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THE HONOURABLE BILL BARISOFF, SPEAKER

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LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR  
Her Honour the Honourable Iona V. Campagnolo, CM, OBC

**SECOND SESSION, 38TH PARLIAMENT**

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MONDAY, APRIL 24, 2006

The House met at 10:03 a.m.

Prayers.

### Introductions by Members

**Hon. B. Penner:** It's my pleasure to welcome and introduce Dallas Smith, chair of KNT First Nations; Art Sterritt of Hartley Bay, executive director of the coastal first nations Turning Point initiatives; and Kelly Brown, representing the Heiltsuk First Nations. These three gentlemen are all seated behind me on the floor of the Legislature, and I ask the House to please make them welcome.

### Introduction and First Reading of Bills

#### PARK (CONSERVANCY ENABLING) AMENDMENT ACT, 2006

Hon. B. Penner presented a message from Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor: a bill intituled Park (Conservancy Enabling) Amendment Act, 2006

[1005]

**Hon. B. Penner:** Mr. Speaker, I move that the bill be read a first time now.

Motion approved.

**Hon. B. Penner:** I am pleased to introduce a bill that makes amendments to both the Park Act and the Protected Areas of British Columbia Act. British Columbia has the third-largest park system in North America, behind only the national park systems in Canada and in the United States of America. We have a parks and protected areas system to be proud of, and I'm proud to have once worked in that system as a B.C. park ranger.

Our government's goal is to continue to make this protected area system even better. That vision was confirmed on February 7 of this year when the Premier announced the provincial land use decisions for the central coast and north coast. This announcement set out a new vision for coastal British Columbia. As the Premier stated that day: "The agreement reached on these areas represents an unprecedented collaboration between first nations, industry, environmentalists, local governments and many other stakeholders in how we manage the vast richness of B.C.'s coast for the benefit of all British Columbians."

This historic decision will result in the establishment of more than 100 new protected areas totalling 1.2 million hectares, emphasizing the protection and maintenance of biodiversity, recreational values, and cultural and heritage values. The protected areas will preserve one of the world's largest intact temperate rain forests and protect some of B.C.'s most spectacular ar-

reas, securing habitat for a number of species including the rare spirit bear, which the Premier introduced as British Columbia's official mammal emblem earlier this session.

At the land use plan announcement for the central coast and north coast, the Premier stated that this government will introduce legislation to establish new protected areas resulting from these two land use decisions and plans. These plans highlight the New Relationship that is being forged with first nations in British Columbia, and I'm pleased to be joined in the House today by the representatives I just introduced moments ago.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to introduce these amendments to the Park Act to create new conservancy designations to protect these special areas. I'm also honoured to introduce amendments to the Protected Areas of British Columbia Act to establish the first 24 conservancies resulting from the central coast and north coast land and resource management plans. Included in these new conservancies is the nearly 103,000-hectare KITASOO spirit bear conservancy on Princess Royal Island. The remaining 85 or so conservancies that will be designated in the coming years will add additional lands to the parks and protected areas system equal to half the land mass of Great Britain. This is truly a historic event.

I move that the bill be placed on the orders of the day for second reading at the next sitting of the House after today.

Bill 28, Park (Conservancy Enabling) Amendment Act, 2006, introduced, read a first time and ordered to be placed on orders of the day for second reading at the next sitting of the House after today.

#### SAFE SCHOOLS ACT

L. Mayencourt presented a bill intituled Safe Schools Act.

**L. Mayencourt:** I move introduction of the Safe Schools Act for first reading.

Motion approved.

**L. Mayencourt:** It gives me great pleasure today to be introducing a piece of legislation that confirms how special and how important it is to make our schools safe for all of our students. A central focus and purpose of the school system in British Columbia is to enable all students to develop their individual potential and acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes to contribute to society. Students benefit academically and socially from a safe, caring and orderly environment.

In 2003, I chaired the Safe Schools Task Force and travelled the province. I heard from hundreds and hundreds of students, teachers, school trustees, and so on, about the need for legislation that would require school districts to develop codes of conduct consistent with the Human Rights Code. The Safe Schools Act is

based on the recommendations of the Safe Schools Task Force and will address the need for a universal code of conduct in British Columbia schools. Fundamental human rights have been confirmed in British Columbia by a number of acts of this Legislature. It is wise, every once in a while, to extend the protection of human rights in British Columbia, particularly to students in our school system.

School districts will be required to establish a districtwide code-of-conduct policy and deal with the issue of bullying, harassment and intimidation in our system. This districtwide policy must include a provision prohibiting bullying, harassment and intimidation or discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, political beliefs, religion, social status, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or age of a student, group of students or their parents.

[1010]

This code of conduct has to be developed and reviewed as a regular part of the school system, and it has to outline clear expectations of what we expect from our students and how we want to deal with these problems. When someone finds that a school district or a person or a group of people have failed to comply with this act, they will have the opportunity to put forward a complaint through the human rights law.

**Mr. Speaker:** Can the member put the motion.

**L. Mayencourt:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to do this. I move that this bill be placed on the orders of the day for second reading at the next sitting after today.

Bill M204, Safe Schools Act, introduced, read a first time and ordered to be placed on orders of the day for second reading at the next sitting of the House after today.

### Orders of the Day

#### Private Members' Statements

##### THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF TUMBLER RIDGE

**B. Lekstrom:** It gives me a great deal of pleasure today to rise in this House to speak about a community in my riding, which just celebrated their 25th anniversary — a relatively new community in our province of British Columbia. That community is Tumbler Ridge, which was built to service the northeast coal sector and was officially incorporated on April 9, 1981.

Since that time, Tumbler Ridge has seen a number of changes in the community. On April 9 of this year I had the pleasure of attending the 25th anniversary celebrations in Tumbler Ridge. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, it is a vibrant community — one that has seen the ups and downs of the coal industry over the last 25 years but took the attitude that regardless of what took place in the coalmining sector, that community was

going to survive. It was going to survive, and it was going to grow and prosper.

[S. Hammell in the chair.]

A few short years ago I actually had the opportunity to serve my community of Dawson Creek as mayor of that community. I was in Vancouver with the mayor of Tumbler Ridge at the time, Mayor Clay Iles. That was in the year 2000. We were at a meeting in Richmond and received a phone call early in the morning while we were having coffee. I received that call with news that Quintette mines had decided they were closing. It caught the mayor of Tumbler Ridge off guard, which surprised us both. He didn't know about this.

Clay is a good friend of mine. He's no longer the mayor in Tumbler Ridge, but immediately his attitude was: what are we going to do to rebuild our community? It wasn't one of defeat. It wasn't one of: boy, the town is going to see some tough times. He took the attitude that we're going to rebuild. We're going to have to look at diversifying.

Many times single-industry towns wait until that sudden impact takes place before they broaden their vision. They began looking at tourism. They began looking at the oil and gas sector many years ago, but really had become dependent on the coalmining sector.

Under the leadership of Mayor Clay Iles, now followed by His Worship Mayor Mike Caisley in Tumbler Ridge, they made an effort to take the community in a different direction. They knew they could rebuild the coalmining sector in Tumbler Ridge. They knew that markets would allow that to happen, but they also knew they couldn't depend anymore on a single-industry community.

Since that time, the Quintette and Bullmoose mines both have closed. In their heyday they serviced and provided about five million tonnes a year from north-east British Columbia in the coal sector. But the diversification began to occur very quickly.

Tourism — and I'm going to speak to that briefly — has taken off in that area. It's one of the most beautiful areas in British Columbia, nestled in the Rocky Mountains and about 65 miles from Dawson Creek and about 65 miles from Chetwynd on our highways. They have three main highways going into Tumbler Ridge, and the activity out there is tremendous. They've brought a balance to it in order to look after the true beauty of what Tumbler Ridge has to offer.

