials that a significant portion of the profits would continue to flow to charities and non-profits.... We therefore request that funding levels be returned to those previously established by the government as of 2008 - that is, \$156 million plus inflation since 2008. The BCACG also very strongly urges that these funds be allocated for all sectors receiving funding prior to the cuts of 2009." (Susan Marsden, BC Association of Charitable Gaming, Written submission 114)

"Restore the amount of funding for arts and cultural organizations supported through gaming revenues and to honour the social contract with British Columbians regarding the expansion of gaming." (Amir Ali Alibhai, Alliance for Arts and Culture, Vancouver public hearing)

"Adult sports groups are now no longer eligible to apply for funding. With this change, seniors' sports groups became ineligible also, the result being that our zone cannot now apply for a grant for 2011 and subsequent years.... It seems illogical to us to exclude the older population from the criteria when one takes into account the health care costs which could in all probability be added to the system if seniors live sedentary and unhealthy lifestyles. It's our serious concern that without the funding assistance we've been able to provide in the past, many of our seniors simply will not be able to afford to attend the games." (Heather Wilson, BC Seniors Games Society – Zone 12, Fort St. John public hearing)

"We request that the Finance Committee preserve levels of gaming funds to the sports system." (Dave Newson and Bruce Deacon, BC Athlete Voice, Written submission 23)

The Finance Committee also heard about the challenges community services, sports and arts groups face when funding agreements are short-term and tenuous. The Comox Valley Transition Society for example, proposed extending the length of Community Gaming Grant agreements to three years in order to provide stable services to clients and to reduce the administration costs of annual grant applications. This sentiment was echoed by the non-profit and arts sectors. Examples of feedback are included here:

“We urge that the discussion during the budgetary process be about lengthening the funding commitment of gaming grants to three years, which would provide stability and would also reduce the administrative costs at the local and ministry levels.” (Heather Ney, Comox Valley Transition Society, Courtenay public hearing)

“We ask that government gaming money be returned to our communities with multi-year funding to ensure sustainability and accessible programs for all ages.” (Jennifer Pickering, Kelowna Alternator Centre for Contemporary Art, Lake Country public hearing)

“In my experience with the direct access program, it is unreliable in the amount of funding that it provides. It is inconsistent and unpredictable from year to year. In many cases to get less — which is often what happens — than what's requested is to make delivery of programs difficult and risky. Often it's better to get nothing, than not enough. It's that much worse when it comes late.” (David Sheach, Big Brothers and Big Sisters Abbotsford, Abbotsford public hearing)

Arts and culture sector

Echoing last year's plea for a reinstatement of arts funding, patrons and representatives of BC's arts and culture community called on the Finance Committee to recommend the restoration of arts funding to 2008/09 levels. At public hearings and through numerous written submissions and online surveys the BC Arts Council, regional arts councils, and performing arts groups requested greater certainty in funding and many expressed their desire to see arts funding managed by the BC Arts Council. Here is what they had to say on the issue:

“There are three areas where we'd like to ask for the support and assistance of this committee. (1) We would like to ensure that the funding for the Council is seen to be consistent with the traditional notion of an appropriation. That includes BC150 and the 2010 fund. (2) We would like your assistance in encouraging and promoting the development of a long-term shared vision for arts and culture in British Columbia....(3) We would like greater certainty in the funding for arts and cultural organizations.” (Dr. Stanley Hamilton, BC Arts Council, Abbotsford public hearing)

“We recommend that a stable and sufficient appropriation of at least \$16 million be allocated to the BC Arts Council in the upcoming provincial budget.” (Joan Richoz, Assembly of BC Arts Councils, Whistler public hearing)

“We reaffirm our recommendation from two years ago to urge the governments to increase BC Arts Council funding to \$32 million, effectively doubling the amount allocated for this year. We urge the provincial government to restore gaming grants to the 2008-09 level and to revise the criteria in consultation with the arts community.” (Ian Case, ProArt Alliance of Greater Victoria, Victoria public hearing)

Non-profit sector

Funding structure

The Finance Committee heard repeatedly about the importance of social service agencies in the province. Provincial organizations such as the Board Voice Society of BC, the British Columbia Association of Child Development and Intervention and the BC Society of Transition Houses described the challenges their member organizations were facing as demands increase and resources dwindle. Other organizations described being at their breaking point.

At the Victoria hearing, the Federation of Community Social Services of BC explained that its 120 agencies are facing a 3½ or 4 percent reduction in capacity. In order to meet the demand for services, additional funding is needed to cover rising costs. The social-care sector also asked the government to consider longer-term contracts for service provision to reduce financial uncertainty and the time and effort spent reapplying for service contracts. Here are the sector’s requests:

“We urge the Committee to recommend that the investments in the social development ministries for community-based social services be sustained at no less than current levels plus a 2 percent operating increase for this year. These budgets simply must not be cut this year. These agencies that are delivering services are doing their very best, and there is no further erosion to the social care infrastructure that can be sustained.” (Jennifer Charlesworth, Federation of Community Social Services of BC, Victoria public hearing)

“Costs for programs are constantly increasing, e.g. due to increases in wages, enrolment in the Municipal Pension Plan, HST, increased market rent and other overhead costs. These are not accurately reflected in contracts with ministries.” (Mitzi Dean, Pacific Centre Family Services Association, Written submission 156)

“We need a commitment to the long term — I define that as three to five years; that's probably long term these days — in contracting partnership with a stabilized funding plan.” (John Belfie, North Okanagan Youth and Family Services Society, Lake Country public hearing)

“Three to five year contracts would be fantastic. The provincial government plans out their budgets years in advance. Municipal governments do the same. School boards do the same. We would love to be able to have an idea, with some certainty, what our budget will be in fiscal 2011/12. We have very little ability to do that. We cross our fingers and hope that the funding projects we are going to be bidding on in January.” (Sam Schechter, Burnaby Family Life, Vancouver public hearing)

“Move to a 'Continuing Service Contracts' model for organizations with existing contracts; use the RFP process for organizations not currently meeting contract compliance and for new contracts.”
(Michelle Larstone, Northern Society for Domestic Peace, Written submission 177)

Transition houses

In Prince George, the Finance Committee was informed by the BC Society of Transition Houses that women and children are being turned away from transition houses due to limited resources. These facilities provide short- and long-term housing and related services to women, children and youth who have experienced, or are at risk of experiencing, violence, while community groups offer counselling and programs for children and women coping with abuse. Various organizations that run transition houses or deliver victim services, as well as individual citizens, called on government to provide additional resources to meet the growing demand. Here is how they expressed their requests:

“Currently the transition house programs are funded to \$30 million each year. This amount of funding has not increased in several years.... In addition, the implementation of the HST this July has increased all our agencies' costs by 4.7%, and we are left to cover that additional cost. We recommend funding increase over the next three to five years by at least 4.75% to offset the impacts of the HST as well as the costs of living that we haven't had any increases to offset.”
(Amanda Alexander, BC Society of Transition Houses, Prince George public hearing)

“In the five years that I have been working in this sector, the requests for service have been increased, along with the costs of providing service, yet there have been very limited increases to funding. What increases we have had, have been limited to union-negotiated wage and benefit increases. Service hours are being eroded in order to pay the increasing operating costs.”
(Heather Ney, Comox Valley Transition Society, Courtenay public hearing)

“In our view, the key to breaking the multigenerational cycle of violence is connected with the crisis and ongoing counselling, the practical support, the advocacy, the outreach to marginalized women in communities, the education — coordinating all of these services and policy that supports all of that. So it's the continuum that is breaking the cycle, not any one service — especially the very front-end intervention. But, for these programs, increases over the last two decades have been rare.” (Tracy Porteous, Ending Violence Association of BC, Surrey public hearing)

Friendship centres

This year, for the first time, the Finance Committee received considerable input on how government can support the 23 friendship centres in the province and BC's growing urban Aboriginal population. Funding for friendship centres is managed through the First Citizens Fund, created in 1969 for cultural, educational and economic development for BC Aboriginal peoples living off-reserve. In partnership with the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres the Friendship Centre Program offsets the employment costs of friendship centre directors.

The Finance Committee was informed that the current provincial funding has not been increased in over 20 years, and that in recent years the Friendship Centre Program has experienced funding cuts.

Over 50 written submissions and more than 30 on-line survey responses from national, provincial and local friendship centres expressed a unified plea for sustainable funding:

“BC’s Aboriginal Friendship Centres currently represent more than a \$40 million investment in programs and services for urban Aboriginal people. I am urging the BC Government to make it your priority to fund new programs and services through establishing a Long Term Capacity Fund (LTCF) of \$3.1 million in Aboriginal Friendship Centres.” (Conrad Saulis, National Association of Friendship Centres, On-line survey 733)

“Friendship Centres provide a wide variety of services that are proven to help off-reserve Aboriginal people lead healthy and productive lives; however, friendship centres are burdened with the ever-growing demand for social, cultural, and settlement support services for the off-reserve population. It is essential that the Government of BC invest \$3.1 million annually to sustain the vital role friendship centres play in the lives of over 145,000 Aboriginal people living off-reserve in BC through a Long-Term Capacity Fund for friendship centres.” (Lorraine Cross, Cariboo Friendship Society, Written submission 29)

“Our friendship centre provides a wide variety of services that are proven to help off-reserve Aboriginal people lead healthy and productive lives, including employment readiness; homeless outreach and prevention; and support programs for children, youth, families and elders.... In order to maintain a sustainable level of support for off-reserve and urban Aboriginal people, it is important to invest in this \$3.1 million annual capacity fund for B.C. friendship centres.” (Roger Kishi, Wachiay Friendship Centre, Courtenay public hearing)

“Friendship Centres are a wise investment and an annual investment of 3.1 million dollars will go a long way to ensuring that aboriginal people receive the services they require in urban areas.” (Sandy Brunton, Quesnel Tillicum Society, On-line survey 494)

Social enterprises

Well-established community organizations and student groups presented ideas to the Finance Committee on ways to support small business and address poverty in British Columbia. For example the Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria spoke of the role co-operatives and social enterprises play in creating employment and social resilience. Additional feedback on how to encourage innovation and social entrepreneurship was also heard:

“Through our credit unions and programs like Enterprising Non-Profits, we are also creating a new generation of social enterprises in the non-profit and cooperative sector that combine social, economic and environmental benefits. We think some of these social enterprises are a cutting-edge model of tackling poverty and creating economic opportunity.” (Rupert Downing, Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria, Victoria public hearing)

“Give grants and low-interest micro-loans (as low as \$2,000 for equipment purchase or staff training) to small business in a way that is not tied to revenue level or collateral but rather on evidence of either need and/or ingenuity.” (Mary P. Brooke, Sooke, On-line survey 148)

“By giving grants to help cover all or most of the starting expenses of a young person's small business, more young entrepreneurs will be able to actively gain experience of owning and running a business. By gaining the experience hands-on and allowing the business to have a solid start, there is a potential for the owner to expand the business into something larger. These small businesses would enhance the economy both in the present and in the future.” (Christina Paterson, G.P. Vanier Secondary School Business Students, Courtenay public hearing)

At the Surrey hearing, the Finance Committee was also introduced to a new model of funding community social services. The Fraserside Community Services Society explained that social impact bonds are based on a commitment from government that it will use a proportion of the savings that result from improved social outcomes due to non-profit programming, to reward non-profits and their investors. As an example, in the UK in March 2010 the Ministry of Justice launched a bond that will fund organizations working to reduce the re-offending rates of short-sentence prisoners and investors will be rewarded if re-offending levels are below an agreed-upon threshold.

Fund-raising assistance

Over the course of the budget consultations the Finance Committee also heard that community organizations were struggling to find private donors. For example, an Okanagan family-serving agency and a local museum association in the Comox Valley encouraged the government to consider creating a matching fund to leverage community support. This is how they framed their requests:

“We raised the money in the community through a variety of fundraising initiatives. It's getting harder and harder, and there's an incredible amount of competition. Just watch the morning news, and you'll see 15 walks, three super-lotteries for monster homes and golf tournaments galore, and a variety of things.” (John Belfie, North Okanagan Youth and Family Services Society, Lake Country public hearing)

“We would appreciate it if the government could consider creating a program under which it could, within limits — which would obviously have to be put in place — match the fundraising successes of volunteer organizations such as ours.” (David Stinson, Comox Valley Air Force Museum Association, Courtenay public hearing)

Income supports

Community volunteer supplement

Certain persons with disabilities and persons with persistent barriers who are unable to work have access to a provincial program called the Community Volunteer Supplement. This program allows individuals receiving disability benefits to earn up to \$100 a month for a minimum of ten hours of volunteer work. The Finance Committee received one request to increase this supplement:

“The Committee should consider allowing people...who are medically unable to work even part-time, to ‘earn’ through volunteer hours the same amount of \$500 that others are allowed to earn without affecting their benefits.” (Richard Mark, Kelowna, Written submission 103)

Marginal effective tax rates

One way to measure the fairness of a government’s taxation policy is to examine the marginal effective tax rates (METR) which take into account not only income tax rates and claw-backs but also other government tax offsets, such as tax refunds and family benefits. A 2008 report released by the Toronto-based C.D. Howe Institute reported that since benefits are reduced as income levels rise, families with children in the \$35,000-\$50,000 income range pay higher-than-average marginal effective tax rates. This means that for every additional dollar earned, these families pay a higher percentage of tax than other income brackets. Here is the input we received on the topic:

“Marginal tax rates are, I think, a very important focus in terms of trying to relieve affordability pressures on exactly that group you’re talking about.” (Rupert Downing, Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria, Victoria public hearing)

“If we’re going to tax – and we all know we have to tax – the question is: how do you do it fairly? It’s not easy; it’s really hard. But the bottom line is: don’t do the things that are going to stop jobs.... Frankly, poorer people spend all of their marginal money that comes in. They are actively engaged in the economy.” (Dan McLaren, Commonwealth group of companies, Prince George public hearing)

