
NEWS RELEASE

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Office of the Premier
Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

FUNDING ENSURES TSUNAMI PREPAREDNESS

VICTORIA – B.C. is providing one million dollars to coastal communities at risk from tsunamis to ensure they are properly prepared, Premier Gordon Campbell announced today.

“The devastating tragedy in South Asia is a vivid reminder for all of us of how vulnerable coastal communities are to the power of tsunamis,” Campbell said. “While British Columbians continue to support relief efforts abroad, we also need to take steps to ensure that we can respond to a tsunami on our coast. B.C. has excellent emergency planners who take the threat of tsunamis very seriously, but we also live in a seismically active region and we know there is more we can do to help them and our communities prepare.”

The money will be used to identify risks, develop enhanced response plans, upgrade communications and warning systems, and support public education programs. Higher-risk communities on the west coast of Vancouver Island and along the central and north coast will each receive \$20,000. Communities in the Georgia Basin and south coast, which are more protected, will receive \$10,000. The Province has also discussed funding with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada to provide for coastal First Nations communities.

“Communities across the province need to be prepared to deal with emergencies,” said Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General Rich Coleman. “This is the first step in an ongoing process to ensure British Columbia is better prepared for a tsunami.”

The Province is holding three Internet workshops January 19-20 to discuss the tsunami threat and potential impact on our coast. Up to 50 community leaders and emergency planners will participate in each workshop by conference call. Experts will discuss tsunami causes, potential speed and height of waves, identification of vulnerable areas, the Pacific Tsunami Warning System, emergency plans and community awareness. The information presented by speakers will be available to the public at www.pep.bc.ca online.

On Dec. 29, Premier Campbell announced an aid package of \$8 million for tsunami victims. The money went directly to the Red Cross, which is helping co-ordinate the country’s relief effort. For more information on B.C.’s tsunami disaster response, visit the government website at www.gov.bc.ca online.

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1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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