Recently, I'm sure most members in this Legislative Assembly and across our province and across this country have heard about the incredible dinosaur finds that have taken place out in Tumbler Ridge. We have a paleontologist, Mr. Rich McCrea, who has been out there for about three and a half years working diligently in trying to make sure these fossils are protected, looked after, extracted. They're looking at putting together a museum, similar to what you see in Drumheller. This find rivals what has been found anywhere in the world, with the age of these fossils. There are some new finds out there.



[1015]

What's interesting is that it wasn't a professional that actually found the tracks originally. It was a pair of young boys. Dr. Charles Helm, who has been just an incredible benefit to the community of Tumbler Ridge over the years.... His son and a friend were out playing, floating down one of the rivers, when they ended up on the shore. They began walking around and thought what they were seeing were dinosaur footprints. They had gone home and told their dad about this, who — I'm sure, like any father — may have thought maybe it was a bear track or something different. Knowing Charles, who is a wonderful person and a great outdoorsman, he went out and looked at it. Sure enough — well-preserved dinosaur tracks with a trail, not just a single track.

From that point on he took a huge interest, as did the community. They began exploring and brought in professionals. It is truly amazing. I have been down on some of the dig sites. What's available out there for the public and for the museum foundation that's working so hard to bring this to fruition is truly incredible.

Not only do they have the issue of the dinosaurs and the paleontologist in Mr. Rich McCrea, who is a world-renowned paleontologist, they also have diversified out into the oil and gas sector. I think it's fair to say that most people realize the northeast part of our province is a driving force for the economy of this great province of ours.

The oil and gas industry has shifted somewhat. Traditionally, a great deal of it was on the north side of the Peace River. With new finds, we are seeing increased exploration, increased extraction of the natural gas in our region. A lot of that is coming from the South Peace region in between Chetwynd, Tumbler Ridge and Dawson Creek. The largest play in Canadian history was recently purchased by the corporation EnCana about two and a half years ago, and it is working out very well. It's driving the economy for all of us.

Tumbler Ridge, with all its beauty and with all its diversification, is a great example of what a community can do. I go back to the point of that day when I was with the previous mayor, Clay Iles, and the attitude — I took a lot from Clay — that without question, there wasn't a blink that took place when he didn't have the first thought as rebuilding that community. That really says a lot about the people of our province.

I know many members in this chamber have come from backgrounds of locally elected office, and we face challenges in that level of government. We face challenges in this level of government. There are two ways to approach those challenges. One is to throw up our hands and say we can't fix it, and look at the negative side. The other, which is the side I prefer to take, is to say if there is a challenge, let's find out what we can do to fix that and move ahead. Tumbler Ridge is by far the greatest example I can ever imagine in seeing that take place.

Back in 1981 Mr. Don Phillips was the MLA for our region and was a driving force behind the development of Tumbler Ridge. Let me tell you, Madam

Speaker, there were a number of people who were really hesitant about developing Tumbler Ridge — not just in government but in our region. They thought maybe they could develop the coalmines out there and travel the people from Chetwynd or Dawson Creek, whether it be by high-speed rail or whether it be in helicopters.

As well, Mr. Frank Oberle was our MP at the time — another gentleman who worked tirelessly to make Tumbler Ridge a reality. I can tell you we are all better off, not just in the Peace region but certainly in the province, for the development of this wonderful community.

I do look forward to the response from my colleague from the opposition on this anniversary I had the opportunity to attend. Following that response, I will certainly close off my remarks.

**L. Krog:** I'm delighted this morning to rise in response to the private member's statement made by my colleague the member for Peace River South about the 25th anniversary of Tumbler Ridge. He's quite right. It is a community whose history represents a response to very difficult circumstances, which it has risen above to some extent. That is much mirrored by the community experience of Chemainus on Vancouver Island, likewise a community that saw a devastating closure of a major mill and had to work very hard to try and revive its economy.

The small communities of British Columbia represented by places like Tumbler Ridge are, in my view, the source of this province's greatness. Notwithstanding the views of the members who represent all those folks on the lower mainland, they are not the centre of the universe. The wealth that fuels this province comes from those rural areas and those rural communities. They are the pioneers of our province in the modern day, who insist on living in conditions that many in the city would find unappealing but who provide the economic wealth and driving force for this province.

[1020]

However, having said that and made compliments to the folks of Tumbler Ridge, I must say that given the vigorous work of the colleague of the hon. member, the member for Vancouver-Burrard, in particular around the Apology Act, I would have thought that this morning the member for Peace River South would have taken an opportunity to at long last apologize to all of those living in the southeast corner of the province for the fiasco and the economic disaster that followed in the coal industry in the southeast — I think of the communities of Fernie and Sparwood — as a result of the former Social Credit government's misguided policy of opening up another coal field that led to the collapse of the coal industry in this province in many respects.

Having a brother who operated a small business in Fernie and who survived those difficult days brought on by the creation of another competing coal sector in this province, I would have thought that this member, speaking on behalf of his political ancestors, the Social

Credit party — and he did wax eloquent this morning about dinosaurs, as I recall, and history.... He might have had it within his heart to apologize to the people of British Columbia, particularly the citizens of Fernie and Sparwood and the southeast sector.

This government has made much of criticism of previous economic development measures taken by the NDP government, but perhaps the hon. member is not aware that just prior to the 2001 election and the dying days of the Dosanjh government, the provincial government was required to write off some \$600 million — I repeat: \$600 million — in unrecoverable debt arising out of Bill Bennett's development of northeast coal.

I'm glad he did mention the member at the time, Don Phillips, who was a well-known and certainly well-heard member of this Legislative Assembly — who's now, I understand, happily retired in Australia or some place far south of the vigorous winters of Tumbler Ridge or the Peace River country.

Nevertheless, I would have thought he could have stood up this morning and acknowledged the role that governments play in economic development and that sometimes governments make mistakes. It ill behooves one government to be too critical of another government, because they all make mistakes from time to time.

I would suggest to the hon. member that we're talking about a somewhat more significant loss of taxpayers' moneys in the development of Tumbler Ridge than we are with — and I hate to bring it up — the issue of the fast cats, over which the members opposite continuously berate this side of the House.

I want to close this morning by suggesting to the hon. member...

Interjection.

**Deputy Speaker:** Member, member.

**L. Krog:** ...that he has an opportunity now, this morning, to apologize to the taxpayers of British Columbia on behalf of his government and their political ancestors for what they did to the province and, in particular, the southeast sector.

**B. Lekstrom:** I would like to start off with an apology, and that would be to the people of British Columbia for having to listen to the member for Nanaimo's response to this. That would be the extent of my apology this morning.

Certainly, I know that colleagues in the opposition now were part of the government when the issue of Tumbler Ridge and the concerns fell upon them. I will give some credit when credit is due. As a member of local government, I was with Mayor Iles at the time, and the government of the day in 2000 did come to the plate and did some good work with the community of Tumbler Ridge.

With that, there is a thank-you — not an apology — and I know that the people of Tumbler Ridge are grateful. It is truly nice to see a community, as I said earlier,

that can take the pressures of a single-industry town, build upon those and diversify their economy, which Tumbler Ridge has done.

Tumbler Ridge has seen a transformation. They went through a huge transformation three or four years ago. A number of the homes that sat empty were sold. We brought people from, really, around the globe, who had taken up the opportunity to come to start a new life. We're seeing that, and it has truly helped the diversification of that economy as well.

[1025]

There are some special people in Tumbler Ridge who I've talked about — certainly Mayor Clay Iles, a good friend of mine. Now Mayor Mike Caisley, who I had the opportunity to work with on the Dawson Creek council, is running the community as their mayor. Their councils over the years.... We talk about mayors a lot, but without the elected council members the job wouldn't be able to be completed, so a huge thank-you goes out to them.

Also, two special people who have been in Tumbler Ridge for the better part of the 25 years — a couple, Mr. and Mrs. Hartford. Mrs. Janet Hartford was a teacher of mine back when I was in high school. She and her husband moved to Tumbler Ridge. Her husband became involved on the local council and participated there. Mrs. Hartford taught in Tumbler Ridge for many years. They're both still out there, integral parts of that community, and just keep building on it and making it an even better place.