Minimum wage

The Finance Committee received feedback on the minimum wage at public hearings, in written submissions and from on-line survey respondents. Business organizations, labour unions, anti-poverty advocates and citizens raised the topic of an increase to the minimum wage but disagreed on the timing and size of an increase. Here is a sample of their divergent views:

“We recommend that the Government of British Columbia maintain the current minimum wage until the economy has fully recovered; that the future minimum wage be based on predictable economic indicators, that increases are announced at least six months in advance, and that

minimum wage is increased in small increments.” (Mark von Schellwitz, Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association, Written submission 326)

“On the minimum wage, we recommend that government adopt a process and a set of guiding principles that provide certainty and affordability to B.C.’s small and medium-sized business employers and employees.” (Anne P. Kothawala, Retail Council of Canada and Shelfspace - the Association for Retail Entrepreneurs, Written submission 342)

“Raise the minimum wage a percentage every year, not all at one time and with a vote at the legislature. This should be a yearly increase so business can plan and budget for increased costs.” (Larry Hildebrand, Surrey, On-line submission 667)

“Increases in social assistance rates and the minimum wage are both necessary and overdue.” (Barry O’Neill, Canadian Union of Public Employees – BC division, Written submission 349)

“To end homelessness, increase income levels and reduce poverty rates, the government must raise the B.C. minimum wage and index it to inflation.” (Darryl Walker, BC Government and Service Employees Union, Abbotsford public hearing)

“The Province should increase its \$8.00 minimum wage immediately to \$9.00 and then incrementally to \$10.00 together with indexation. “Minimum wages” are a crucial element in “making work pay” providing a wage floor for the working poor.” (Philip Gates, Duncan, On-line survey 689)

Affordable housing

This year housing affordability was a topical issue with submissions highlighting barriers such as high prices, high rental costs, land-use regulations and staff shortages. A variety of viewpoints were presented with a sample included here:

“Safe and affordable housing is a fundamental component of community health. For this reason we request that the provincial government responds to the very serious shortage of rental housing, by working with the federal government to remove disincentives to private sector investment in purpose-built rental housing and develops investment incentives.” (Vivien Christison, Lionsview Seniors’ Planning Society, Written submission 138)

“House prices have increased two times or more making home ownership impossible for many middle income families, and pushing rent for decent housing out of the grasp of lower income families.” (Marian Hof, Coquitlam, On-line survey 448)

“The most important issue in Castlegar is lack of affordable housing, particularly for low income single people and couples under 60 years, without children....All of the new building construction

in Castlegar and area is for business or high-end housing. No construction is underway or planned for affordable housing.” (Janet Crawford, Castlegar, On-line survey 138)

“We recommend that the Government of British Columbia continue its collaborative work in the area of affordable housing for citizens. Priorities should be: land use planning to ensure that such housing is properly integrated into communities.” (Susan Murphy, Canadian Federation of University Women – BC Council, Written submission 224)

“There is one person, one provincial representative from the Ministry of Housing, for the 15,000 people in the Mount Waddington regional district, who because of the big caseload, of course, can only come to Port Hardy once a month for a few days. So we recognize the need to have a permanent position in Port Hardy or in the regional district to help us really assess our housing needs, to get the data we need to move forward.” (Councillor Nikki Shaw, Mount Waddington Health Network - housing committee, Port McNeill video conference session)

During the consultations, the Finance Committee was informed of the problems landlords sometimes face when collecting renting from individuals on income assistance. A witness in Port McNeill suggested that one simple solution could be to send the shelter component of income assistance directly to the landlord, under an agreement with the tenant that could only be terminated by mutual consent.

Community safety

The Finance Committee received requests for the continuation of funding for the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit - British Columbia (CFSEU-BC), which was established in 2004 to facilitate the suppression of organized crime in the province, and is part of the RCMP ‘E’ Division. The Unit includes members seconded from each of the municipal forces in the province. There are three branches of CFSEU-BC, in Kelowna, Prince George and Victoria. The government approved \$53 million to fund these three branches, which is anticipated to be depleted in the next fiscal year. The specific requests are below:

“The province created the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Units that address organized crime. There are 16 members that have been placed within the city of Kelowna serving the whole region. That came with a \$53 million commitment, and there is no commitment to go beyond that \$53 million. We know that will run out next year. We are concerned not only from a policing perspective; 16 people were located into Kelowna. To have them here for two years and then pull them out would seem to be not the fairest thing to do. Also, it doesn't provide a long period of time to determine how successful that kind of program is. Two years or so for these kinds of units to establish themselves isn't a very long time. We would like to see that funding commitment to integrated policing continue.” (Paul Macklem, City of Kelowna, Lake Country public hearing)

“An organized crime task force is in Kelowna. It has a three-year mandate; it expires in 2011. We've spoken with the Minister of Public Safety in Ottawa. He wholeheartedly endorses the

necessity for this organized crime task force to continue in Kelowna.” (Wesley Shields, Kelowna Chamber of Commerce, Penticton public hearing)

Concerns were also raised with committee members about the provincial Traffic Fine Revenue Sharing Grant, an annual unconditional grant to help municipalities address public safety issues, which is due to expire on December 31, 2010. Most municipalities have used this money to assist in paying for their annual policing costs, and cancelling the grant will result in municipalities either reducing police strength or funding the increase from an increase in property taxes. Some municipalities urged the Finance Committee to make a recommendation on this issue:

“Since 2002 the Province has shared revenues generated by traffic fines with local governments. This revenue has accounted for 5-6% of our local police services budget. We request that the Province include traffic fine revenue sharing as a permanently funded program in the annual Provincial budget without the need for separate cabinet approval each year.” (Mayor Dianne Watts, City of Surrey, Written submission 289)

“Courtenay is also concerned that traffic fine revenue-sharing, which terminates at the end of 2010, will not be continued. The grant is needed to ensure current levels of policing in their municipality.” (Mayor Fred Bates, Village of Cumberland, Courtenay public hearing)

In the course of presenting the request for revenue-sharing on behalf of smaller North Island communities, the Mayor of Cumberland also asked for a review of grant procedures to allow earlier advances on large-dollar grants to facilitate small communities’ cash-flow requirements.

Conclusions and recommendations

This year the Finance Committee received considerable input from community-based services in both the non-profit and creative arts sectors. We acknowledge the valuable services these sectors provide and were struck by the extent of financial uncertainty they face. Accordingly, we believe there is an urgent need to review the funding structure for allocating community gaming grants and contracts for service delivery. We also consider arts funding to be a priority.

With regard to specific community services, we would propose that government give serious consideration to allocating additional resources for transition houses and friendship centres. At the same time, we think government also needs to make some changes to income supports and finance initiatives that encourage social entrepreneurship and promote housing affordability. Renewal of funding for measures to maintain the safety of our communities are equally worthy of consideration.

Community services recommendations

The Finance Committee recommends that the provincial government:

27. Revisit eligibility criteria for community gaming grants; and consider reinstating grants for three years to provide stability, predictability and consistency.
28. Make funding of the arts a high priority in the 2011/12 budget by returning to overall actual funding levels of 2008/09 to encourage an independent and creative cultural sector.
29. Minimize any incremental requirements of the RFP process for service providers; and consider working with organizations like Board Voice to ensure best value for money, minimum administration costs and as much focus as possible on front-line services.
30. Increase funding for transition house programs; and enhance the coordination and delivery of services for victims of domestic violence.
31. Invest additional resources annually in a long-term capacity fund for BC friendship centres.
32. Continue to support programs to assist individuals and organizations to become self-sufficient or to start a business.
33. Investigate the use of social impact bonds as a way to fund and empower private organizations to provide valuable services.
34. Explore ways to encourage additional charitable donations.
35. Consider allowing people who are medically unable to work, even part-time, the opportunity to 'earn' (a greater amount) through volunteer hours without it affecting their benefits.
36. Undertake changes to provincial claw-back policies and tax rates to bring the marginal effective tax rates (METR) for families with children in the \$35,000-\$50,000 income range in line with METR for BC families in other tax brackets.
37. Increase the minimum wage in small increments with appropriate advance notice.
38. Take steps to facilitate the creation of market-supplied, affordable entry-level housing in British Columbia.
39. In an effort to increase the supply of entry-level rental housing, tenancy agreements assigning social assistance payments directly from government to landlords should only be amended with the express written agreement of both the tenant and landlord.
40. Allocate funds received from the federal government towards the continuation of the organized crime task force in the Okanagan region and Prince George, beyond the three-year term that the funding was committed for.
41. Continue traffic fine revenue-sharing beyond 2010 to ensure current levels of policing in municipalities.

British Columbians' Priorities for the Environment and Resource Industries

The Finance Committee received a number of submissions during the pre-budget consultation process on topics relating to the environment and natural resources. Topics receiving considerable attention included environmental protection and enforcement, and the promotion of BC products for local consumption. Improvements to communications infrastructure such as expanded broadband Internet access were also requested, particularly in northern areas.

As in previous years, several organizations representing agriculture, forestry, and mining also participated in the pre-budget consultations. These sectors requested changes to streamline the environmental assessment process and to increase provincial funding for agricultural support programs. Other industry submissions highlighted the importance of providing permanent funding to existing pilot or term-funded initiatives. Several groups, for example, called for ongoing support for the predator control program and for Geoscience BC. Forestry sector organizations, in turn, voiced specific support for continuing to invest in Forestry Innovation Investment Ltd., which works to develop uses for BC wood and to promote BC forest products globally.

Environmental protection

The Finance Committee received submissions from across the province calling on the government to reinstate funding to the Ministry of Environment for conservation and enforcement. These included requests for more resources for environmental management in BC Parks and stepped-up enforcement of fishing and angling regulations. The current number of conservation officers in the province, for example, was cited by several members of the public as being inadequate for proper enforcement of the freshwater fisheries.

Other submissions called for increases in general funding to ensure adequate maintenance and oversight in BC parks, areas also deemed to be currently lacking due to budget allocations. Written submissions pointed out how more funding for parks brings benefits such as healthy living, jobs, tourism, and community-building. Other recommendations were also proposed to address prevention and control of invasive plant species. Here are some of the specific requests:

"We would like to see a larger budget for BC Parks and Protected Areas. A small change in our spending philosophy and a little more value placed on our parks will be more cost-effective in the long run." (John Neville, BC Nature (Federation of BC Naturalists), Written submission 27)

"We strongly suggest that enforcement budgets be increased to ensure adequate staffing on the ground and in the office. The number of conservation officers needs to be re-established to a number greater than before the reductions." (Patti MacAhonic, BC Wildlife Federation, Whistler public hearing)

“Fish and wildlife are renewable resources and should be included in the vision of a healthy and wealthy BC, but these resources can only be maintained and enhanced if both Ministries of Environment and Forests and Range can fulfil their mandates. This cannot be accomplished through budget cuts. We respectfully request that full funding be restored and/or increased to these ministries in future budgets.” (Ron Watanabe, Courtenay and District Fish and Game Protective Association, Courtenay public hearing)

“We do need more enforcement officers in British Columbia. The ranks of the conservation service are spread so thin with doing too many things at once.... Please add a little bit more money to the service so we can serve the public better.” (Doug Peck, Fernie video conference session)

“Although we are very grateful for the support we have received in the past, we do feel a bit like the little boy with his finger in the dike. Unless the province steps up as an entity to address the harmful invasions of plants, we're going to end up in the same situation we see in other parts of the world.” (Andrea Eastham, Northwest Invasive Plant Council, Terrace public hearing)

Environmental assessment process

The Finance Committee heard from industry stakeholders about the need for reform of the environmental assessment process, which presently involves both the provincial Environmental Assessment Office and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency. For example, Initiatives Prince George advocated increased harmonization of federal and provincial environmental assessments to streamline the assessment process and to allow new development. It was noted that issues stemming from the existing environmental assessment process create inefficiencies and duplication which have a negative impact on northern development. Other organizations, such as the Christian Labour Association of Canada, discussed how environmental assessments can cause delays which hinder job creation. Here is the input the Committee received on this topic:

“We ask that the Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services recommends that work on harmonization of the federal and provincial environmental assessment processes be expedited to the greatest degree practicable.” (Tim McEwan, Initiatives Prince George, Prince George public hearing)

“You're all well aware...that there's duplication between provincial and federal departments. We would encourage government to find ways to reduce that overlap and that inefficiency, and also to improve decision-making timelines so that we don't sit and listen to things about {Prosperity} mine opening for ten, 15 or 20 years.” (David Prentice, Christian Labour Association of Canada, Abbotsford public hearing)

“We support and encourage the BC government's attempts to reduce project timelines through coordination with the BC/Federal Environmental Assessment process and First Nation consultations.” (Ross Stanfield, East Kootenay Chamber of Mines, Written submission 261)

Predator control program

The Wild Predator Loss Prevention Mitigation Program is currently funded on a pilot basis through the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC. Initially established in 2009, the program seeks to protect BC's commercial livestock sector from wildlife predator damage while preserving natural predator-prey relationships. Representatives from agriculture and livestock industry groups appeared before the Finance Committee in Kamloops, Fort St. John and Abbotsford, and called on the government to establish a permanent predator control program to address losses of livestock to carnivores. Here is a summary of their requests:

“Currently we have a predator control program in place, but it's in place as a pilot program. We need to change this and make it a permanent, stable program. Predators are preying on our ranchers' livestock at alarming rates. Our ranchers are very concerned about the escalating losses from carnivores, particularly as this wild predator program does not have stable funding.”
(Kevin Boone, BC Cattlemen's Association, Kamloops public hearing)

“We've run two controlled pilot programs over the past number of years. It's time for these to cease to be pilot programs and to actually implement them.... They've been shown to be effective and to work.” (Garnet Etsell, BC Agriculture Council, Abbotsford public hearing)

