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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

### **DISASTER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE LIMIT RAISED**

VICTORIA – Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA) funds are being increased to help British Columbians who suffered from the extreme weather in January, which caused floods, landslides and mudslides, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General Rich Coleman announced today.

“Since the \$100,000 maximum for Disaster Financial Assistance applicants was put in place 12 years ago, the cost to replace losses has risen dramatically – over 150 per cent to replace a structure,” Coleman said. “We’re raising the DFA limit to \$300,000 to help British Columbians with the costs of recovering from a disaster.”

Extreme weather, heavy rainfall and river and creek ice jams were experienced across the province from Jan. 17 to 31, 2005, causing an estimated \$20 million in damage.

DFA provides financial assistance to eligible homeowners, residential tenants, farms, small businesses and charitable organizations where uninsurable property is damaged or destroyed by disasters. Currently, the amount of DFA payable is 80 per cent of the accepted claim over \$1,000 to a maximum payable of \$100,000 for all eligible costs. Retroactive to Jan. 1, 2005, the maximum payable is \$300,000. This includes the cost to repair, rebuild, replace or relocate essential structures, the clean-up or removal of debris and replacement of essential contents. Other DFA costs can include personal effects and removal and storage of items. There is no maximum limit to local governments.

“This government has made it a priority to help people recover from disasters,” said Coleman. “Right after the emergency struck, we were on the ground making sure people were safe and had food, shelter and clothing. Now we are helping them rebuild over the long term.”

For more information on Disaster Financial Assistance go to [www.pep.bc.ca](http://www.pep.bc.ca) or call the Provincial Emergency Program toll-free 1-888 257-4777. Claims for the January extreme weather event should be submitted no later than May 25, 2005.

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