In closing, I do want to say that the 25th anniversary was a wonderful celebration. It celebrated the cultural diversity they have; certainly, people from all over the world have come to work in those mines that were closed. More importantly, today the brightest spot of all is the new revitalization of our mining sector. Tumbler Ridge is a beehive of activity with new exploration and new coalmines that have already opened up, with others on the horizon. The shipment of coal from the northeast part of British Columbia is once again leading this province in being a valuable part of the economic well-being of British Columbia. We should all be very proud of that.

I would once again, in closing, like to say congratulations to Tumbler Ridge on their 25th anniversary. I look forward to being there for their 50th anniversary celebrations, because once you move to the Peace, once you live in the Peace, you stay in the Peace forever.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

**B. Simpson:** When President Eisenhower gave his farewell address in 1960, he predicted many of the challenges that would face America and its political leaders in the coming decades. For example, he warned that the growing military-industrial complex, while a necessity in the Cold War era, must be controlled lest it gain unwarranted influence and power over public policy. To quote from his speech: "Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of

defence with our peaceful methods and goals so that security and liberty may prosper together." Unfortunately, history has shown that the American people haven't been as knowledgeable nor as alert as Eisenhower might have hoped.

Eisenhower also pointed out another area in which we must remain alert and knowledgeable. That area is the challenge that merely focusing on the present would pose for a nation of consumers. Again from his speech:

Another factor in maintaining balance involves the element of time. As we peer into society's future, we — you and I and our government — must avoid the impulse to live only for today, plundering, for our own ease and convenience, the precious resources of tomorrow. We cannot mortgage the material assets of our grandchildren without risking the loss also of their political and spiritual heritage. We want democracy to survive for all generations to come, not to become the insolvent phantom of tomorrow.

Over the last decade the focus of political debate has been on government debt and the financial burden that will place on future generations. However, our myopic focus on financial debt has caused us to lose sight of Eisenhower's warning that a more insidious way of mortgaging our children's future is to consume our planet's material wealth with no thought to the impact this will have for future generations.

Nowhere is this thinking more evident than in our consumption of fossil fuels and on the impact this is having on our climate. Despite being warned as early as the 1970s that we cannot consume fossil fuels and pour carbon dioxide and methane gases into the air without ultimately and significantly impacting our climate, generations of political leaders have put short-term economic considerations ahead of the longer-term implications of this profligate consumption of a limited resource.

In short, we have failed to heed Eisenhower's warning that true leadership involves an element of time, that we have an obligation to make political decisions for both present and future generations. As a result, we have lost decades of opportunities to be more proactive and to avoid what now appears to be upon us: an accelerating and catastrophic climate change. Now we are the future generation that will be paying the price for this lack of foresight.

[1030]

Day after day more information is brought to light to show that catastrophic climate change is not some future event, that it is upon us now. Day after day the headlines scream for our attention to this critical issue. Some of the current impacts of climate change include rapidly melting ice in both the polar regions, undermining the very foundations of ocean ecosystems and threatening the flow of major ocean currents that drive global climate.

Krill populations in the Antarctic are in steep decline — as much as 40 percent per decade — and krill is the primary source of food for a host of marine mammals. The normal pattern of ice formation and melting in the Arctic has been disrupted so dramatically that polar bears are slowly starving to death, and more and more of them are being found drowned as a result of

having to hunt in open water. Like krill, polar bears are an indicator species for the health of arctic ecosystems.

To make matters worse, the ocean is becoming more acidic as it absorbs large amounts of carbon dioxide from the air. This increase in acidity, combined with higher water temperatures, is killing another base for aquatic ecosystems, and that is the coral reefs. These are dying at an alarming rate.

Terrestrial ecosystems are also being impacted. Amphibian populations are dying at alarming rates. Whole forests are literally being eaten by bugs, as we well know in British Columbia. Fire, drought and floods are destroying whole ecosystems in one cataclysmic event after another.

Over the last 12 months the scientific community has begun to talk about the possibility that we have either reached or are about to reach the tipping point at which we will see an even more dramatic acceleration of the impacts of our failure to act to control carbon dioxide emissions when we had the chance decades ago. Yet in this province, under this government, we continue to fail to rise to the challenge that accelerating climate change poses for both present and future generations of British Columbians.

Not only has climate change not made it into the last two budget or throne speeches, but the Ministry of Environment service plan still uses as its basis an action plan that was developed without public consultation and released in December 2004 so that it would avoid public scrutiny and debate. This plan lacks any sense of urgency, contains no innovation, sets no specific targets for reducing our carbon emissions and focuses on merely trying to get carbon credits for our hydroelectric dams and our forests as carbon sinks.

In light of the growing evidence that we're about to enter a period of accelerated climate change, the government's 2004 climate change plan is morally bankrupt. In fact, the government's action plans and strategies speak volumes to the fact that it does not take climate change seriously. Cabinet ministers have advocated for coal-fired electrical generation. Its energy and economic plans are still heavily focused on fossil fuel consumption. Its transportation strategy is based on more lanes and more bridges, rather than public transport. Its forests and land management strategies still do not address the significant forest health issues that climate change has already wrought on our land base.

It's time for real leadership on this issue, and that leadership must start with open, public debate on what British Columbians want to do to address this global dilemma. Today I challenge the government to put their climate change plan to the test by engaging in a full public debate on this issue as soon as possible. I believe that many British Columbians are, in Eisenhower's words, alert and knowledgeable about this important issue, and they will compel this government to take more concerted and more deliberate action to address our impact on global climate change.

**Hon. B. Penner:** Change is here. It's impacting our water, our traditional natural resources and our energy

sources. It's how we adapt to that change that will have an enormous impact on our environment, our economy and our communities.

I attended the global climate change conference in Montreal last December, and one of the most startling sessions I had a chance to attend was a presentation where the conclusion was that even if we stop the production of all greenhouse gasses today that result in climate change, the gases already in the atmosphere will continue to have an impact for the next 50 years. So the change is here, and preparing for change is necessary.

Now, the member made some reference to the climate change plan. It's true. We have a 40-point action plan to address climate change, and contrary to what the member indicated, it has had some decent reviews. I can quote from the McCarthy Tétrault report, which says: "The plan can be viewed as a reasonable first step in what will likely become an all-pervasive effort to deal with climate change."

[1035]

It's true: we are making steps. It is a first step because the previous NDP government had no action plan to address climate change. That's probably why the member for Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows in early April — April 5 — said: "The NDP in the late 1990s was not good on climate change either."

What we've put in place is a 40-point action plan, and we're following that plan. Here's what has happened so far. Under the previous government in the 1990s, they built fossil-fuelled power plants in Fort Nelson and Campbell River; tried to build one on Duke Point and exempt it from an environmental assessment process and the BCUC process, which would oversee that project, and the citizens of Vancouver Island said no to that; and, shall we forget — I know some of us would like to — they went ahead and built a fossil fuel-powered plant in Pakistan and lost millions of dollars on behalf of B.C. taxpayers, because those investment dollars were lost. That had no benefit to British Columbia.

In contrast, what we've done in British Columbia is develop new sources of electricity for the benefit of British Columbians. Since 2001 all — 100 percent — of the new sources of electricity that have come on line in British Columbia have come from renewable sources of electricity. We've signed contracts with more than 35 small hydro run-of-the-river projects in British Columbia — zero emission, greenhouse gas-neutral projects that help contribute to keeping the lights on here in British Columbia.

We are also, for the first time in British Columbia, generating gas from methane gas escaping from landfills. That was not happening in the 1990s; that's happening under the leadership of this government today.

A few weeks ago B.C. Hydro announced that they had received proposals — I think 53 proposals — for their latest call for new energy supplies. Those proposals include five or six wind projects, some of them very substantial in size; I think 32 or 34 additional, small, run-of-the-river hydroelectric projects; and five or six projects to make use of waste heat.