Natural resources industry sector

Federal-provincial assistance programs

The Finance Committee also received submissions from the agriculture industry concerning existing federal-provincial assistance programs that share the costs to farmers and ranchers of large income declines, such as crop losses due to disaster. In Kamloops, the BC Cattlemen's Association described some of the challenges facing the ranching industry due to drought in recent years and stressed that assistance is needed through existing federal-provincial programs. In Abbotsford, the BC Agriculture Council also called for BC's participation in AgriRecovery, a joint federal-provincial program:

“The ranching industry is losing producers and cattle at an alarming rate, and we are told that if we need assistance, it must come through the programs available. ... [We request] that the provincial government utilize the programs that they have established with the federal government wherever necessary to invest in the future of agriculture in British Columbia.” (Kevin Boone, BC Cattlemen's Association, Kamloops public hearing)

“As AgriRecovery is a 60/40 federal/provincial cost shared program, provincial government funds must become available to trigger a federal investment through this program.” (Garnet Etsell, BC Agriculture Council, Abbotsford public hearing)

BC branding program

The Finance Committee also received requests to consider recommendations for greater promotion of the production and local consumption of BC agricultural products. Presenters noted how BC lags behind other provinces such as Ontario when it comes to promoting local food, and does not have an agri-food technology and commercialization centre. The Committee heard submissions calling for provincial investments to help to identify and market BC agricultural products, and renewed government funding of the Buy BC Program. British Columbians, presenters noted, are demanding local products but they need to be able to identify them. Here is a sample of comments on this topic:

"We need to take advantage of this buy-local phenomenon that has been taking place. BC residents are crying for local product, but they need to be able to identify it. That's where the branding program comes into play. It's absolutely critical, so we recommend that \$2 million per year need to be allocated to that program." (Garnet Etsell, BC Agriculture Council, Abbotsford public hearing)

"One of our recommendations is that the \$2 million per year that was earmarked in the Agriculture Plan comes back and that we do the Buy BC program again." (Nico Human, BC Food Processors Association, Abbotsford public hearing)

"Farmers' markets address many of the goals of the BC Agriculture Plan by creating new local markets for agriculture, but we have room for improvement as over 30 percent of consumers still need more information on how to access local food." (Elizabeth Quinn, BC Association of Farmers' Markets, Whistler public hearing)

"[We need to] continue to encourage a business climate where more products and businesses are made, produced or started in BC rather than somewhere else ... I don't understand why a vast majority of the food products that we buy are processed in or are indirectly from the U.S." (Dave Verwoerd, Abbotsford, On-line survey 171)

Artisan distilling industry

At the Lake Country public hearing, the Finance Committee learned about BC's emerging artisan distilling industry and some of the challenges it faces. The Artisan Distillers Guild of British Columbia described how the existing policies of the Liquor Distribution Branch, which controls the distribution of alcohol in the province, make it difficult for distillers to market their products. The Guild requested that the same distribution and price markup policies in place for the BC wine industry be extended to the BC craft distilling industry. The Comox Valley Economic Development Society also requested support for artisan distillers at the Courtenay public hearing.

Farmers' markets

Advocates for farmers' markets made presentations at the Whistler and Courtenay hearings and spoke about their health and community benefits. Since the markets are regulated by municipalities, the advocates called for the Province to work with local government to establish permanent sites:

“In response to the question, ‘What are your priorities if government had additional resources?’ we provide the following answers. Invest in what’s working, such as farmers’ markets as hubs of health. Support partnerships to allow markets to establish secure and permanent locations — talk to the municipal people here at the convention and work together to have permanent locations.” (Elizabeth Quinn, BC Association of Farmers’ Markets, Whistler public hearing)

“Our intent is to encourage the Committee to consider current budget allocations to the Ministry of Agriculture and, in particular, to agri-food marketing activities, export-oriented agri-trade, immigration and investment, as well as the development and expansion of public farmers markets throughout the province.” (John Watson, Comox Valley Economic Development Society, Courtenay public hearing)

Ministry operating budgets

As in previous years, representatives of the agriculture sector and the mining industry appeared before the Finance Committee and commented on how the current budget allocation to natural-resource ministries is having a serious impact on the delivery of services. In the case of the mining industry, the ministries’ ability to carry out permitting and consultation requirements was referenced. Specific concerns about inefficiencies and overlap between permitting agencies, the slow rate of permits being issued, and cuts to permitting agencies were also pointed out as areas needing attention. Here is a sample of what the Committee heard on the topic of ministry budgets:

“[W]e have had an ever-declining amount of dollars invested on the part of government into agriculture.” (Garnet Etsell, BC Agriculture Council, Abbotsford public hearing)

“[W]e are concerned by the level of cuts to key permitting agencies, whether it’s Energy and Mines, or Environment or the Integrated Land Management Bureau. We feel that it’s gotten to a point where it’s compromising their ability to get permits done. That, of course, impacts the economy.” (Pierre Gratton, Mining Association of British Columbia, Victoria public hearing)

“We are having challenges in the permitting side. We are having challenges on the First Nations side on the land base and so forth. There are good people working hard to make that a smoother process, but that is a reality. That’s why our proportional decrease had occurred, vis-à-vis other Canadian jurisdictions.” (Gavin Dirom, Association for Mineral Exploration - British Columbia, Victoria public hearing)

“Our ability to spend money on exploration is directly impacted by how fast and how effectively permits are done. That’s money in the ground. That’s money spent, particularly in the more depressed regions of the province.” (Byng Giraud, Imperial Metals Corp, Terrace public hearing)

“Budget cuts along with staff cuts have impaired the Mining and Minerals Division’s ability to deliver the level of service and timely handling of permit applications the industry requires to function effectively.” (Ross Stanfield, East Kootenay Chamber of Mines, Written submission 261)

Forestry Innovation Investment Ltd.

At the hearings in Abbotsford and Vancouver, representatives for the wood industry voiced support for Forestry Innovation Investment (FII), a provincial agency that promotes BC forest practices and products around the world. The Finance Committee learned about the important role that FII plays in developing the value-added wood product industry and creating new opportunities in foreign markets. The BC Wood Specialties Group and the Coast Forest Products Association called for continued and stable funding of FII to ensure that its work continues. Here are their requests:

“Our primary recommendation is to provide ongoing funds to FII to help advance marketing of value-added wood products, the capacity building in the sector and the development of the wood-first culture in the province. Without these funds, it’s difficult to see that the value-added industry is going to continue to grow.” (Brian Hawrysh, BC Wood Specialties Group, Abbotsford public hearing)

“I can’t tell you how much the \$21 million put into Forestry Innovations Investment every year is helpful to the industry. It allows us to ensure market access and develop markets in our offshore markets and get us diversified away from the United States. ... You need to continue to fund that program.” (Rick Jeffery, Coast Forest Products Association, Vancouver public hearing)

Mineral exploration – Geoscience BC

Geoscience BC is an industry-led and -focused, applied geoscience organization with the mandate to encourage mineral and oil and gas exploration investment in British Columbia. As in previous years, recommendations were made to the Finance Committee for the province to continue investing in Geoscience BC, whose funding is scheduled to end in March 2012. Representatives for Geoscience BC and the mining sector pointed out how the organization helps to attract investment and drive innovation, and is an international leader in the provision of public geoscience. The Committee heard the following recommendations in support of this organization:

“We recognize that this is not a good fiscal time for government, but we really think that a commitment of at least two or three years’ worth of funding to Geoscience BC would allow us to move forward, particularly on the water studies in the northeast.” (Dr. Lyn Anglin, Geoscience BC, Abbotsford public hearing)

“We think there should be more money given to Geoscience BC. They’re going to be running out of money shortly.” (Byng Giraud, Imperial Metals Corp., Terrace public hearing)

“A strong provincial geoscience program attracts investment, promotes exploration and pays for itself many times over. We encourage more government spending on geoscience initiatives and fully endorse Geoscience BC’s 5-year Data for Discovery initiative, including the Stimulating Exploration in the East Kootenays proposal.” (Ross Stanfield, East Kootenay Chamber of Mines, Written submission 261)

“We have two entities. We have the survey, and we have Geoscience BC. Currently, they are both potentially underfunded and not likely to contribute or survive in a very meaningful way. We need both to be resourced appropriately and adequately, and basically two halves create one solid whole.” (Gavin Dirom, Association for Mineral Exploration - British Columbia, Victoria public hearing)

Lower Fraser River – dredging program

This year, the Finance Committee again heard requests for the provincial government to assist with the dredging of the Ladner channels of the Fraser River. It was noted that about 150,000 metric tonnes of sediment is deposited in these channels every year and build-ups of sediment create navigational safety problems for both commercial and pleasure watercraft. Since federal funding for dredging of deep-sea channels ceased in 1998, the following recommendations were made for the province to work with other levels of government to address this outstanding issue:

“The recent analysis has determined that about 1.2 million cubic metres of sediment needs to be removed to return the channel to the pre-1990 conditions. The sediment loads are expected to increase, of course, as a result of a lot of the deforestation and the soil erosion caused by the mountain pine beetle. It’s a concern to all of us that we do see a lot of sediment from those areas.” (Mayor Lois Jackson, Corporation of Delta, Surrey public hearing)

“Our request to the Committee and to our provincial government is to recognize the severity and importance of this issue and to accept the financial responsibility of partnering with other government agencies to address and correct the situation.” (John Roscoe, Ladner Sediment Group, Abbotsford public hearing)

Communications infrastructure

Presently, Network BC provides leadership and support for strategic use of telecommunications in British Columbia, including the development of broadband connectivity access. At the Prince George hearing, the Finance Committee heard several presentations that included requests for improved high-speed internet access and cell phone coverage to foster business development and distance learning opportunities. Here are examples of what we heard:

“We ask that the Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services encourage the province to reduce remaining gaps in northern British Columbia broadband coverage and to eliminate cell phone dead zones over a fixed timeline over the current decade. Further, we recommend that the Committee encourage senior governments and telecommunications firms to address the need for fibre redundancy in northern British Columbia, particularly at the two key transportation nodes of Prince George and Prince Rupert.” (Tim McEwan, Initiatives Prince George, Prince George public hearing)

“Continue your efforts to improve broadband access with reduced cost of delivery of the last mile in rural and remote regions.” (Roy Spooner, Prince George Chamber of Commerce, Prince George public hearing)

“Improving broadband width and high speed access throughout the province particularly in remote regions needs to be a government priority in order for all regions of the province to have equitable access to enhanced distance learning opportunities.” (Sharel Warrington, Prince George Board of Education, Prince George public hearing)

Conclusions and recommendations

The Finance Committee believes very strongly that additional resources must be allocated in the next budget for environmental protection and for the promotion of investment and export opportunities in key natural resource industries. We are very concerned about current deficiencies within the permitting process and would like to see them addressed as soon as possible. We are also persuaded that ongoing funding is needed for specific initiatives, and to address inequities in rural parts of BC.

Environment and resource industries recommendations

The Finance Committee recommends that the provincial government:

42. Increase funding for conservation, wildlife habitat and species protection, and resource management enforcement.
43. Work with the federal government to adopt a single, comprehensive and effective environmental assessment program to avoid duplication and unnecessary delay.
44. Commit funds for the Ministry of Agriculture to deliver a permanent predator control program.
45. Include in the Ministry of Agriculture budget adequate resources to maximize the benefits of federal-provincial programs, such as AgriStability and AgriRecovery, and to finance a branding program for BC agricultural products, as recommended in the BC Agriculture Plan.
46. Remove regulatory barriers that impede the development of artisan distilling in BC.
47. Work with local governments to establish permanent locations for farmers' markets.
48. Ensure that there are adequate front-line resources to address minerals permitting and First Nations consultation requirements in a timely manner; and eliminate unnecessary duplication while maintaining environmental standards.
49. Continue funding and consider expanding Forestry Innovation Investment Ltd.
50. Extend funding for Geoscience BC beyond its current mandate to support its critical role in supporting resource industries.
51. Allocate funds for a sediment removal program on the Fraser River and its tributaries.
52. Continue the extension of broadband access to all rural remote communities in the province; and improve fibre-optic redundancy in cell phone dead zones.

British Columbians' Tax and Fiscal Priorities

The Finance Committee received some input from the business sector requesting transition measures relating to the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST). The film industry requested changes to tax credits, while construction associations proposed a provincial home renovation tax credit. Submissions were also received regarding the federal Capital Gains Tax and tax exemptions for farm improvements. This section concludes with a summary of the public's comments on the fiscal plan.

Tax measures

HST Recapture of Input Tax Credits

The introduction of the HST has given businesses the opportunity to claim Input Tax Credits (ITCs) for the HST they pay, effectively reducing the tax paid on their business inputs. However, from July 1, 2010 until June 30, 2018, "large" businesses - those making more than \$10 million in annual sales - are subject to "recapture" of a portion of the available ITCs that are attributable to the provincial part of the HST. The rate of ITC recapture will be 100% for the first five years the HST is in effect, and will then be phased out by reducing the rate of recapture in equal increments over the following three years.

