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PREMIER OUTLINES KYOTO POSITION TO PM

The Right Honourable Jean Chrétien, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister:

On February 12, I wrote to you on behalf of Canada's premiers, detailing our concerns and expectations regarding the Kyoto Protocol. And on August 2 in Halifax, Canada's premiers unanimously agreed on the need for a First Ministers' meeting prior to any federal decision on ratification.

I am writing to once again reiterate British Columbia's position that there must be a fair and reasonable implementation plan for the Kyoto Protocol that includes a comprehensive assessment of potential costs and economic impacts, and is subject to adequate consultation with the provincial and territorial governments, as well as the public.

As our officials have made clear on numerous occasions, there are at least five major areas of concern from B.C.'s perspective that must be addressed as part of an implementation plan, prior to any ratification decision. These are as follows:

1. **B.C. must retain the benefits of its forest carbon sinks.** B.C.'s forest sink could be as high as 48 million tonnes of CO₂ a year, by far the highest in Canada, and it is estimated that our province alone could account for all of the forest sink credit allotted to Canada under the Kyoto Protocol. As such, if the federal government is intent on using B.C.'s forests to reduce Canada's overall burden, then credit must be provided to the province. Moreover, B.C. must retain its undiminished management authority and jurisdiction over its forest resources.
2. **The federal government must provide specific credit for our unique energy production situation and our clean energy exports.** B.C. has already invested heavily and wisely in clean, renewable hydroelectric development. We are now looking to other sources to cost-effectively meet new electricity demand, including natural gas. B.C.'s overall emissions from energy production will remain far lower than most other jurisdictions. Moreover, our ability to export clean energy must be recognized for its value in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. We must receive fair compensation for the value of our energy production and export.

3. **The federal government must guarantee that B.C. industry receives credit for early action in reducing emissions and does not bear an unfair burden.** Many B.C. industries including the energy, pulp and paper and smelting sectors have already significantly reduced their emissions, and have invested heavily to improve their energy efficiency. Credit must be given for these actions.
4. **The federal government's national measures must address the climate change priorities and action areas that B.C. has already identified.** There are many areas where positive steps are being taken, including alternative energy development, improved urban transit, energy efficiency measures, and the development of clean energy for remote First Nations. The federal government must work with B.C. in these and other areas where significant progress can be achieved.
5. **B.C. must receive co-funding for the clean air, energy efficiency and high-tech measures that our province will advance as part of its own climate change actions.** Because B.C. already has low per capita emissions and the majority of our energy is produced through clean and renewable hydroelectricity, significant reductions to current emission levels will be much more costly and challenging than in other jurisdictions. Any implementation plan must reflect this fact, and include a formula that fully accounts for our higher incremental emission-reduction costs.

B.C. will not support an implementation plan that does not fully and adequately address these concerns. That support is only possible if the federal government produces an implementation plan that includes a comprehensive assessment of potential impacts; and is subject to adequate consultation with the provincial and territorial governments, as well as the public.

The data released by Natural Resources Canada on October 11 suggests that B.C. will be expected to bear a highly disproportionate share of loss of jobs and economic growth in the scenarios being contemplated by your government. This is unacceptable, especially in light of our large forest sinks and reliance on clean energy. B.C. cannot and will not bear the burden of the rest of Canada when it comes to climate change.

B.C.'s commitment to addressing climate change is not at issue here. Clearly we all must do our part and B.C. has been a leader in this regard. B.C. has been at the forefront of efforts to deal with climate change. Literally billions have been invested by the people of this province over the past decades to ensure clean energy is part of our economic fabric. It is essential that the Government of Canada not punish B.C. citizens and industry today because we had the foresight to act in the past. Further, it is critical to note that any plan to deal with climate change must protect our competitive position in North America, the primary market place for our goods and natural resources.

B.C. is unique, just as Nova Scotia, Manitoba, Alberta and Nunavut are too. All of Canada's provinces and territories are unique and can combat climate change in their own ways. And just as our contributions are unique, so too are our interests. We have a responsibility to look after our citizens, our economies, and, of course, our environments.

I urge your government not to impose one universal solution on a country as broad and diverse as Canada. We are indeed the only country in the western hemisphere that is facing the prospect of having to implement significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions as a result of the Kyoto Protocol and our first responsibility must be to our own citizens and the diverse regions that make up our country.

Our province is doing its part to address climate change. We have a history of reliance on clean energy, and it is essential that B.C.'s unique situation be taken into account in development of any federal climate change plan. It is critical that the Government of Canada put forward a fair and reasonable plan immediately.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

Gordon Campbell
Premier

Visit the province's Web site at <http://www.gov.bc.ca/> for online information and services.