I think it makes sense to look at utilizing waste energy to do something good and productive for British Columbia, because due to a lack of investment in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s in domestic energy supplies, British Columbia has become a net importer of electricity. That's making us dependent on imported electricity, primarily from the United States, much of that generated from fossil fuel.

That's why our energy plan set an ambitious target of trying to achieve 50 percent of new sources of electricity from clean sources. I know the Environment critic for the opposition, the member for Vancouver-Hastings, said that in his view, that was a very ambitious challenge. He said: "That's a big challenge to get to 50 percent." He said that on April 6, 2006.

In fact, since 2001 we've exceeded that 50-percent target, as I mentioned. We've actually had 100 percent of new sources come from clean sources in British Columbia.

There's more work to be done, and so we're doing that. We've got a \$2,000 tax credit for individuals who purchase a hybrid vehicle. I took advantage of that incentive and purchased a hybrid vehicle for my own personal use, using my own personal funds, in late May of last year. I can tell you that that \$2,000 incentive on the provincial sales tax made a difference to me. I'm told by auto dealers that it has made a huge difference in British Columbia, because today British Columbia is the per-capita leader in private ownership of hybrid vehicles across the country.

That's showing leadership. I know the member from...

**Hon. S. Hagen:** Comox.

**Hon. B. Penner:** ...Comox has also purchased a hybrid vehicle for his own personal use and is showing leadership in that way, because those hybrid electric vehicles reduce not just gas consumption but the emissions that come out of the tailpipe.

We've done a number of other things. We've taken taxes off of new equipment for boilers and gas furnaces that are more efficient so we can reduce consumption. Ultimately, no one individual or no one government has all the answers to help us address the challenge of climate change. We all have to work on this together, and we are showing leadership.

**B. Simpson:** The Minister of Environment's comments are quite intriguing, given that when he was interviewed after the Montreal meeting on climate change he indicated to the press in a fairly candid comment that the range of changes that were upon us made him lose sleep. Yet this government did not list climate change as one of the transformative changes in a throne speech about transformative changes that were going to impact the globe. That is a gross oversight.

[1040]

What do they do? They go back to the 1990s. Well, at the Council of Forest Industries a few weeks ago the

Premier said — and I'm paraphrasing — that it's not 1960; it's not 1980; it's 2006, and we must address the challenges of 2006. I think that's a lesson that the Premier ought to give to his entire cabinet. It's 2006, and it's time this government got out of opposition mode, started acting like a government and started showing true leadership for the challenges facing us in 2006.

Canada is warming faster than any other place on the globe. The implications for that are dramatic. We've already seen New Orleans under water. How many Canadian cities will be under water, and how many dikes is this government involved in helping to prepare and build and raise for that? Arctic sovereignty is now on the horizon. The macro changes that are occurring are absolutely incredible. But it also goes down to the smaller range. The tick for Lyme disease, as an example, is spreading outside of its normal domain. That has implications for many British Columbians if our medical profession is not apprised of that and British Columbians are not apprised of that.

We need true leadership, and this government had a task force called the economic impacts panel for climate change. It had a report of March 25, 2003, in which that panel stated that this government should set targets and drive a change in our economy through those targets. Has the government done that? No. They did not establish targets. That panel stated to this government: "Developing recommendations on how to consult with stakeholders and engage the private sector, NGOs and the general public in developing and implementing the B.C. action plan is a necessary step for taking this so-called first step to its next level."

What has this government done? It released its B.C. plan in the midst of Christmas holidays in December 2004. A climate change plan released in the midst of Christmas holidays. That makes a lot of sense. If this government is not afraid of this plan, if this government does not believe this plan is morally bankrupt and if this government does believe that it is showing true leadership on this issue, then take it to the public for full public discourse and debate.

#### GIVING STUDENTS CHOICES

**H. Bloy:** I'm here to talk about third-party student fees and to allow choice for all students. The issue of mandatory third-party student fees might be a touchy subject for some of my colleagues in the House here, but I think it is an important subject to address. I am sure many here were involved in university or college politics in addition to their studies. As MLAs we also hear from constituents with various backgrounds who are members of many different professions.

As my constituency is Burquitlam, Simon Fraser University is part of it, and I have the opportunity on many occasions to meet with students from Simon Fraser and listen to their concerns. Quite obviously, these conversations steer towards their lives at SFU and their issues, not only in the classroom, but also the cost of tuition, university policies and other costs related with attending university. In addition to these costs of tui-

tion, textbooks and student union dues, many British Columbian secondary students also have to pay third-party fees to such organizations as the Canadian Federation of Students, CFS for short, and the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations.

I want to make it clear that I'm not here to criticize these organizations or associations. That is not what I wish to talk about. My goal is to discuss the importance of presenting students with the choice of where their money goes. I believe that to charge third-party fees to students who are already struggling to get through university should all be put to a vote each year, possibly at the time of registration, because it's hard.

We talk about our provincial politics when we say: "Why don't more people vote?" We're in the 50- to 60-percent range provincially, and we're in the 70- to 80-percent range federally. Municipally, where you have the most say, we can be anywhere from 15 to 30 percent. At universities, on average, less than 10 percent of the students vote for their association at that school.

[1045]

To be really frank about it, it's a real investment to attend university or college. As a parent I'm fully aware of these costs. I have a daughter who next year will be entering her fourth year at the University of Victoria and a daughter who will be graduating this June from BCIT. I'm aware of the costs and how students struggle to make ends meet. I know that both of my daughters work part-time while they go to school. They've worked full-time through the summer and will have very little dollars that they'll owe at the end of their education, because they've worked hard at school on their grades, at a part-time job and in the summer earning money.

As we know, the actual cost of attending university isn't necessarily the tuition fees. When the tuition fees were frozen and so low, it was costing students an extra year or year and a half to stay in university. This is where the costs added up — paying an extra year and a half of rent, clothing allowance and food.

When it comes to actually paying for the university student union invoices, many students feel that these third-party costs are embedded in their invoice from the student union. These costs are not an option, and they're forced to pay them.

Investment in education by our government has reduced how much a student spends on going to school, but the student unions and the individual colleges and universities have not reduced any of the costs for students joining their association. The fact is that these fees have no direct relationship to the institution that the students attend. With money being tight and at a premium, some students might feel better if their money were spent elsewhere. Anyone in this House would agree with allowing students the choice of whether or not they should have to pay these third-party fees.

There are several reasons why a student might decide it's not worth contributing to a third-party group. First, each post-secondary institution most likely has its

own student union or association set up to represent students' interests; therefore, there is little support for one that is not based on campus. Second, a student might feel that there is not any value in the services a third-party group offers, but they have no choice in that. Third, some of the organizations are not directly accountable to the students they represent. For instance, there might be no voice in how the organization is made up or who is elected or selected to serve on behalf of the students. It's a bit like taxation without representation.

Just to digress a bit, we've seen that happen in the lower mainland when TransLink was electing people but the people of that area had no say in how their dollars were being spent. As a great example: the parking tax.

Outside of university and colleges, if someone has dues, such as union dues, taken off their paycheque, this person has a right to choose how it is spent through the election of shop stewards or other officials who are then held accountable as to how they represent. I cannot imagine too many employees belonging to a union being happy if their representative is appointed top-down without a say of who the person is. If this happened, I doubt this group of employees would volunteer or want to belong to that union for any length of time.

A fourth reason, and one that is often brought to my attention, is the nature of the organizations and who they purport to represent. There is no question that some third-party groups are political in nature and advocate for governments, both provincial and federal, to make policy positions based on the organization's recommendations. By making these proclamations, they often state that they represent all students.

Perhaps some students do not support the views of a particular third-party organization and feel this group does not actually represent them. A student might hold the conviction that they enrolled in a post-secondary institution to be taught and to learn, not to become entwined in a political discourse. In these cases of conscientious objections, can you blame a student if they feel their hard-earned money is not being spent wisely and they wish not to fund an organization they philosophically cannot support?