During the budget consultation process, the Finance Committee received submissions requesting that government revisit the HST Recapture of Input Tax Credits (RITC) provisions. The British Columbia Agricultural Council reported that large agricultural co-operatives, which had been formed in an effort to bring more efficiency to the industry, were now penalized by the RITC provisions. As well, the tourism industry was concerned that the benefits of the HST are not being realized in its service-oriented sectors, because of the high labour component in their cost structure. Finally, small business owners raised the point that the \$10 million threshold is a disincentive to growth, as they are penalized if they exceed the threshold. Here is the input we received on this topic:

"It has been raised by one of our members that there was a rule brought in with the HST called the recaptured input tax credits. Inadvertently this has hit large cooperatives, particularly the fruit cooperative in the Okanagan Valley. Here you've got small farmers that have collectively come together to market their product, and by doing the right thing and consolidating the many processing plants that were in the Okanagan Valley, they've created a large efficient entity. It has put them over the threshold, and as a result, for eight years they will not be able to enjoy the full benefits of the HST. So we urge the Committee to recommend that cooperatives be exempt from that recaptured input tax credit rule." (Garnet Etsell, BC Agricultural Council, Abbotsford public hearing)

"The recommendation from our Chamber is to introduce a provincial tax rebate or credit program that follows the same phase-in calendar as the RITC schedule." (Shannon Renault, Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce, Victoria public hearing)

“Eliminate the \$10 million revenue cap for Input Tax Credit (ITC) eligibility for tourism-related businesses. We ask that government legislate removal of this growth impediment within six months because this will help our province’s visitation generators for the 2011 tourism season.”
(Stephen Regan, Council of Tourism Associations, Written submission 346)

“I would like the government to review the \$10 million threshold for the large business restriction on input tax credits. I manage a meat-processing business in the Fraser Valley and consider the company a small business. I don’t know why a company should be penalized for growing their sales or encouraged not to grow their sales so they can claim back some more input tax credits.”
(Brian Bilkes, Chilliwack, Written submission 146)

HST new-home rebate threshold

When the HST was first announced in July 2009, the government also stated that purchasers of new homes would be eligible for a rebate of a percentage of the provincial component of the HST, up to a maximum purchase price of \$400,000. After consultation with the industry, this threshold was raised to \$525,000.

This year realtors and builders requested further action by suggesting that this threshold be indexed to Statistics Canada’s New Housing Price Index to ensure that new home buyers would not be forced to pay additional HST as new home prices rise in the future. Here is a sample of what we heard:

“The provincial HST new-home rebate threshold should also be indexed using the New Housing Price Index, with adjustments made annually. The current HST rebate is available at 71.43 percent of the provincial portion of the HST up to a maximum of \$26,250. The rationale behind the structure was that most, or about 75 percent, of the buyers of new homes would pay no more tax currently with the HST implemented. However, unless the threshold is indexed now, as new home prices rise over time, a higher proportion of buyers will pay HST on new homes. We estimate that new home prices in communities throughout BC will exceed the maximum threshold by the year 2025 unless the recommendation is adopted.” (Mark Andersen, British Columbia Real Estate Association, Whistler public hearing)

“We join the BC Real Estate Association in recommending that you index the HST new-home rebate threshold currently set at \$525,000 using the New Housing Price Index and make adjustments annually. We urge you to be proactive now and save future homebuyers of new homes from paying more tax.” (Scott Olson, Fraser Valley Real Estate Board, Surrey public hearing)

“By acting now to index the HST new-home rebate threshold, elected officials have an opportunity to resolve a problem before it starts and save future homebuyers of new homes from an unfair tax burden.” (Howard Neufeld, Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board, Lake Country hearing)

“Increase the harmonized sales tax (HST) threshold and subsequent rebate on new homes. \$525,000 is not indicative of the average new single-family home price in the Lower Mainland.”
(Peter Roskell, Greater Vancouver Home Builders’ Association, Written submission 370)

“Index the HST new home threshold on real estate - otherwise it won't be many years until all new home buyers will not receive a rebate.” (John McKilligan, Langley, On-line survey 123)

Film industry tax credits

The Digital Animation or Visual Effects (DAVE) tax credit program provides refundable tax credits on a corporation's digital animation or visual effects activities, but excludes audio. The film production industry appeared before the Finance Committee to request extending this credit to audio to reverse the trend towards centralizing all post-production activities in the States. Presenters also asked that writer fees be included as eligible labour expenditures, to ensure that screenwriters in the province are also able to benefit from tax credits for the industry. Here is a sample of the input:

“One of the things we asked government for, at a \$2 million cost, was to have all post-production - which is after principal photography, where you add the visual effects and all the sound - covered by the digital animation or visual effects credit. Currently it covers portions of post-production, but it doesn't cover sound, for instance. You can imagine a movie without sound; it just isn't quite the same. What we're seeing now is that a lot of the post-production work is now being more centralized in the US. We think that if we're covering it by DAVE now — and there are 19 series going on in BC right now — we can bring this work up to British Columbia.”
(Peter Leitch, Motion Picture Production Industry Association of BC, Surrey public hearing)

“Recognizing government's very tight fiscal situation, we are asking government to consider two requests: one is restoring the funding to BC Film to preserve more intellectual property in BC, controlling our destiny, telling our stories and becoming a fully integrated production centre; and secondly, immediate small administrative adjustments to Film Incentive BC that target BC-owned work that will significantly and immediately improve the investment client for new projects.” (Rob Bromley, Canadian Media Production Association – BC Producers' Branch, Whistler public hearing)

“We urge government to enhance the Film Incentive BC tax credits program for TV series and feature films to a competitive level, as recommended by the Canadian Media Production Association. As well, we support the Motion Picture Production Industry Association's recommendation that all post-production facilities be eligible for the DAVE credit.”
(Roland Stanke, Thompson-Nicola Film Commission, Kamloops public hearing)

“In British Columbia currently, the tax credit eligibility for domestic productions only includes labour from the final script stage forward. The exclusion of script development from BC's domestic tax credit eligibility puts screenwriters in BC at particular disadvantage.”
(Maureen Parker, Writers Guild of Canada, Written submission 338)

“The tax incentives for the film industry in British Columbia are of utmost importance to me. It creates clean well paid jobs and the multiplier effect is great for many businesses.” (Mark Angus, Vancouver, On-line survey 286)

Home renovation tax credit

Builders, realtors and citizens told the Finance Committee that the federal government's home renovation tax credit had a big impact on local builders and helped to curtail the underground economy. The Canadian Home Builders Association also suggested that this tax credit could be increased if a renovation reduces greenhouse gas emissions or increases energy efficiency. Here is what we heard:

"A home renovation tax credit is essential to encourage the upgrading of existing housing stock, to strengthen a post-recession economy and to minimize the potential growth of the underground cash economy." (Doug Wittal, Canadian Home Builders Association - Central Interior, Kamloops public hearing)

"What we are asking for is a 2 percent permanent renovation tax credit on the portion of the renovation industry that is now subject to the HST. The money goes to the consumer so the consumer then has the money to spend on other things. We're also asking that that amount be increased to 4 percent if it's a green renovation. So if that family or that homeowner is doing a renovation that actually reduces the impact on the grid...then they should be rewarded by getting more of that money back." (M.J. Whitemarsh, Canadian Home Builders Association of BC, Victoria public hearing)

"We recommend that the Finance Minister consider new-housing construction and renovation incentives to invigorate this important segment of the market." (Randi Masters, Victoria Real Estate Board, Victoria public hearing)

"I know that this was a federal initiative, but the home renovation tax credit in our industry was just a real breath of fresh air. We saw several thousand British Columbians take advantage of it. I would hope to see back a made-in-BC home renovation tax credit. In 2009 it really helped maintain employment." (Angela Calla, Surrey public hearing)

Capital gains tax rollover

The Committee received input from the Fraser Valley Real Estate Board suggesting that the current federal capital gains tax system discourages Canadians from selling income properties, as the amount realized from a sale after paying the tax would not be enough to enable an individual to invest in another property. The Board stated that implementing tax deferral would help create additional housing capacity to meet the demands of rental housing and urban densification, and would also assist Canadians saving for retirement by making real estate a more viable investment vehicle. Here is what we heard on this issue:

"We recommend the provincial government join realtors and Fraser Valley municipalities in recommending the federal government implement a system to allow the deferral of the capital gains tax and the recaptured capital cost allowance when an income property is sold and the proceeds are reinvested in another income property within one year, for the benefit of communities." (Deanna Horn, Fraser Valley Real Estate Board, Surrey public hearing)

“Encourage the Federal Government to defer the Capital Gains Tax when the proceeds from the sale of an investment property are re-invested within one year into another investment property. This would really help with the supply of rental properties offered for sale creating lots of jobs as new owners tend to spend way more on improvements than old owners.” (John McKilligan, Langley, On-line survey 123)

Farm improvements tax exemption

Last year the Finance Committee recommended that government implement recommendation 9 of the Farm Assessment Review Panel’s 2009 report regarding exemptions for farm improvements. The BC Agriculture Council appeared before the Committee again this year at the Abbotsford hearing reiterating the need for this recommendation to be implemented to encourage redevelopment of existing buildings. For the next fiscal year, the Council recommends that farm improvements be exempt at 87.5 percent of assessed value or \$50,000, whichever is greater, for the 2011 assessment roll, and that the provincial government provide impacted local governments with funding to compensate for this loss of revenue, estimated to be between \$2 million and \$4 million a year.

Fiscal Plan

The Finance Committee received input from British Columbians on the fiscal plan contained in the 2011 Budget Consultation Paper. While recognizing the necessity of deficits during challenging economic times, the submissions focused on the need for government to eliminate the deficit as soon as possible and get back to balanced budgets. Some of the comments we received are provided below:

“The Chamber believes that the only responsible approach is to dedicate all additional revenue to reducing the deficit, thereby reducing the burden we place on future generations and returning us to balanced budgets as early as 2011-12.” (John Winter, BC Chamber of Commerce, Vancouver public hearing)

“For our budget submission we do not propose any major revenue or expenditure items this year. Instead, we want to focus on deficit elimination and sort of stay the course, if you will. Having said that, we do believe that the government may wish to boost capital spending, if it turns out that the economy slows more than anticipated.” (Ken Peacock, Business Council of British Columbia, Abbotsford public hearing)

“Cut the deficit. I know this won't win the approval of most voters and politicians, but it would be the responsible thing to do.” (Victor Vogt, Abbotsford, On-line survey 14)

Conclusions and recommendations

The Finance Committee thinks there is a case for transition measures to assist farm co-operatives and smaller businesses adapt to the HST, and for providing some relief to purchasers of new homes. We were also persuaded to support the administrative changes proposed by the film industry and receptive to the idea of a provincial tax credit for home renovations. Finally, we strongly believe that the planned return to balanced budgets should be expedited, if circumstances permit.

Tax and fiscal priorities

The Finance Committee recommends that the provincial government:

53. Work with the federal government to exempt agricultural co-operatives from HST Recapture of Input Tax Credits; and raise the HST RITC threshold so it does not impact small and medium-sized businesses.
54. Index the HST new-home rebate threshold.
55. Extend the Digital Animation or Visual Effects tax credit to cover audio in post-production work; and include writer fees as eligible labour expenditures under Film Incentive BC.
56. Consider a permanent tax credit of 2% on all home renovations and 4% on Built Green BC renovations to promote energy efficiency in retrofits and create LiveSmart incentives for landlords and tenants.
57. Continue to work with the federal government to implement a system to allow for the deferral of the capital gains tax and the recaptured capital cost allowance when a residential income property is sold and the proceeds are reinvested in another residential income property within one year.
58. Exempt farm improvements at 87.5 percent of assessed value, or \$50,000, whichever is greater.
59. Maintain deficit reduction as a significant priority and stay within the timeline for, or accelerate, the return to a balanced budget.

Summary of recommendations

The Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services recommends that the provincial government:

Health services

The Finance Committee recommends that the provincial government:

1. Continue to increase the annual investment in the provision of health services, keeping increases in health care spending in line with the average growth of the provincial economy.
2. Seek to identify and resolve with the BCMA any significant inequities in the fee schedule, in advance of compensation negotiations.
3. Continue to dedicate funds to scale up successful pockets of innovation in the public health care system, such as the primary-care discipline of family practice and patient-focused funding.
4. More fully utilize the expertise and scope of practice of all health care professionals – dental hygienists, dietitians, nurse practitioners – around the province, particularly in rural BC.
5. Examine the costs and benefits of advancing a lifetime prevention plan for British Columbians.
6. Provide resources for Alzheimer Society of BC's First Link program, Acquired Brain Injury Innovation Fund, Pacific Parkinson's Research Centre, and Vancouver Coastal ALS Centre.
7. Acknowledge the importance of end-of-life services within the medical care structure and provide equitable support to in-home hospice care, hospice houses and palliative care facilities across the province, recognizing the valuable contributions made by volunteers in this area.
8. Continue to help people stay healthy by expanding the nationally acclaimed ActNow program; by increasing health education within the K-12 system and beyond; and by offering incentives and assistance to quit smoking, to stop the use of illicit drugs, and to curb excessive drinking, by exploring the revision of the liquor tax structure to tax according to alcohol content.
9. Reinvest in health and nutrition promotion programs, particularly the BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program.
10. Engage in a dialogue with British Columbians about measures to reduce the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, such as pop, fruit drinks, energy drinks and vitamin waters.

Education system

11. Urgently review the application of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) to universities and colleges, since existing policy is denying post-secondary institutions the opportunity to access outside capital, in particular for programs and infrastructure not typically funded by government.
12. Start to restore the Annual Capital Allowance allocation for post-secondary institutions back to pre-2009 levels.
13. Reduce financial barriers to post-secondary education by lowering the interest rate charged by StudentAid BC on student loans, and by establishing a provincial system of upfront needs-based grants targeted at people who are having trouble escaping the cycle of poverty.
14. Urgently and significantly increase access to postgraduate medical training positions for Canadians studying medicine abroad.
15. Build on the success of the distributed model used for the northern medical program to expand spaces for occupational therapists and speech pathologists in various regions around the province.
16. Examine the feasibility of establishing an engineering program at UNBC appropriate for the North.
17. Work with all sectors and the Industry Training Authority to expand and enhance apprenticeship opportunities.
18. Enhance coordination of adult literacy programs and provide additional resources to service providers, as required.
19. Help school districts to meet their unique needs by providing more flexibility in management and program delivery.
20. Treat the K-12 annual facilities grant as a high priority for funding in the 2011/12 Budget.
21. Provide ongoing funding for post-secondary transition coordinators on a full-time basis, province wide, especially in those areas with historically low enrolment rates; and create a pool of incentive funding for pilot projects that will allow better integration of college and secondary school activities, with the goal of improving transition rates to post-secondary institutions.
22. Consider extending the Passport to Education Program to cover Grades 6 to 10 to encourage younger students and their parents to consider post-secondary options, including trades training programs, at an earlier age.

