

OPINION-EDITORIAL

ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVES NOT “STATUS QUO”

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(312 words)

After reading NDP MLA Gregor Robertson’s “Sound Off” column in the Vancouver Sun on Thursday, I wondered whether he was actually living in the same province as the rest of us.

His claim that British Columbia is going with a “status quo” approach when it comes to the environment is plainly silly. It’s been a year since Mr. Robertson was elected and he could have done his homework by now.

Here are just a few of our government’s environmental initiatives that Mr. Robertson seems to have missed:

- In early February, British Columbia and the world celebrated our new land-use plan for the Central Coast and the North Coast. This landmark agreement will protect 1.8 million hectares and led to the creation of the Spirit Bear Conservancy.
- We tripled the Living Rivers Trust Fund to \$21 million to help fund river restoration projects.
- We completed a \$73 million deal to protect Burns Bog, after the NDP supported putting a theme park in the area.
- Brought in a \$2,000 tax incentive for hybrid vehicles.
- We’re supporting the \$1.9 billion RAV Rapid Transit Line (Canada Line) to take 200,000 cars off Lower Mainland roads.
- Invested about \$12 million last year in BC Parks infrastructure and \$13.3 million this year to upgrade more campgrounds and picnic areas, and to acquire more park land.
- Successfully fought and stopped the Sumas Energy 2 Project to protect Fraser Valley Air Quality – something the NDP didn’t do.

I’m also happy to inform Mr. Robertson that alternative energy and power technology is indeed one of the largest growth industries in our province. B.C. is on the leading edge in areas like hydrogen and fuel cells, natural gas and electric hybrid engines.

Our actions have helped make B.C. a world leader in sustainable environmental management. That is something that should make every British Columbian proud.