One solution to this problem would be a section on registration forms that could clearly indicate if a student wishes to contribute towards any third-party organization or political project from within.

[1050]

**N. Macdonald:** I was asked today to respond to the statement by the member and third-party fees. I'm afraid I just find it really difficult to find any passion to respond to what has been said. I recognize that it's probably an issue in his area. I was given an opportunity to talk about education, and I was ready for a range of things that would be of interest and importance. What I'm going to do is talk about things that I have a passion for, and I will concede third-party fees. If the member thinks they're important, he will have a chance to elaborate on that.

What I'll talk about is.... Well, with five minutes, I can easily put forward my ideas on what makes an education system work. The language of choice is often used, but, you know, choice has always been there in the education system. We do have a magnificent education system; we always have. It goes back to a system that we've put in place over time, and when treated with respect, it gives us tremendous results.

The key to education — I'll just be a bit philosophical about it — is pretty simple. Governments probably have less control over it than they think. The important part to education, as I see it.... I will just give you a bit of my background. I've been a teaching assistant. I've taught here in B.C. for a long time in the public system. I've taught in Africa in local schools. I have been a principal in the public system here. I've taught at international schools.

No matter which school I've been at, the important thing is this: you take the people that are in contact with students, you make sure that you choose good people, you make sure that they're trained, you make sure that you treat them properly, you make sure that they continue to learn and you give them the resources to do their job. As a government, that is all, really, that you can do. If you do that properly, you will have an education system that will give you a wide variety of choices and give you excellent education.

The point that I would like to remind this government of, because I think it's something they have control over and they can work with, is this. We often talk back to 2002, when we would characterize there being an underfunding of the system. The reality is that there are three parts to funding.

The first relates to the number of students, and that has gone down in the province. The second relates to the amount that you are spending per student, and that has gone up. Both of those things are highlighted by the government, but the third part has to do with the cost of education.

That cost of education, and it relates to a number of factors, has gone up far more than you would compensate with the amount that you're paying per student. So you had less money, and the realities that you created were these. You have students being presented with choices that most would agree are not acceptable. You have students being asked to choose between taking history 12 by correspondence or not at all. You have students being asked to take other humanities courses, especially in rural areas, by correspondence or not at all. That was a choice that my daughter was given. You have talk about on-line linkups to present calculus. That might be a reasonable way to do it, but you saw a far better way in the '80s and '90s, which was to have enough resources so that you could have small classes in rural areas to have a teacher teach, face to face, students in small classes.

I will be bringing to the attention of the House specific examples of schools in rural settings that are under a hundred students. The example I will use will be Canal Flats, where you have three-way splits, no librarians, no music programs, a lack of special educa-

tion — all of these because the funding is simply not there, either through the type of funding formula this government has put in place or the total overall amount of funding to make sure that you have a quality of education in rural settings. I also would encourage the government to get to work and fix the problem that was identified in the teachers' job action, which is primarily around class composition and class size. These are real issues that need to be dealt with.

As I turn this back over to the member, I know he is going to go back to third-party fees. I thank him for the opportunity to speak for few moments on something I feel passionately about.

[1055]

**H. Bloy:** I would like to thank the member for Columbia River–Revelstoke for his comments. It kind of surprised me that he does support the elimination of third-party fees at universities. I have to take it that he didn't want to talk about it, that he feels the fees the student unions charge should be reduced and should only be directed directly to the student cost. But for the member to go on.... I know he's a member of the New Democratic Party. That means he's automatically a mouthpiece for the British Columbia Teachers Federation, and now he's here.

We're working on class size and classroom composition, but you have a member who wants to bring that up. Since 2005 we've hired 1,200 new teachers in the province. We have the highest student fee ever in the history of British Columbia of over \$7,000 per student, yet he continues to go to the lowest common denominator at any point.

**Deputy Speaker:** Member, can you confine your statements to the private member issue that's on the table, rather than referring to another member.

**H. Bloy:** I am referring to the issue that's on the table and to the person that spoke, Madam Speaker.

The person that spoke, spoke about the British Columbia Teachers Federation and where they were going. Is he here to debate the union contract? I think that has been debated handily. I believe we've settled 51 union contracts for four years, and I believe this is just an unbelievable accomplishment for any government in British Columbia.

I want to get back to what I brought up and thought was a worthwhile discussion, which the NDP did not want to discuss, and that was third-party fees. Should they be allowed a place in our province's campuses? There's no reason to believe they have support from thousands of students in British Columbia. The question is: should all students be forced to fund these organizations?

Regardless of the debate that these third-party organizations serve students well, I'm not sure if that's a debate for us here, but it's a debate for us to bring back to our students. The choice must be the decision of the students and their decisions alone. That's why I hope everyone here today thinks about this issue and sup-

ports the case that students should have the choice of whether or not to join and contribute to third-party post-secondary organizations.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity today.

## ORGAN DONATIONS

**K. Conroy:** This week, April 23 to April 30, marks National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Week. In B.C. organ donation and transplantation is managed by the B.C. Transplant Society. This organization, which was established in 1986, directs, delivers or contracts for all organ transplant services across B.C.

The BCTS contracts for in-patient and out-patient transplant services from three transplant hospitals and operates seven regional clinics throughout B.C. for out-patient care. The society believes that the health-restoring benefits of organ transplant services should be available to those individuals who meet the suitability and eligibility criteria for transplantation in B.C.

They are international leaders in organ donation, transplantation and research, which ensures that their patients and families have an improved quality of life. I would be remiss to say that the Transplant Society not only has this as a vision and a philosophy but carries it out in the exemplary service and support they provide to transplant patients and their families in this province.

Our family, as you are all well aware, has been a very happy benefactor. Not only does my husband Ed have an improved quality of life, he has a life. Unfortunately, the same can't be said for other patients and their families who are waiting on a wait-list for an organ donation. Today there is a chronic shortage of hearts, lungs, kidneys and livers for transplant in B.C. as the need far outweighs the number of organs available for transplantation.

There are more than 400 people awaiting organ transplants, and hundreds more are awaiting corneal transplants. Many of those waiting for a solid organ transplant die on the waiting list. Demand for transplants is increasing, while the number of organ donors remains unchanged.

Survival rates of transplant patients continue to improve, providing recipients with extended and high quality of life. Over the weekend we heard of transplant recipients who were running in the Sun Run in Vancouver — one a liver transplant and the other a double lung — and both were able to run the ten kilometres in honour of their donor and the donor families.

[1100]

Transplants are cost-effective. For those with kidney disease, the average cost of dialysis treatment is \$50,000 a year. By comparison, the one-time cost of a kidney transplant in B.C. is approximately \$20,000, with an additional yearly cost of about \$6,000 for anti-rejection medications.

Since January 1986, when the B.C. Transplant Society was established, more than 3,000 organ transplant procedures have been performed in B.C. The first living organ transplant in B.C. was performed in 1976

when a mother donated a kidney to her daughter. Since then, hundreds of living transplants have occurred. Between '98 and 2000 the number of living kidney transplants each year has nearly doubled — from 43 in '98 to 81 in 2000, which reflects more than half the total number of kidney transplants in a year.

In early 2001 the B.C. Transplant Society established a living liver program, and the first of these transplants was performed in March 2001. Usually, organs for liver transplant are obtained from cadaver donors after they or their families have given permission. Unfortunately, there are not enough cadaver donor organs available for today's growing list of people waiting for a liver transplant. Many patients waiting for liver transplants become too sick to undergo transplant surgery, and some even die while on the list.

If a patient can receive a portion of a liver from a relative or friend, he or she need not wait for a cadaver organ. Thus, live donor liver transplantation can be an important alternative for many patients. In a live donor liver transplantation, a portion of the liver is surgically removed from a live donor and transplanted into a recipient immediately after the recipient's liver has been entirely removed.