Children and youth

23. Provide additional funding for expansion of school-based early learning initiatives (eg StrongStart BC, neighbourhood learning centres); encourage more partnerships with parents, government and business; expand health check-ins for infants and toddlers in existing facilities, and allow flexibility for home visits, as needed; and provide leadership and initiate partnerships with all levels of government for funding, services and capital projects to decrease childhood vulnerability.
24. Improve resourcing to address any delays for early intervention therapy and autism services in order to facilitate the transition of children with special needs into the K-12 system.
25. Facilitate a seamless transfer of services and for youth with special needs transitioning into adulthood, and ensure sufficient resources are available to provide supports for adults with developmental disabilities and their families.
26. Investigate the feasibility of providing seamless child care to address the needs of working parents.

Community services

27. Revisit eligibility criteria for community gaming grants; and consider reinstating grants for three years to provide stability, predictability and consistency.
28. Make funding of the arts a high priority in the 2011/12 budget by returning to overall actual funding levels of 2008/09 to encourage an independent and creative cultural sector.
29. Minimize any incremental requirements of the RFP process for service providers; and consider working with organizations like Board Voice to ensure best value for money, minimum administration costs and as much focus as possible on front-line services.
30. Increase funding for transition house programs; and enhance the coordination and delivery of services for victims of domestic violence.
31. Invest additional resources annually in a long-term capacity fund for BC friendship centres.
32. Continue to support programs to assist individuals and organizations to become self-sufficient or to start a business.
33. Investigate the use of social impact bonds as a way to fund and empower private organizations to provide valuable services.
34. Explore ways to encourage additional charitable donations.
35. Consider allowing people who are medically unable to work, even part-time, the opportunity to 'earn' (a greater amount) through volunteer hours without it affecting their benefits.
36. Undertake changes to provincial claw-back policies and tax rates to bring the marginal effective tax rates (METR) for families with children in the \$35,000-\$50,000 income range in line with METR for BC families in other tax brackets.
37. Increase the minimum wage in small increments with appropriate advance notice.

38. Take steps to facilitate the creation of market-supplied, affordable entry-level housing in British Columbia.
39. In an effort to increase the supply of entry-level rental housing, tenancy agreements assigning social assistance payments directly from government to landlords should only be amended with the express written agreement of both the tenant and landlord.
40. Allocate funds received from the federal government towards the continuation of the organized crime task force in the Okanagan region and Prince George, beyond the three-year term that the funding was committed for.
41. Continue traffic fine revenue-sharing beyond 2010 to ensure current levels of policing in municipalities.

Environment and resource industries

42. Increase funding for conservation, wildlife habitat and species protection, and resource management enforcement.
43. Work with the federal government to adopt a single, comprehensive and effective environmental assessment program to avoid duplication and unnecessary delay.
44. Commit funds for the Ministry of Agriculture to deliver a permanent predator control program.
45. Include in the Ministry of Agriculture budget adequate resources to maximize the benefits of federal-provincial programs, such as AgriStability and AgriRecovery, and to finance a branding program for BC agricultural products, as recommended in the BC Agriculture Plan.
46. Remove regulatory barriers that impede the development of artisan distilling in BC.
47. Work with local governments to establish permanent locations for farmers' markets.
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49. Continue funding and consider expanding Forestry Innovation Investment Ltd.
50. Extend funding for Geoscience BC beyond its current mandate to support its critical role in supporting resource industries.
51. Allocate funds for a sediment removal program on the Fraser River and its tributaries.
52. Continue the extension of broadband access to all rural remote communities in the province; and improve fibre-optic redundancy in cell phone dead zones.

Tax and fiscal priorities

53. Work with the federal government to exempt agricultural co-operatives from HST Recapture of Input Tax Credits; and raise the HST RITC threshold so it does not impact small and medium-sized businesses.
54. Index the HST new-home rebate threshold.
55. Extend the Digital Animation or Visual Effects tax credit to cover audio in post-production work; and include writer fees as eligible labour expenditures under Film Incentive BC.
56. Consider a permanent tax credit of 2% on all home renovations and 4% on Built Green BC renovations to promote energy efficiency in retrofits and create LiveSmart incentives for landlords and tenants.
57. Continue to work with the federal government to implement a system to allow for the deferral of the capital gains tax and the recaptured capital cost allowance when a residential income property is sold and the proceeds are reinvested in another residential income property within one year.
58. Exempt farm improvements at 87.5 percent of assessed value, or \$50,000, whichever is greater.
59. Maintain deficit reduction as a significant priority and stay within the timeline for, or accelerate, the return to a balanced budget.

Appendix A: Public Hearing Witness List

- Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce, David Hull, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)
- Abbotsford Community Services, Nadine Power, Rod Santiago, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)
- Abbotsford Hospice Society, Marion Keys, Debbie Lehmann, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)
- Andy Ackerman, 04-Oct-10 (Fort St. John)
- AiMHi - Prince George Association for Community Living, Kris Zemlak, 05-Oct-10 (Prince George)
- Alliance for Arts and Culture, Amir Ali Alibhai, Mo Dhaliwal, Nancy Noble, 15-Sep-10 (Vancouver)
- Alma Mater Society of UBC Vancouver, Jeremy McElroy, 28-Sep-10 (Whistler)
- ALS Society of British Columbia, Wendy Toyer, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)
- Alzheimer Society of British Columbia, Jean Blake, Barbara Lindsay, Jim Mann, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)
- Artemis Options Society, Lisa Ellis, 07-Oct-10 (Victoria)
- Artisan Distillers Guild of British Columbia, Frank Deiter, 21-Sep-10 (Winfield)
- Arts Council of New Westminster, Susan Wandell, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)
- Arts Council of Surrey, Carol Girardi, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)
- Assembly of British Columbia Arts Councils, Joan Richoz, 28-Sep-10 (Whistler)
- Association for Mineral Exploration – British Columbia, Gavin Dirom, 07-Oct-10 (Victoria)
- B. C. Association of Farmers' Markets, Jon Bell, Elizabeth Quinn, 28-Sep-10 (Whistler)
- B.C. School Trustees Association, Connie Denesiuk, 22-Sep-10 (Penticton)
- B.C. Brain Injury Association, Julia Zarudzka, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)
- B.C. Cattlemen's Association, Kevin Boone, Judy Guichon, 22-Sep-10 (Kamloops)
- B.C. Citizens for Green Energy, David Field, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)
- B.C. Government and Service Employees Union, Michael Eso, Darryl Walker, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)
- B.C. Real Estate Association; Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board, Janice Myers, Howard Neufeld, 21-Sep-10 (Winfield)
- B.C. Wildlife Federation, Patti MacAhonic, 28-Sep-10 (Whistler)
- Ballet Kelowna, Alison Moore, 21-Sep-10 (Winfield)
- Rodrick Baziw, 08-Oct-10 (Vernon)
- BC Agriculture Council, Andreas Dolberg, Garnet Etsell, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)
- BC Apartment Owners and Managers Association, Marg Gordon, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)
- BC Arts Council, Jackson Davies, Dr. Stanley Hamilton, Karen Young, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)
- BC Association for Community Living, Annette Delaplace, Leila Rahemtulla, Tim Stainton, 15-Sep-10 (Vancouver)
- BC Association of Family Resource Programs, Pam Kacir, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)
- BC Coalition for Action on Alcohol Reform, Lembi Buchanan, Dr. John Gray, 07-Oct-10 (Victoria)
- BC Colleges, Jim Reed, 07-Oct-10 (Victoria)
- BC Federation of Retired Union Members (BC FORUM), Bill Silvester, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)
- BC Food Processors Association, Nico Human, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)
- BC Seniors' Games Society, Zone 12, Heather Wilson, 04-Oct-10 (Fort St. John)
- BC Society of Transition Houses, Amanda Alexander, 05-Oct-10 (Prince George)
- BC Sustainable Energy Association, Guy Dauncey, 07-Oct-10 (Victoria)
- BC Wood Specialties Group, Sean Greenhill, Brian Hawrysh, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)
- Big Brothers Big Sisters, David Sheach, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)
- Judie Blakley, 23-Sep-10 (Cranbrook)
- Board of Education, School District No. 34 (Abbotsford), Kevin Godden, Julie MacRae, Cindy Schafer, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)
- Board of Education, School District No. 38 (Richmond), Al Klassen, Linda McPhail, Monica Pamer, Teresa Pan, 15-Sep-10 (Vancouver)
- Board of Education, School District No. 57 (Prince George), Lyn Hall, Roxanne Ricard, Sharel Warrington, 05-Oct-10 (Prince George)

Board of Education, School District No. 60 (Peace River North), Doug Boyd, Jaret Thompson, 04-Oct-10 (Fort St. John)

Board of Education, School District No. 62 (Sooke), Jim Cambridge, Wendy Hobbs, Dave Lockyer, Jo Mitchell, Dave Saunders, Acting Mayor Lillian Szpak, 07-Oct-10 (Victoria)

Board of Education, School District No. 79 (Cowichan Valley), Candace Spilsbury, 24-Sep-10 (Nanaimo)

Board Voice Society of BC, Jenelle Cooper, 07-Oct-10 (Victoria)

Board Voice Society of BC, Alyson Hagan-Johnson, 08-Oct-10 (Port McNeill)

James Bourquin, 24-Sep-10 (Smithers)

BrainTrust Canada Association, Doug Rankmore, 21-Sep-10 (Winfield)

British Columbia Aboriginal Mine Training Association, Leonard Jackson, Laurie Sterritt, 08-Oct-10 (Merritt)

British Columbia Association of Child Development and Intervention, Bruce Sandy, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)

British Columbia Chamber of Commerce, Jon Garson, John Winter, 15-Sep-10 (Vancouver)

British Columbia Construction Association, Manley McLachlan, 07-Oct-10 (Victoria)

British Columbia Cycling Coalition, Richard Campbell, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)

British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association, Glen Lucas, Joe Sardinha, 22-Sep-10 (Penticton)

British Columbia Medical Association, Dr. Jonathan Agnew, Dr. Ian Gillespie, Rob Hulyk, 07-Oct-10 (Victoria)

British Columbia Paraplegic Association, Linda Annis, Chris McBride, 07-Oct-10 (Victoria)

British Columbia Real Estate Association, Mark Andersen, Norma Miller, Cameron Muir, 28-Sep-10 (Whistler)

British Columbia Teachers' Federation, Larry Kuehn, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)

Vanessa Brown, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)

Building Owners and Managers Association - B.C., Paul LaBranche, 28-Sep-10 (Whistler)

Bulkley Mental Health and Addictions Advisory Committee, Brian Fuhr, 24-Sep-10 (Smithers)

Burnaby Family Life, Sam Schechter, 15-Sep-10 (Vancouver)

Russ Burtnick, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)

Business Council of British Columbia, Ken Peacock, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)

Angela Calla, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)

Camosun College, Lansdowne Campus, Peter Lockie, 07-Oct-10 (Victoria)

Campaign to Control Cancer, Jayne Akizuki, Jim Favaro, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)

Canada's National Brewers, Greg D'Avignon, Cheryl Muir, 07-Oct-10 (Victoria)

Canada's Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies (Rx&D), BC Regional Committee, Bob Dawson, Sharon Dean, Peter Simpson, 07-Oct-10 (Victoria)

Canadian Bar Association - British Columbia Branch, Caroline Nevin, Stephen McPhee, 15-Sep-10 (Vancouver)

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, BC Office, Iglia Ivanova, 15-Sep-10 (Vancouver)

Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Heather Tilley, 15-Sep-10 (Vancouver)

Canadian Federation of Students, BC Office, Ian Boyko, Nimmi Takkar, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)

Canadian Home Builders' Association Central Interior, Patsy Bourassa, Doug Wittal, 22-Sep-10 (Kamloops)

Canadian Home Builders' Association of British Columbia, M.J. Whitmarsh, 07-Oct-10 (Victoria)

Canadian Media Production Association - BC Producers' Branch, Rob Bromley, Liz Shorten, Catherine Winckler, 28-Sep-10 (Whistler)

Canadian Renewable Fuels Association, Doug Hooper, 28-Sep-10 (Whistler)

Canadian Sport Centre Pacific, Wendy Pattenden, 28-Sep-10 (Whistler)

Child Development Centre of Prince George and District, Val O'Connor, Darrell Roze, 05-Oct-10 (Prince George)

Childhood Obesity Foundation, Dr. Tom Warshawski, 08-Oct-10 (Vernon)

Christian Labour Association of Canada, Alex Pannu, David Prentice, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)

City of Castlegar, Mayor Lawrence Chernoff, 23-Sep-10 (Castlegar)

City of Cranbrook, Mayor Scott Manjak, 23-Sep-10 (Cranbrook)

City of Fort St. John, Mayor Bruce Lantz, 04-Oct-10 (Fort St. John)

City of Kelowna, Graeme James, Paul Macklem, 21-Sep-10 (Winfield)

City of Prince George, Finance & Audit Committee, Murry Krause, 05-Oct-10 (Prince George)

Clean Energy BC, Paul Kariya, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)

Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC, Sheila Davidson, Sharon Gregson, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)

Coast Forest Products Association, Rick Jeffery, 15-Sep-10 (Vancouver)

College of New Caledonia, John Bowman, 05-Oct-10 (Prince George)

College of New Caledonia Students' Union, Robert Chavarie, 05-Oct-10 (Prince George)

College of the Rockies, Alex Jensen, Dianne Teslak, 23-Sep-10 (Cranbrook)

Commonwealth Financial, Dan McLaren, Heather Oland, 05-Oct-10 (Prince George)

Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria, Rupert Downing, 07-Oct-10 (Victoria)

Comox Valley Air Force Museum Association, Bob Mortimer, David Stinson, 06-Oct-10 (Courtenay)

Comox Valley Baseball Association, Steve McNamee, 06-Oct-10 (Courtenay)

Comox Valley Child Development Association, Lorraine Aitken, Pamela Crowe, 06-Oct-10 (Courtenay)

Comox Valley Economic Development Society, Gary Rolston, John Watson, 06-Oct-10 (Courtenay)

Comox Valley Transition Society, Anne Davis, Heather Ney, 06-Oct-10 (Courtenay)

Comox Valley United Soccer Club, Matthew Blecha, 06-Oct-10 (Courtenay)

Conayt Friendship Centre, George Girouard, 08-Oct-10 (Merritt)

Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia, Robert Clift, David Mirhady, 15-Sep-10 (Vancouver)

Corporation of Delta, Mayor Lois Jackson, Sean McGill, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)

Courtenay and District Fish and Game Protective Association, Ron Watanabe, 06-Oct-10 (Courtenay)

CP Road Access (BC) Society, Carmen Purdy, 23-Sep-10 (Cranbrook)

Cranbrook and District Arts Council, Sioux Browning, 23-Sep-10 (Cranbrook)

Cranbrook Archives, Museum and Landmark Foundation, Garry Anderson, 23-Sep-10 (Cranbrook)

Cridge Centre for the Family (The), Geoff Sing, 07-Oct-10 (Victoria)

Denominational Health Association, Arthur Enns, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)

District of West Kelowna, Mayor Doug Findlater, 22-Sep-10 (Penticton)

Downtown Surrey Business Improvement Association, Robert Dominick, Elizabeth Model, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)

Ending Violence Association of B.C., Tracy Porteous, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)

Federation of Community Social Services of BC, Dr. Jennifer Charlesworth, 07-Oct-10 (Victoria)

Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC, George Davison, Phillip Legg, Cindy Oliver, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)

Fighting Autism Intervention Reductions, Chris McIntosh, 24-Sep-10 (Nanaimo)

First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition, Adrienne Montani, 15-Sep-10 (Vancouver)

Ken Forest, 04-Oct-10 (Fort St. John)

Fort St. John and District Chamber of Commerce, Andrew Tylosky, Nic Weswick, 04-Oct-10 (Fort St. John)

Fort St. John Community Arts Council, Lisa Bush, Brent Hodson, Tara O'Donnell, 04-Oct-10 (Fort St. John)

Fraser Valley Brain Injury Association, Carol Paetkau, John Simpson, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)

Fraser Valley Real Estate Board, Debbie Jay, Scott Olson, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)

Fraserside Community Services Society, Caroline Bonesky, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)

G.P. Vanier Secondary School, Miranda Knox, Christina Paterson, Paul Rebitt, 06-Oct-10 (Courtenay)

Genome British Columbia, Bruce Schmidt, Alan Winter, 15-Sep-10 (Vancouver)

Geoscience BC, Dr. Lyn Anglin, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)

Dr. Mychael Gleeson, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)

Golden Active Transportation, Luke Nichols, 06-Oct-10 (Golden)

Golden Early Childhood Development Coalition, Joanne McCullough, 06-Oct-10 (Golden)

Greater Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce, Mike Delves, 24-Sep-10 (Nanaimo)

Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce, David Marshall, Shannon Renault, 07-Oct-10 (Victoria)

Greater Victoria Regional Child Care Council, Dr. Enid Elliot, 07-Oct-10 (Victoria)

Manpreet Guttman, 15-Sep-10 (Vancouver)

Haisla Nation Government, Kitamaat Village Council, Chief Dolores Pollard, Councillor Ellis Ross, 05-Oct-10 (Terrace)

Headlines Theatre, David Diamond, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)

Human Early Learning Partnership, UBC, Dr. Paul Kershaw, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)

Imperial Metals Corp., Byng Giraud, 05-Oct-10 (Terrace)

Import Vinters & Spirits Association, Tim Crowhurst, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)

Initiatives Prince George, Tim McEwan, 05-Oct-10 (Prince George)

Institute of Chartered Accountants of British Columbia, Richard Rees, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)

Insurance Bureau of Canada, Serge Corbeil, 07-Oct-10 (Victoria)

Trevor Johnson, 24-Sep-10 (Smithers)

Dave Jones, 24-Sep-10 (Smithers)

Kelowna Alternator Centre for Contemporary Art, Jennifer Pickering, 21-Sep-10 (Winfield)

Kelowna Chamber of Commerce, Wesley Shields, 22-Sep-10 (Penticton)

Kootenai Community Centre Society, Lendina Bambrick, 06-Oct-10 (Creston)

Kootenay Boundary Community Services Co-operative, Andrew Earnshaw, 23-Sep-10 (Castlegar)

Paula Kully, 22-Sep-10 (Kamloops)

Kwantlen Faculty Association, Bob Davis, Phillip Legg, Joel Murray, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)

Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Mary Jane Stenberg, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)

Ladner Sediment Group, Vicki Huntington, MLA, Jim McMillan, John Roscoe, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)

Anna Lary, 15-Sep-10 (Vancouver)

Sharon M. Mackenzie, 22-Sep-10 (Penticton)

Dr. Judith Marcuse, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)

Sherry McLeod, 22-Sep-10 (Penticton)

Mining Association of British Columbia, Ben Chalmers, Pierre Gratton, 07-Oct-10 (Victoria)

Beth Morton, 21-Sep-10 (Winfield)

Motion Picture Production Industry Association of British Columbia, Menashe Arbel, Brian Hamilton, Peter Leitch, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)

Mount Waddington Health Network – housing committee, George Ewald, Councillor Nikki Shaw, 08-Oct-10 (Port McNeill)

Nanaimo Brain Injury Society, Mark Busby, 24-Sep-10 (Nanaimo)

New Car Dealers Association of B.C., Blair Qualey, 07-Oct-10 (Victoria)

North Island College, Dr. Jan Lindsay, 06-Oct-10 (Courtenay)

North Island Community Services Society, Traci Fontana-Wegelin, 08-Oct-10 (Port McNeill)

North Okanagan Neurological Association (NONA), Helen Armstrong, 08-Oct-10 (Vernon)

North Okanagan Youth and Family Services Society, Dennis Dandeneau, John Belfie, 21-Sep-10 (Winfield)

Northern Development Initiative Trust, Janine North, Mayor Dan Rogers, 05-Oct-10 (Prince George)

Northern Technology and Engineering Society of BC, Dr. Albert Koehler, 05-Oct-10 (Prince George)

Northwest Community College, Cathay Sousa, 05-Oct-10 (Terrace)

Northwest Community College Students' Union, Danielle Branco, Mikael Jensen, 05-Oct-10 (Terrace)

Northwest Invasive Plant Council, Andrea Eastham, 05-Oct-10 (Terrace)

Oceanside Community Arts Council, Lauren Sabine, Jenny Tindall, 24-Sep-10 (Nanaimo)

Okanagan College, Allan Coyle, Lance Kayfish, 22-Sep-10 (Penticton)

Okanagan College Students' Union, Cory Nelmes, 22-Sep-10 (Penticton)

Omineca Beetle Action Coalition, Don Bassermann, Sharon Tower, 05-Oct-10 (Prince George)

PacificSport Northern BC, Jim Burbee, Ann Holmes, Anne Pousette, 05-Oct-10 (Prince George)

Parkinson Society of British Columbia, Alexandra Rice, Diane Robinson, 15-Sep-10 (Vancouver)

Peace River Regional Cattlemen's Association, Ron Buchanan, Mike McConnell, 04-Oct-10 (Fort St. John)

Doug Peck, 06-Oct-10 (Fernie)

Pembina Institute, Matt Horne, 15-Sep-10 (Vancouver)

Penticton Art Gallery, Jeannette Montgomery, 22-Sep-10 (Penticton)

Lynn Perrin, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)

Prince George Chamber of Commerce, Jennifer Brandle-McCall, Dr. Bill McGill, Roy Spooner, 05-Oct-10 (Prince George)

Prince George Hospice Society, Donalda Carson, Evangeline Studney, 05-Oct-10 (Prince George)

ProArt Alliance of Greater Victoria, Allison Bottomley, Ian Case, Peter Sandmark, 07-Oct-10 (Victoria)

Project Literacy Kelowna Society, Barb Hagan, Tom Wilson, 21-Sep-10 (Winfield)

Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver, Harriet Permut, Sylvia Sam, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)

Rick Hansen Foundation, Colin Ewart, 07-Oct-10 (Victoria)

Rick Hansen Institute, Mark Aston, 07-Oct-10 (Victoria)

Terry Robertson, 05-Oct-10 (Prince George)

Bill Ross, 22-Sep-10 (Penticton)

Sage Hills Developments Ltd., Pat English, David Russell, 06-Oct-10 (Courtenay)

Save Our Northern Seniors Society, Rick Bourdon, Jean Leahy, 04-Oct-10 (Fort St. John)

Wendy Seet, 15-Sep-10 (Vancouver)

Selkirk College, Barry Auliffe, Marilyn Luscombe, 23-Sep-10 (Castlegar)

Selkirk College Students' Union, David Lubbers, Varenka Schwarz, 23-Sep-10 (Castlegar)

Simon Fraser Student Society, Kyle Acierno, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)

SFU Surrey, Joanne Curry, Wilf Hurd, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)

Eugenia Siormanolakis, 15-Sep-10 (Vancouver)

Smart Tax Alliance, Craig Williams, 15-Sep-10 (Vancouver)

Society of Canadians Studying Medicine Abroad (BC), Dr. Andrew Ignaszewski, Dr. David Taylor, Dr. Andrew D. Thompson, 15-Sep-10 (Vancouver)

Southern Interior Development Initiative Trust, Cindy Popescul, 23-Sep-10 (Cranbrook)

Sport BC, Tim Gayda, 28-Sep-10 (Whistler)

Cynthia Stark, 15-Sep-10 (Vancouver) and 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)

STEPS Forward, Joe Greenholtz, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)

Sun Peaks Mountain Resort Municipality, Liz Forster, Mayor Al Raine, 22-Sep-10 (Kamloops)

Sunshine Coast Community Services Society, Vicki Dobbyn, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)

Sunshine Coast Community Services Society and Board Voice, Gloria Lifton, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)

Surrey Board of Trade, Anita Huberman, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)

Terasen Inc and FortisBC, Douglas Stout, 28-Sep-10 (Whistler)

Thompson Rivers University, Dr. Roger Barnsley, Karl de Bruijn, 22-Sep-10 (Kamloops)

Thompson Rivers University Students' Union, Jamshid Mirzabekov, Krystal Smith, 22-Sep-10 (Kamloops)

Thompson-Nicola Film Commission, Roland Stanke, Victoria Weller, 22-Sep-10 (Kamloops)

Tourism Kelowna, Roger Sellick, Brad Sieben, 21-Sep-10 (Winfield)

Truck Loggers Association, Dave Lewis, 15-Sep-10 (Vancouver)

UBC Students' Union Okanagan, Kirk Chavarie, Amanda Lepholtz, 21-Sep-10 (Winfield)

University of Northern British Columbia, Dr. Mark Dale, Dawn Martin, Kaleigh Milinazzo, 05-Oct-10 (Prince George)

University of the Fraser Valley Faculty and Staff Association, Vlad Dvoracek, Phillip Legg, Rhonda Snow, 15-Oct-10 (Abbotsford)

Vancouver Board of Education (School District 39), Patti Bacchus, 15-Sep-10 (Vancouver)

Vancouver International Bhangra Celebration, Sandra Garossino, Opreet Kang, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)

Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter, Alice Lee, Heather Lloyd, 16-Sep-10 (Surrey)

Vernon Public Art Gallery, Pamela Burns Resch, Dauna Grant, Sigrid-Ann Thors, 21-Sep-10 (Winfield)

Victoria Real Estate Board, Jim Bennett, Randi Masters, 07-Oct-10 (Victoria)

Village of Cumberland, Mayor Fred Bates, 06-Oct-10 (Courtenay)

Wachiay Friendship Centre, Cora Beddows, Roger Kishi, 06-Oct-10 (Courtenay)

West Kootenay Early Years Initiatives, Dorothy Kaytor, Lynn Proulx, 23-Sep-10 (Castlegar)

Heidi Westfall, 24-Sep-10 (Smithers)

Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs, Debbie Pierre, John Ridsdale, 24-Sep-10 (Smithers)

Women's Contact Society, Irene Willsie, 22-Sep-10 (Kamloops)