Live donor liver transplantation is possible because the liver, unlike many other organs in the body, has the ability to regenerate or grow. Both sections of the liver regenerate within a period of four to eight weeks after surgery. This type of surgery first began more than a decade ago, using the left lobe of the liver in adult donors for children who needed transplants. Surgeons then progressed to splitting a single cadaver liver for transplantation into two recipients.

Today many centres are offering adult-to-adult live donor liver transplants. Since the creation of the B.C. Transplant Society 20 years ago, the number of organ transplants performed annually has increased by more than 400 percent. However, on the average in B.C., there are 25,000 deaths a year, and less than 1 percent will result in an organ donor donation.

The question is: how do folks become donors and ensure their wishes are known? In B.C. since 1998, when the organ donor registry was formed, it is a very simple procedure. One only needs to fill out a registration form available in numerous places or go on line to the B.C. Transplant Society. If you're not sure if you're registered, you can go to a website and type in your personal health number. Not only will it tell you if you are registered, it'll tell you when you did.

It is no longer good enough to have a sticker on your driver's licence. You still need to register. One might also ask: without a decal on my driver's licence or CareCard, how does anyone know about my decision concerning organ donation? By filling out and submitting your organ donor registry form, you are entered into a computerized registry via your personal health number. If in the future you have an accident, the medical staff know that you are on the system.

This is considered a form of living will, which lets an individual indicate their own decision about organ donation. Approximately one of every three organs

that can be available for transplant is lost because the wishes of the loved one are not known to the family, so it is very important to have a discussion with your family when you register. Please discuss it, because surprises for families at a traumatic and tragic time are not a good thing for anyone, and you as an individual will have your wishes respected.

One can imagine how difficult it is for the hospital staff and organ procurement team when they ask for organ or tissue donation at such a time of tragedy and loss, but when one thinks of how an organ transplant can offer life or a better quality of life to another person, it gives the donor family the opportunity to help others at this very difficult time in their lives.

Rarely do donor families and the recipients know of each other. The Transplant Society does send a letter to the donor's family, telling what organs and tissues were used. Almost every year the society has a very moving ceremony where they acknowledge donor families. It was at one of these ceremonies where my husband's donor family introduced themselves to him.

It was purely through chance, and the unique circumstances surrounding his situation and mutual acquaintances, that this happened. It was also a moving and profound experience for all involved. Every year on the anniversary of his last transplant, I offer a quiet thanks to a family that lost a son but had the courage to give our family and a number of other families so very much — something that on this 20th anniversary we all need to remember.

[1105]

**D. Hayer:** This statement on organ donation is something that is very dear and very near to my own heart, as it is to the member for West Kootenay-Boundary. If it had not been for the donation of bone marrow from my daughter Sonia, my eldest son Alexander would not be alive today. I'm sure many members in this House today remember the member's husband, Ed Conroy, who sat as an MLA in this House before 2001 and who required a donated organ to maintain his life and his health.

Bone marrow transplant and organ donations allow countless people throughout the world to live long, active and healthy lives, when otherwise their contribution to society would be lost forever. It is always tragic to hear of some poor child who faces imminent death because of failure of one or more of their organs. Just replacement of that defective tissue can change the whole world for the child's family. We often hear of people later in life who, for various reasons, suffer from kidney failure or other debilitating and eventually fatal diseases. A new organ can give them a new lease on life and allow them to continue normal lives where they would otherwise be lost.

My colleague from Kelowna-Mission has been very active in supporting bone marrow transplants, and I have joined her in her effort to encourage people, particularly those of South Asian background, to register as donors. I also encourage everyone, regardless of their race or ethnicity, to offer bone marrow donations



along with registering as an organ donor. It is a gift of life that can be a living legacy when tragedy strikes somebody, or it can be a living transplant such as a kidney, because you can survive with one, or a liver, because you only need to give part of it and it grows back again. Through advancement in medical technology, it is possible to donate not only kidneys but hearts, lungs and livers, along with a host of other living life-giving organs.

British Columbia has an excellent organ donation registry, so should an accident happen and death occur, emergency personnel can immediately investigate to determine if the deceased had made a gift of life. That will allow them to take the necessary steps to preserve and prepare those organs for transplant. I was surprised and encouraged that the British Columbia Transplant Society has more than 500,000 people registered to donate organs in this province. That is remarkable and outstanding, and it speaks volumes about how much people in British Columbia care about helping others.

At the same time, I also encourage other British Columbians who have not registered yet to register. I am certain that one of the most welcome and, at the same time, tragic calls to a person or family is that a donor of the necessary organ has been found. The good news is that the recipient may have a new lease on life. The tragedy is that someone had to lose their life to give new life to others, unless it's a living transplant such as a kidney or liver.

Another benefit of being a potential organ donor is that often you can help to save the lives of many people. I believe this is a wonderful and truly selfless act that any person can undertake. It offers hope and faith to those awaiting life-giving surgery. From my own perspective as a potential organ donor, I know it provides a great deal of satisfaction to know that after you're gone, you are still helping others to survive.

I very much support this statement. I encourage everyone to register as an organ donor or bone marrow transplant donor or even become a regular blood donor — or consider registering as a living transplant, such as a kidney or liver.... This is a cherished gift of life that will have an enormous impact on the life of the person whose life you are saving. Becoming a registered organ donor is a legacy we all should leave behind.

**K. Conroy:** I want to thank the member for Surrey-Tynehead for his words. I think this is something that we can all agree on, on both sides of the House, with this issue.

I also want to turn to the Human Tissue Gift Act. This act was brought into the House in 1998. At the time, the legislation was designed to increase organ donations and transplant procedures in B.C. and was one of the first of its kind in Canada. Amendments to the Human Tissue Act were to allow the government to draft clear protocols for hospitals and health professionals to ensure that opportunities to receive organ donations were not missed.

Regulations under the new legislation were to enable health professionals and hospitals to notify the

B.C. Transplant Society of the death or imminent death of an individual, to allow the society to determine if that individual had previously registered their wishes by signing up on the organ donor registry. Amendments were also to lead to the establishment of clear protocols for health professionals, outlining the process for seeking consent from suitable organ donors' next of kin if the potential donor had not registered with the province's organ donation registry.

[1110]

This process is working in the province. However, we do face another predicament, which is a good one, although not for people waiting for a transplant. We are a safer society. There are fewer accidents that lead to donors. The reality in this province is that there are fewer donors, because fewer people are dying in circumstances that lead to organ donation.

The statistics show that the number of in-hospital deaths of people aged zero to 69 from motor vehicle accidents and cerebral cardiovascular diseases like strokes — the most common causes of death for potential organ donors — has decreased steadily in the province over the past few years. This is due to a number of positive factors — improved safety measures such as air bags and helmet laws, as well as continued advancements in medical care.

In 1990 the number of these in-hospital deaths totalled 635, compared to only 325 in 2004 — half of the number in 1990. This trend is good news for most of us, but for those waiting for a life-saving organ transplant, it means fewer organs and longer waits.

A review of preliminary mortality data for 2005 suggests that this decline is continuing. The downward trend in the number of donors for transplants makes it even more imperative that British Columbians take action by registering their decision on B.C.'s organ donor registry. Based on a public opinion survey, 85 percent of British Columbians said they support organ donation and intend to register their decision, but just over 13 percent have done so.

April 23 to 30 is National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Week. What are people waiting for? All ages can register. There is no denying of anyone, regardless of their age. You can register today with your organ donation to ensure that your decision is recorded. To register or for more information, you simply need to get on the Transplant Society website at [www.transplant.bc.ca](http://www.transplant.bc.ca) or call their 1-800 number. We all need to do this.

**Deputy Speaker:** Members, I'd just like to mention that private members' statements are intended to be non-confrontational and non-partisan. I think both sides of the House slipped over that a bit this morning.

Hon. members, unanimous consent....

Interjections.

**V. Roddick:** I ask leave to make an introduction.

Leave granted.

### Introductions by Members

**V. Roddick:** In the gallery today — under the guidance of teacher John Powell, a strong advocate of parliamentary democracy — are 40 students in civics 11. They are accompanied by Todd Allan and the principal of Delta Senior Secondary School — or Ladner high, as we affectionately call it — Ray Holme, whose son, Matt Holme, is in research here in the Legislature. Would the House please give them a very enthusiastic welcome.

**Hon. C. Richmond:** I call continued debate on Motion 36 on the order paper.

**Deputy Speaker:** Hon. members, unanimous support of the House is required to proceed with Motion 36 without disturbing the priorities of the motions preceding on the order paper.

Leave granted.

[1115]

### Motions on Notice

#### GATEWAY TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

*(continued)*

**H. Bloy:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to talk today in support of the Gateway project in the lower mainland of British Columbia. I do mention the gateway in the lower mainland of British Columbia, but it's really the gateway for all of British Columbia. It's a gateway to move goods and services from the ports along the Pacific Ocean to all citizens of British Columbia and to the rest of Canada and, in fact, North America. The Gateway talks about the lower mainland but really the whole Gateway and transportation program in this great province includes Kicking Horse Pass, which is bringing goods and services and people from the rest of Canada.

I want to talk specifically about Burnaby and Coquitlam and the great benefits that it offers just in the area where I live. Did you know that 35 percent of all traffic that comes onto the freeway at 152nd Avenue in Surrey actually leaves at the Cape Horn interchange, which is the first interchange right on the other side of the bridge? This transportation system through the lower mainland will leave no more traffic than what's already going to Vancouver. It will help to disperse it.

Where we have these areas we're going to improve the interchanges, possibly, in many cases by having two lanes exit or coming onto the freeway so we can move it. We're going to develop collector lanes in the lower mainland so that the traffic going straight through isn't impeded by other traffic that's just merging onto the freeway. There will be more controlled merges all the way along.

In Burnaby there will be a new overpass, the Wayburn interchange, which will help the local citizens to go north and south in Burnaby without interfering

with the traffic from the freeway, which will continue at Willingdon Avenue. At Willingdon Avenue, traffic from the freeway will be able to disperse with that within the community. This new Wayburn intersection will allow the free flow of traffic and buses to move the local citizens within the area.

There's going to be a barrier separation all the way along the freeway through Burnaby and Coquitlam, which will separate the traffic from merging into the faster lanes of the freeway. We're going to have a special lane for buses and commercial vehicles. These commercial vehicles will be able to move through the lower mainland to get to all the citizens of British Columbia. By moving the commercial traffic that much faster, as a leading port, we can continue to be able to create jobs in British Columbia by the movement of goods and services through the lower mainland.

As we move along the freeway, there will be parts of the freeway in Coquitlam that will actually be lowered. One is at King Edward Street at United Boulevard where the big-box stores are in Coquitlam. At this location, because of a train and an old bridge, the traffic is reduced to two lanes, which are continually backed up. We'll be lowering the lower mainland and putting a bridge over the freeway and over the railway tracks — again, so we can continue to move people and services in British Columbia.

It's not only traffic. We talk about many things about moving traffic in the lower mainland. I've just specifically spoken about the freeway that goes through the ridings and the cities of Burnaby and Coquitlam, but there's going to be a south route that is going to move commercial vehicles that may have the possibility of tolling. There's going to be a north route that will come through my riding and other related ridings where we're improving all the intersections so the traffic will be able to flow that much faster. These changes are going to continue.

We're going to have tolling on the Port Mann Bridge. I know that some people are opposed to tolling, but tolling is one of the control factors to keep it going. The proposed tolling is \$2.50 each way. That's \$5 a day for the majority of commuters, but they're saving in excess of an hour to an hour and a half a day. Is that \$20, that hour they're saving, or \$100? It's not only the money factor; it's the quality time they get to spend with their family. They have more time at home, more time within the community. It's less pollution that they put out into our air when the traffic is moving and not sitting and idling.

[1120]

On top of all of these great things that are going on in the Gateway project and with government — what they would like to see — we also have the largest single dollar investment in cycling improvements ever. I don't believe there have been this many dollars invested anywhere in North America on the improvement of cycling. Personally, I'm afraid to cycle in the city. That's on a bicycle — okay? Some other members may ride bigger bikes. I'll stick to the bicycle.

They are putting \$50 million into these routes. What it is, is to join up with the existing cities. It's to help them get around the interchanges. There is a large group of people who ride their bikes to work every day. But the bikes have to fit in with the cars. It has to be an easy fit. It has to work so it's safe for everybody and it's not nerve-racking on the drivers wondering where all these bicycles are coming from. The bicycles don't want to see cars so close to them that they are afraid they are going to be hit.

On that, I would like to thank Madam Speaker for allowing me the opportunity to stand up here and support this motion. Thank you very kindly.

**C. Puchmayr:** It's an honour to rise here in this House and debate the Gateway plan. This plan, of course, is not without some controversy, as we have seen. It's a plan that has some long-term effects on the lower mainland. It's a plan that can have some positive effects, and it's also a plan that can have some very serious and negative effects.

To implement it without addressing all of the concerns that are being raised on this side would be very short term, and we would only be able to look back and see that we had a glaring missed opportunity to do this right. We've seen the science all over the world. We've seen the experts, we've listened to the experts, and we've read what the experts have told us. You can't build your way out of congestion. You can do so temporarily, and then the congestion returns. We need to have a plan that has some sustainable environmental choices and options and has some transportation choices, as well, that will mitigate the impacts of growing population out in that area.

The Gateway project. There are some incredible risks to the Gateway project as being planned today. Some of the risks are with the agricultural land reserve. Of course, we've seen the pressures, and we're seeing now through the courts and through the allegations of influence that are being made on taking land out of agricultural land reserve. That certainly has some concerns with people in my community and throughout the province.

The farmland is certainly at risk when you make it easier for single-occupancy vehicles to travel out in the other areas, out into the farmlands or where the farmlands currently exist. Greenspace is at risk — incredibly at risk. Waterfowl habitat is at risk. Neighbourhoods are at risk, and air quality is at risk.

This plan, if implemented correctly, can have some long-term benefits. Goods movement — there isn't anyone in this House who doesn't agree that there needs to be a way of addressing the goods movement. Certainly, our economic trade is something that we value and that is necessary in this province and in this region, so goods movement is something that this plan has to address and can address without taking the entire plan in the way that it's being forced on to us.

Alternative transportation is a must. If we look at just merely what happens in the lower mainland airshed.... We have a very unique airshed. You can go to Toronto, and you can go to almost any province in

Canada, and it's very difficult to find this type of an airshed that is basically mountains on the north, mountains on the east and a border on the south. You have the Cascadia airshed, and all the pollutants from the northwestern United States come up into our airshed as well.

[1125]

Especially the members who live out in the Fraser Valley and the members who live beyond the Fraser Valley and even as far up as Hope recall that very often when there are air inversions, the people who are affected the greatest by pollutants from motor vehicles are the people who live out in the Fraser Valley. They are the people in Abbotsford and Aldergrove and Chilliwack — even in Hope. Some of the most dangerous air quality readings that have ever been given by the GVRD have been as far as Hope, where there have been warnings that anyone with mild respiratory issues needs to stay indoors because of the air inversions and the pollutants that are stuck in that airshed during times of poor air quality.

If we're saying we're going to create a transportation network that is going to facilitate growth of more vehicles onto the grid, we have to be extremely concerned about the air quality of the very people that we think we're trying to address with this. That's why we need to have alternatives to the vehicle and we need to look at transportation as a part of this entire project.

I'll just give you a statistic. An average car that puts on 20,000 kilometres a year emits 4.8 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere — 4.8 tonnes a year of CO<sub>2</sub>. In order to mitigate that, you would have to plant 200 trees per car. That has to be taken into consideration when we're looking at what effects this project will have on the air quality and on the lives that we live.