Appendix B: Written Submissions

100 Mile House and District Arts Council, Gordon Hoglund	BC Healthy Living Alliance, Mary Collins	Marty Camping
Stephen Aberle	BC Lodging and Campgrounds Association, Joss Penny	Canadian Bankers Association, Nancy Hughes Anthony
Neale Adams	BC Nature (Federation of BC Naturalists), John Neville	Canadian Diabetes Association, Connie Abram
Advocis, Financial Advisors Association of Canada, Ed Skwarek	BC Recreation and Parks Association, Suzanne Allard Strutt	Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Brian Bonney
Joe Akerman	BC Society of Transition Houses, Shabna Ali	Canadian Federation of the Blind, Oriano Belusic
Ameresco Canada Inc., Doug Wall	Cara Beckett	Canadian Federation of University Women, Susan Murphy
Garry Anderson	Sue Beebe	Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association Inc., Frank Swedlove
Terrance Anderson	Barbara Bekei	Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, British Columbia Division, Craig Williams
Wendy Antoine	Jessica Bender	Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association, Mark von Schellwitz
Denise Armstrong	Wally Bergen	Canadian Sport Centre Pacific, Gord Sleivert
Arrowsmith Naturalists, A.T. David Hutchings	Rae Lyn Betts	Canadian Union of Public Employees - BC Division, Barry O'Neill
Assembly of British Columbia Arts Councils, Junko Sakamoto	Brian Bilkes	CARFAC British Columbia, Julie McIntyre
Association for Community Education for British Columbia, Janey Talbot	Eden Bishop	Cariboo Friendship Centre, Lorraine Cross
Jean Bain	Board of Education, School District No. 78 (Fraser-Cascade), Linda McMullan	Eileen Carrier
Bruce Baldo Sr.	Board of Education, School District No. 43 (Coquitlam), Melissa Hyndes	Kate Castelo
Jeremy Banks	John G. Boehme	Central Interior Logging Association, MaryAnne Arcand
Chris Barber	Barry Booth	Century House Association, Patricia Smith
Lisa Barrett	Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada - Pacific Region, Carrie Wagner-Miller	Jenna Chalmer
Heather Batke	Sharon Bradley	Kelly Charlton
Nicole Bayntun	Delia Brett	Emily Cheung
BC and Yukon Territory Building and Construction Trades Council, Wayne Peppard	Holly Bright	J Cheung
BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres, Warren Clarmont, Naomi Graham	Don Brown	Dr. Raymond Chipeniuk
BC Association of Charitable Gaming, Susan Marsden	Eric Brown	Jackie Chow
BC Association of Institutes and Universities, Ruth Wittenberg	Linda Brown	City of Surrey, Mayor Dianne Watts
BC Athlete Voice, Bruce Deacon, Dave Newson	Lorna Brown	Inge Clapperton
BC Down Syndrome Centre Society, Rosalie Newell-Wagner	Bulkley Valley Child Development Centre Society, Kerri Bassett-Kluss	
BC Family Net Society, Anita Dadson	Bulkley Valley Literacy Coalition, Jane Boulton	
	Heather Burnett	
	Isabel Byczko	

Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform, Ruby Berry, David Lane, Stan Proboszcz, Jay Ritchlin, Catherine Stewart	Fraser Valley Regional District Environment Committee, Patricia Ross Susan Freedman	Imperial Tobacco Canada Ltd., Sebastien Dolan, Pénéla Guy Independent Media Arts Alliance, Timothy Dallett
Comox Valley Community Arts Council, Dallas Stevenson	Michelle Fu	Maria Insell
Council of Tourism Associations of BC, Stephen Regan	Doris Gallas	Karen Irvine
Pierre Coupey	Robert Garfat	Andrew Ius
Janice Cross	Tamara Garreau	Iglika Ivanova
Laurie Dawson	Carmina Gooch	Karen Jawl
Terence Dawson	Monique Goward	Hector Johnson
Natasha Del Bianco	Anne Gray	Sam Jones
Alisa Denduyf	Lindy Gray	Vicky Jones
Lisa Descary	Greater Vancouver Community Services Society, Ron McLeod	Juan de Fuca Cycling Coalition, Stephen Hindrichs
Laura Di Cicco	Greater Vancouver Home Builders' Association, Peter Roskell	Sharon Kahanoff
Tamara Dika	Greater Victoria Film Commission, Kathleen Gilbert	Kamloops Gymnastics Trampoline Centre, Lisa Palechuk
Lawrence Dill	Vern Griffiths	Yasmin Karim
Adrian Dolan	Robert Grundison	Marci Katz
Don Dorofay	GS1 Canada, Alicia Duval	Kathy Kaufman
Diana Downey	Gymnastics BC, Moira Gookstetter	Devin Kettle
Downtown Service Providers Committee, Rev. Allen Tysick	Ingrid Haagmans	Kildaton Enterprises; Spot Solutions Ltd; Purple Rock Editing, Gib McArthur
Miranda Duffy	Nancy Hall	Madeleine Kipling
Eva Durance	Marcus Handman	Stephane Kirkland
Gidget Dutour	Susan Hannon	Bonita Klovance
East Kootenay Chamber of Mines, Ross Stanfield	Jennifer Hardwick	Knowledge Network Corporation Board of Directors, Glenna Pollon
Morna Edmundson	Margaret Harrington	Kootenay Kids Society, Stephanie Fischer
Lotte Elias	Nigel Harvey	Lauren Kresowaty
Nicole Ensing	Francis Heng	James Krull
Marilyn Erickson	Carole Henshall	Jasvinder Kullar
Charles Evans	Heritage BC, Larry Foster	Chung Yin Kwan
Dianne Evans	June Higgins	Janis La Couvée
Karleen Evans	Kathleen Higgins	Kathryn Lacerte
Martina Evans	Keith Higgins	Bob Landell
James Fankhauser	Hiiye'yu Lelum Society, Mark Turner, Debbie Williams	Colleen Lanki
Talia Fanning	Rob Hollins	Debbie Larson
Ian Farthing	Shannon Holmes	Anh Le
Brian Felker	Kellie Hopkins	Lori LeCount
Alexander Ferguson	Bill Horne	Su-Feh Lee
David Ferguson	Tannis Hugill	Heather Lejeune
Fernie and District Arts Council, Oz Parsons	Bill Hunter	Les Échos du Pacifique, Daniel Bouchard
Wendy Fontaine	Cheryl Hutcherson	
Jocelyn Fransen	Renee Laci	

Xiao Dong Liao	Nanaimo Child Development	PacificSport Okanagan, Doug
Maree Lien	Centre Society, Michael Robinson	Nicholas
Joyce Lindemulder	Nanaimo Youth Services	PacificSport Regional Sport Centre
Linttell Projects Inc., Robert Linttell	Association, Steve Arnett	Fraser Valley, Linda Palm
Lionsview Seniors' Planning Society,	Nanoose Naturalists Club, Carolyn	Glenda Parker
Vivien Christison	Dodd	Ian Paterson
Deborah Long	Michael Nation	Keitha Patton
Deborah Loxam-Kohl	Nature Vancouver, Margaret Coutts	George Payerle
Paul Luchkow	Nawican Friendship Centre, Patricia	Peace River Regional District, Karen
Colleen MacDonald	Hoard	Goodings
Lucille Mack	Andrew Nazareth	Cory Philley
Mike Mackenzie	Caroline Nelson	Lori Pickering
Jodi MacLean	New Westminster Seniors Services	Nigel Pieloth
Phoebe MacRae	Task Force, Mariam Larson	Amelia Pitt-Brooke
Emilie Madill	Victor & Edith Newman	Stephen Plant
Gerald Maier	Diane Nicholls	Sue Porter
Maple Ridge Pitt Meadows Arts	Yvonne Nielsen	Leanne Prain
Council/The ACT Arts Centre	Bobbi-Jo Norris	Prince George Native Friendship
and Theatre, Lindy Sisson	North Peace Community Resource	Centre, Barb Ward-Burkitt
Jason Margolis	Society, Karla Marsh	Prince George Symphony Orchestra,
Richard Mark	North Vancouver School District's	Jim Caldwell, Ruth Langner
Laura Lee Marshall	Presidents' Council, John Lewis	Tania Prince
Lindsey Martin	John Michael Northcote	Quesnel Tillicum Society, Sandy
Bruce McAra	Northern Society for Domestic	Burton
Gerilee McBride	Peace, Michelle Larstone	Radix Theatre Society, Andrew
Cathy McCashin	Cindy Nygaard	Laurenson
Nathan McDonald	Ocean Renewable Energy Group,	Shane Raman
Sheryl McGraw	Dr. Chris M. Campbell	Ana Rawlek
Rosanna McGregor	Joan O'Connor	Regional District of Central
Julie McIntyre	Melissa Oei	Okanagan, Cary Berger
John McKay	Okanagan Choral Society, John O.	Regional Student Transition
Jennifer McLaren	Powell	Coordinators, Kelly Knister, Troy
Michael McLellan	Okanagan Festival Singers, Claire	Marshall, Bob Thompson
Annatheia McLennan	Burns	Retail Council of Canada and
George Menzies	Omineca Enterprises Limited, John	Shelfspace - the Association for
Jonathan Middleton	Peterson	Retail Entrepreneurs, Anne
Colin Miles	Caitlin O'Reilly	Kothawala
Nicole Mion	David R. Pacey	Jennifer Roberts
MITACS Inc., Dr. Arvind Gupta,	Rosana Pacheco	Nadia Roberts
Jason Lesage	Pacific Association of Artist Run	Ian Robertson
Frank Moher	Centres (PAARC), Keith Higgins	Scott Robinson
Leslie Moore	Pacific Centre Family Services	Alcwyn Rogers
Morine & Co. Chartered	Association, Mitzi Dean	Pat Rogers
Accountants, Lisa Mercure	PacificSport Interior BC, Carolyn	Sheena Rogers
Corbin Murdoch	Boomer	Marvin Rolls
Sylvia Murphy		Anita Romaniuk

Joan L. Rush	Terrace Child Development Centre,	Phyllis Webster
Salt Spring Singers, Alan Hughes	Margot Van Kleeck	Ruth Claire Weintraub
Meagan Saulnier	Alison Therriault	West Coast Legal Education and
Michael Scholar	Mary Thomas	Action Fund (West Coast LEAF),
Heather Scott	Connie Thompson	Kasari Govender
Kulwinder Sekhon-Kullar	Together Against Poverty Society	West Kootenay Suzuki Association,
Jodi Sellars	(TAPS), Kelly Newhook	Stephanie Judy
Stacey Sim	Diane Tompkins	Sarah Westwick
Grady Sjkovist	Diane Toop	White Rock and Surrey Naturalists
Bryan Skinner	Katalin Toreky Paziuk	Society, Liz Walker
Kathy Slade	Rose Tweedie	Laura White
David Sloboda	Urban Development Institute,	Elaine William
Slocan Valley Early Childhood	Pacific Region, Maureen Enser	Fallon William
Community Advisory Council,	Valley Charitable Bingo Society,	Crystal Williams
Penny Tees	Gerrie Foster	Marguerite Witvoet
Smithers Exploration Group, Rob	Dirk Van Stralen	Lissa Wolsak
Boyce	Vancouver International Fringe	Jody Wolstenholme
Southern Interior Beetle Action	Festival, David Jordan	William Wong
Coalition, Rhona Martin	Vancouver Island North Film	Woodmere Nursery Ltd., Joe Wong
Spectrum Solutions, William Reid	Commission, Joan Miller	Iian Woods
Joanna Spurling	Vancouver Island Strata Owners	Johanna Wright
Rosy Steinhauer	Association, Tony Davis	Katey Wright
David K. Stewart	Vancouver Orpheus Male Choir,	Steve Wright
Christine Stoddard	Liana Savard	Writers Guild of Canada, Maureen
Stoney Creek Environmental	Vancouver Phoenix Gymnastics,	Parker
Committee, Alan C. James	Joanne Dodge	Cornelia Wyngaarden
Sarah Storteboom	Victoria Native Friendship Centre,	Cease Wyss
Treana Stubel	Carl Mashon	YMCA Vancouver, Lisa Rupert,
Sunshine Coast Community Services	Trinita Waller	Andrea Vollans
Society, Keely Halward	Larry Wartel	Cathie Young
Rhonda Surette	Jon Washburn	Morgan Young
Patricia Sweet	Lisa Watson	Stephen Youngman
	Glenys Webster	Dawn Zoe

Appendix C: On-line Survey Responses

Debora Abood	BC Association of	Bob Burkinshaw	Allan Collier
Marg Ahdemar	Aboriginal Friendship	William Burton	Colliers International,
Alberni Valley Timbre!	Centres, Carla	Patrick Butler	Vancouver, Jim
Choir, Sam Frketch	Bortoletto	Tracy Byrne	Mackenzie
Sean Aldridge	Ric Beairsto	Caledonia Nordic Ski	Shona Collison
Paul Alexandrescu	Brad Beaton	Club, Jim Burbee	Len Comaniuk
Briand and Dee Allaert	Chris Beaton	Alan Campbell	Community Action
Anne Allgaier	Linda Beaven	Karen Campbell	toward Children's
Mayana Ambers	Carolyn Beavington	Sharon Campbell	Health, Eve Layman
Ashish Anand	Caroline Bechtel	Michelle Carduner	Comox Valley Cycling
Paula Anderson	Susan Becker	Melody Carleton	Coalition, Ed Schum
Richard Anderson	James Begley	Mary Carlisle	Terry Connors
Sylvia Anderson	Ivan Behrmann	Barbara Carroll	Brian Conrad
Mark Angus	Julie Bell	Greg Caws	Pat Cook
Jennifer Applebaum	Vic Benetton	Centre Culturel	Michelle Cooper
Randy Apps	Desmond Berghofer	Francophone de	Rob Corrins
Jon Ardagh	Cameron Berry	l'Okanagan	Sharon Costlelo
Francois Arnaly	Jason Bertucci	Employment Centre,	Alyson Cotie-Dudley
Martin Arnesen	David Biggs	Mireille Beck	Council of Forest
Rob Arthur	Andrew Bird	Cathy Chabot	Industries, John Allan
Jessica Ashmore	Michael Bishop	Harprit Chahal	Korlene Coward
Christine Atkins	Natalie Bishop	Laura Chalfin	Janet Crawford
Valerie Axford	Ronald Blackmore	Sperril Chambers	Caroline Creighton
Peter Ayles	Peter Boddy	Francis Chan	Doug Cronk
Glen Baber	Steve Boettger	Bob Chandler	Debra Cross
Andrea Baga	Paul Boileau	Donald Charlton	David Crowe
Adriana Baggio	Darren Bond	Dean Chatterson	Carly Cunningham
Meghan Bailey	Holly Bondy	Ming Chen	Maria Cutchey
Bruce Balazs	Jane Boulton	Rhiannon Chernencoff	Dennis Dalla-Vicenza
Sarah Balazs	Tannis Braithwaite	Edward and Elfreda	Karron Wanda Damron
Hilary Baldwin	Lisa Brideau	Chick	Cheryl Davies
John Balfour	British Columbia Choral	Dilys Chiew	Robert Davies
Gerry Balmer	Federation, David	Gayle Chin	Jackie Dawson
Garry Baraniuk	Stewart	Michael Chiu	Dean de Sousa
Bill Bard	Mary Brooke	Jackie Chow	Kevin De Sousa
Chris Bard	Ted Brooks	Dawn Christenson	Larry de Temple
Ruth Bard	Doug Brown	Tracey Christianson	A. Deacon
David Barkes	May Brown	Gordon Clark	Dease Lake Pregnancy
Liz Barnett	Steven Brown	James Clark	OutReach Program,
Liz Barnett	Mary Browne-Clayton	Tanya Clarmont	Teneal Nole
Ken Barron	Paul Browning	Joy Clifton	Feri Dehdar
Peggy Barron	Glenis Bryson	Daniel Close	Robert Dell
Jessica Bates	Des Burke	Henny Coates	Meghan Deutscher

Tom deWolf	Brad Filmer	Gail Gossen	Larry Hildebrand
James DeYoung	Jeannine Fitzsimmons	Ken Gould	Anthony Hill
Lawrence Dill	Robert Fladmark	Andrew Graham	Andrew Hillaby
Joe DiMarco	David Flater	George Grant	Michelle Hiller
Zhaogang Ding	D. Flintoff	Janet Grant	G. Campbell Hobson
Barbara Dionne	Christine Foell	N. Grant	Linda Hodgins
Suzie Dionne	Evelyne Forbes	Rob Grant	Marian Hoff
Danielle Dmytar	Robert Forbes	Jonathan Graves	Nicole Hoiss
Susan Dodsworth	Randy Ford	Bob Gray	Carrie Hokanson
Dodwell Realty Ltd., Radu Ghita	Linda Forsythe	Rob Gray	Jacob Hokanson
Ada Dooley	Peter Francis	Margaret Green	Anette Holtkamp
Jeannette Dore	Blair Franklin	Tanya Gregoire	David Holzer
Debra Dotschkat	Sherry Freeman	Roger Griffin	Richard Hoover
Chuck Doucette	Tony and Marlene Freeman	Sharon Groshok	James Hope
Robert Douglas	Arlin French	Richard Gross	Hornby Festival Society, Joanne Ovitsland
Adrian Duso	Henry Frew	Sheila Gutsche	Len Horvath
Andrew Dyck	Eliina Friesen	Jesse Hague	Deborah Houde
Nicole Dykema	Suzanne Fritz	Andrew Haigh	Houle Electric, Colin Pollard
Kate Dyson	Dennis Furnell	Julie Halfnights	Housing for Young Adults with Disabilities, Clay Knowlton
Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre Society, Melanie Angus	Jordan Gadsby	Edward Halko	Robert Howell
Barbara Eckersley	Gordon Gaglardi	Keely Halward	Trudy Loraine Hubbard
Jim Edgson	Faith Gagnon	Peter Hann	Kathleen Hudson
Janice Edwards	Eddie Gardner	Marilyn Hansen	Bryn Hughes
Margot Edwards	Gordon Gardner	James Hargrove	Humble Manufacturing Company Ltd., Ron Walsh
Peter Edwards	Philip Gates	Roy Harman	David Hunter
Ron Edwards	Gateway Property Management	Darwin Harmon	David Husson
Susan Ellard	Corporation, Branko Cvoric	Jim Harris	Gyula Huszar
Val Embree	Judy Gaudet	Eugene Harrison	Gordon Inglis
Ron Emerson	Judy Gaudet	Jason Harrison	David Inwood
Ron Emery	Bob Geary	Rolf Harrison	Cynthia Jamieson
Ken Emmons	Richard Gee	Scott Harrison	Susan Jardine
Imelda Engels	Darin Germyn	Craig Harrold	Peter Jeffrey
William Epps	Shelly Gervais	Shane Hartman	Jessie Jim
Mira Evens	Kim Gibson	Brenda Hayden	Eva Johansson
Lori Evoy	Richard Gibson	Lesley Heieis	Gordon Johnson
Ben Fanning	John Giesbrecht	Tomas Hekl	Geraldine Jones
Talia Fanning	Ron Giles	Susan Hendricks	Harley Jones
Cami Fasan	John Giesbrecht	Elizabeth Hendriks	Maryke Jones
Aaron Fedora	Adrien Gilfillan	Georgina Hendriks	Pamela Jones
Stephanie Fiacher	Ron Giles	Karen Hewitt	
Gordon Ficke	Adrien Gilfillan	Jane Heyman	
Gino Ficociello	April Gilliland	Pamela Heywood	
Cindy Fillon	Donald Gilmore	Highlands Golf, Barbara Mitchell	
	Jackie Glendale	Hiyye'yu Lelum Society, Mark Turner	
	Rodney Gobelle		
	Joe Goodwill		
	Jennifer Gordon		

Paul Jones	Cheryl Lee	Bruce McConnachie	Mark Myhre
Sarah Jones	Donna Lee	Jim McCormack	Michael Mysak
Patti Jordane	Linda Leeson	Sandra McCrone	Ken Nash
Ted Joslin	Les Echos du Pacifique,	Maureen McDermid	Terence Nathan
Jacko Kardux	Daniel Bouchard	Gordon McFadden	National Association of
Dave Keene	Forbes Leslie	Robert McFarlane	Friendship Centres,
Lorina Keery	Marylou Leslie	Leslie McGarry	Conrad Saulis
Madelon Keiji	Sheahan Letondre	Paddy McInnes	Grazyna Nawrocka
Kelowna and District	Chester Lewis	David McIntosh	Nelson and District
Society for Community	Rowena Locklin	Chase McIvor	Museum, Archives, Art
Living, Charisse Daley	Andrea Loops	John McKelvie	Gallery and Historical
L. Kenway	Sidney Lott	Colleen McKendry	Society, Leah Best
Mary Anne Kenwood	Jeff Lumley	Kelly McKenna	Kai Nestman
Thomas Kertes	Geoff Lyons	John McKilligan	Cheryl Netzke
Ki-Low-Na Friendship	Colleen MacDonald	Brian McKinley	Ellen Newman
Society, Edna	Fin MacDonald	Linda McMullan	Ken Nicholson
Terbasket	Jackie MacDonald	David McPhee	Yvonne Nielsen
Candy King	Donna MacDougall	Theresa McPhillamey	Marina Niks
Kaitlyn Kirkham	Al MacGregor	Lisa Mercure	Ismail Zuky Niseng
Holly Kish	Jeannette MacInnis	Jim Micallef	Roberta Norman
Steve Kloster	Bruce Mackenzie	Riley Milavsky	Martin Norris
Bonita Klovance	Ian Mackenzie	Jennie Milligan	Len Novakowski
Wayne Koch	Roberta MacQuarrie	Masoume Mirfakhraei	Manuel Nunes
Glenda Kopperson	Julia MacRae	Frank Mitchell	Colin Oakes
George Kovacic	Lillian MacRae	Renel Mitchell	Chrystal Ocean
Hans Kratz	Arthue Magill	Timothy Mitchell	Candace O'Connor
Eric Kristensen	Janis Magnuson	Fareed Mojab	Inger O'Hanlon
Michael Krueger	Mike Maguire	Andrew Molloy	Erik Oinonen
Peter Krueger	M'akola Housing Society,	Jill Moreton	Heidi Olfert
Peter Kuehn	Kevin Albers	Clint Morgan	Ciaran Olsen
Annette Kuhn	Doug Maljaars	Morguard Investments	David Olsen
Roger Lagasse	Ruth Mandt	Ltd., Michael Walker	Jamie Onciul-Omelus
Amen Lalli	Tom Manning	Kim Morton	Meaghan Orlinski
William Lampert	Abraham Mansouri	Nadia Motut	Bob Ostle
Theresa Lang	Lois Marsden	D.M. Mount	Micheal Owen
Tim Lang	Allen Martens	Muks-Kum-Ol Housing	Pacific Centre Family
Erika Lange	Jeff Martin	Development Society,	Services Association,
Maria Langis	Maryam Massah	Marianne Brorup	Victoria, Mitzi Dean
Greg Last	Hubert Massiah	Weston	Carolyn Pahl
Read Latosky	Erik Mast	Mara Muller	Bruce Parisian
Paul Lavallee	John Matt	Marnie Munro	Melinda Park
Shannon LaViolette	Luke Mayba	Donald Munsell	Alicia Parker
Laurie Lawrenuk	Emily Mayne	Alastair Murdoch	Natalie Parker
Brad Layton	Travis McAlpine	Colin Murray	Andrew Parkinson
Julie Lebel	Bruce McAra	Wendie Murray	Barb Parrott
Bill Lee	Alan McConchie	Susie Myers	Alan Pater

Todd Patrick	R.J. Reeves	SEED Electronics Inc.,	Surrounded by Cedar
Brett Patterson	Lorna Reid	Nima Boostani	Child and Family
Duane Pavelich	Shirley-Ann Reid	Karl Seidel	Service, Barb Cowan
PDG Mobility, Louis	Robert Rempel	Swarn Sekhorn	Mary Sutmoller
Belanger	Elazar Reshef	Diane Sekuloff	Jennifer Swaykoski
Leo Pedersen	Revelstoke Visual Arts	Angela Semeniuk	Barb Sylvester
Terry Peel	Society, Jackie	Peter Severinson	Synergy Engineering Ltd.,
William Perry	Pendergast	Michael Sharpe	David Atkinson
Sacha Peter	Richmond Property	Douglas Shelly	Chrystal Tagmann
Bruce Peters	Group Ltd., Jean	Judith Short	H. Tailor
John Petersen	McKay	Phil Sibbald	Michele Tanaka
Elizabeth Peto	Claude Richmond	George Simich	James Tang
Eddie Petrossian	Julie Rink	Colin Simkus	Lori Tannar
Art Phillips	Rite Handyman Ltd,	Nancy Sine	Brenda Taylor
Charles Phipps	Michael Anderson	Nazira Sinkovits	Cel Teigen
Carol Pickering	Doug Rive	Small World	Tekmar Control Systems
Velten Pilger	Martin Robbert	MUSICFOLDER.com	Ltd., Don Gibbs
Alan Pineo	Tim Roberts	Inc., Ian Bullen	TELUS, Kim Logan
Kim Poirier	Gina Robertson	Bruce Smith	Marco Terwiel
Laura Poland	Barb Robinson	David Smith	Dano Thorne
Lyn Pollard	J. & M. Robson	Dorothy Smith	Rick Thorpe
Dorian Pope	Glen Rodgers	Natasha Smith	Gary Thulin
Barbara Popil	Bill Rogers	South Okanagan	John Tilley
Port Alberni Orchestra	Marvin Rolls	Similkameen Brain	Tina Tofsrud
and Chorus Society,	Joan Rondeau	Injury Society, David	Paul Tolnai
Barry Miller	Doris Routliffe	Head	Ian Tootill
Christopher Porter	Patricia Roy	Jim Sparks	Sylvia Treptow
Robin Posella	Brian Russell	Karen Sparrow	Kristina Trommel
Melody Postle	Auren Ruvinsky	Marnie Spino	Judy Truelove
Manfred Preuss	Chris Ryan	Douglas Spratt	Patrick Truelove
Pro Air Systems Ltd., Jeff	Dan Sabourin	Sherry St. Onge	Christopher Tsichlas
Lee	Lisa Sanders	Cheryl Ann Stahel	Karl Turner
John Puddifoot	Shelley Sanders	Tim Stainton	Lynn Turner
Burke Purdon	Christopher Sandve	Alec Steel	Antonio Valente
Christine Purvis	Karan Sarang	David Steele	Ron van der Eerden
QMC Metering	Michael Saufferer	Richard Stern	William Van Der Ende
Solutions, Mike Easton	Milt Schellenberger	Frances Stetson	Annie Van Metre
Robin Quaintance	Ed Schneider	Pamela Stevenson	Vectis Support Services,
Dawn Quast	Pam Schneider	Gary Strachan	Tammi Fitch
Quesnel Tillicum Society,	Patrick Schreck	Curtis Stratuliak	Veritas Hydrophobic
Sandy Brunton	Lois Schwarz	Sue Stroud	Polymer Inc., Paul
Paul Raines	Matt Schwarz	Eve Subra	Winn
Dave Ranson	Irene Joy Scobie	Paul Sullivan	Ben Verkerk
Lloyd Rash	Stephanie Seaton	Jeff Summers	Dave Verwoerd
Marguerite Ravn	David Secunda		Walter Verwoerd
Melanie Ray			Elvi Vetland

Victoria Native	Larry Wartel	Bob Wilson	Robert Yolland
Friendship Centre,	Allan Watt	Brian Wilson	Linda Young
Carl Mashon	Mike Weeber	Lori Wilson	Brenda Yuen
Village Arts Cooperative,	Elaine Weidner	Rick Wilson	William Yuen
Victoria Page	RuthClaire Weintraub	Phyllis With	Tim Yzerman
Magnus Vinje	Jon Wellman	Selena Witt	Moreno Zanotto
Don Vipond	Chelsea Werrun	Adam Wojtowicz	Alex Zhu
Victor Vogt	Nancy Westfall	Bernice (Nina) Wolanski	Neil Ziola
Mark Vranckaert	Thomas Westgate	Maiya Wolfe	Danny Zucchet
Arlene Vrtar-Huot	Paul Weston	Kathleen Woodley	Jamin Zuroski
Paul Walker	Richard Whale	Amy Woodruffe	David Zuvic
Richard Walker	Stephanie Whitehurst	Bunny Wortman	Corey Zylstra
Brian Wall	Rupert Whiting	Percy Wright	
Brian Wallis	Julia Whittaker	William Wright	
Dan Walsh	Theo Wiering	Eileen Wttewaall	