Obviously, the short-term effects can be very catastrophic. Some people may say that because we.... People that live on the north side of the Fraser River may have greater effects, and we've heard the accusations of NIMBYism. That isn't the case. In my community, New Westminster, we have over 300,000 cars a day travelling through, and only 18,000 of those trips are generated from New Westminster. So we're already taking the brunt of the vehicles.

We have also accepted the north-south-east infrastructure program, which is an overpass and a highway to the borders for goods movement. The North Fraser perimeter road is now a gridlock of trucks, bumper to bumper, that are going through Front Street in New Westminster, through some of our most historic areas. It has now become a truck route with extremely poor air qualities underneath the parkade. We are looking at ways of addressing the goods movement issue, but we're also looking at ways of creating a quality of life that benefits all.

When we look at this.... We listened to both sides talk about the pros and cons of it, but we're not seeing an active and open debate in the communities. We're seeing.... My term is a horse-and-pony show of staff going out to the different communities and putting up some pretty little coloured boards and talking, basically, about the impacts of that project in that community, as opposed to the overall impacts in the region.

We've been promised reports on the medical and health impacts of this project. We have yet to see that. I'm concerned that the reports will show that this will have catastrophic effects on the health of people, especially out in the Fraser Valley and beyond.

The type of dialogue that needs to happen here is.... You need to have an open and complete public process that brings the economists to the table, brings the scientists to the table, brings the GVRD to the table and brings the community to the table so that we can share the ideas and listen to each other's vision of what a properly constructed Gateway project should have and what the long-term benefits are.

The plan that we're using to say that this is the wrong way to go is a plan that was driven through the GVRD livable region strategic plan, which was a plan that won an award in Dubai in 2002. It's a plan that the United Nations awarded the GVRD \$30,000.... It won first place for community planning and regional planning, so you know, we're not just pulling things out of the atmosphere here. These are people that are scientists, that travel the world, that have looked at examples and have seen the mistakes that other countries have made. They are telling us that the livable region strategic plan is something you need to address. It's something that is workable.

[1130]

In order to get to the completion of this project — to do a project that works for everyone — we need to have complete, open dialogue so that everything is on the table, so that all the stakeholders are together and so that we have a plan that is sustainable for the long term and not just the short term.

**V. Roddick:** I rise in support of Motion 36. Our province has produced a comprehensive transportation plan to help us meet our growing economy, trade and population. The status quo is definitely not an option. Most of our major transportation infrastructure in the lower mainland was built when I was in my late teens and early 20s. That's virtually the Dark Ages. No wonder we're facing gridlock.

How do we accomplish the transportation goals and still maintain our livable communities? The Gateway program has been consulting with municipalities, TransLink and GVRD staff for over two years. What must come out of these meetings are solutions that take into consideration the feelings of the average citizen. The vast investment that we will be making is mostly funded by Canadian taxpayers.

They need not only to be listened to but to be heard, so that this project fits with the priorities in TransLink's strategic transportation plan, the GVRD livable region strategic plan, the GVRD sustainable region initiative, the Vancouver city transportation plan and the Vancouver climate change plan. Remember: Vancouver chose not to be a Seattle, with freeways slicing it up, but the rest of the lower mainland should not suffer for that planning choice.

In Delta South the Gateway program is faced with two unique challenges. Covering up Delta's superb

farmland yet again for the movement of goods, services and people — we must not lose sight of the fact that we need these critical tracts of land to produce our wonderful, sustainable, safe, local, fresh food. We still have to eat to live. What we also need is that important land mass to maintain and sustain the most critical ingredient: the farmer. Our second issue and challenge is Burns Bogs, the lungs of the lower mainland.

We are facing continued erosion in safety, sustainability and quality of life if we do not improve our transportation system. Let's continue working together for a better, brighter future for all our communities and our families.

**B. Ralston:** I know the member for Delta South just referred to the age of infrastructure in the lower mainland and how this plan or series of projects may tackle some of those problems. The particular part of the plan that I want to focus on is the one which I share with the member for New Westminster. It's the Pattullo Bridge.

The Pattullo Bridge is 69 years of age. It's one of the oldest bridges in the region, I think, and it's the subject of much debate within the riding which I represent and within Surrey generally. Some of that debate has been occasioned by the safety problems that the outdated and outmoded construction of that bridge poses to people who travel across the bridge. In particular, there was a sentencing of a person who caused the death of John Heida, who was travelling across the bridge on October 22, 2004, and died in a head-on crash.

The occasion of the sentencing of the person, Felicia Mitchell, who caused that death was the subject of local debate within Surrey and some editorial comment by the local newspapers. Indeed, John Heida's brother, Dick Heida, told the judge in court he couldn't understand why the safety problems on the bridge had not been addressed by the authorities. He said: "If they had acted quickly, my brother and many others would still be alive."

[1135]

By one estimate, at least 20 people have died on that bridge since 1990. It's recognized as being a very unsafe structure. Indeed, in the evening hours, to reduce the safety hazards on the bridge, the bridge traffic is confined to two lanes. A series of traffic cones is mounted on the bridge regularly each evening and taken off in the morning in order to moderate the speed of the traffic that travels across the bridge.

Now, the Pattullo Bridge as a particular part of the transportation infrastructure in the lower mainland is somewhat addressed in this plan. Technically speaking, the Pattullo Bridge now falls under the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority, or TransLink. It's their jurisdiction. It was given to them in 1999, and they have responsibility for the bridge.

But in the plan, the Gateway plan, the Pattullo Bridge is considered as a toll-free alternative. Were the province to proceed with twinning the Port Mann Bridge and instituting tolls, the Pattullo Bridge would be considered as the toll-free alternative. That's consis-

tent with the plan that there needs to be — at least, policy as it presently sits — a toll-free alternative to a tolled passage within the lower mainland.

The proposal in the plan is that the Pattullo Bridge, as crowded and as congested and as unsafe as it is, would take the burden of those people who chose not to pay the toll. If one looks at the geography of it, there are many people in North Surrey and North Delta who are closer to the Pattullo Bridge and use it on a daily basis and would probably continue to use it. Indeed, it would attract others who would want to avoid the toll, given some of the projections of the toll that's set. One can well imagine, given relative incomes throughout the region, that there will be many people who will want to avoid the toll.

The Pattullo Bridge, in the plan, poses.... It's set up to be a magnet for those who choose to avoid the toll. Now, is this sound policy? I would submit that it's not.

Indeed, in the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority document from Glen Leicester, who's the vice-president of planning, dated April 10, 2006, he suggests that it's not. What the proposal from TransLink.... The TransLink board of directors have not yet considered this report. They haven't taken a position on it as of yet, but the report expresses that very concern. They express that this proposal of a toll-free alternative on the Pattullo may, obviously, skew preferences and that it will result in increased hazards upon the Pattullo Bridge.

The hazards on the Pattullo Bridge are such that the Minister of Transportation, notwithstanding the government's policy on photo radar, has now come out in favour of supporting photo radar on the Pattullo Bridge, mounted somewhere on the structure. The city council of Surrey has also suggested that this, as well, would be an interim measure to deal with the problem that the Pattullo Bridge poses.

The Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority expresses deep concern about this particular alternative and suggests that it's sufficiently concerned that there should be a dialogue on the future of the bridge and that no action on the Port Mann Bridge widening be undertaken until a longer-term strategy has been agreed upon for the Pattullo Bridge. So they, in this report — and the TransLink board has not yet taken a position.... They see a linkage between improvements on the Pattullo Bridge — or, indeed, a replacement — as part of the plan or series of projects that's really not addressed by the Gateway project.

[1140]

Given what is said here, there are some opportunities to think about a long-term replacement for the Pattullo Bridge. There is a series of short-term measures such as the photo radar and the other safety measures on the bridge, but as the Heida family knows, the real long-term solution for safety on that bridge is its replacement.

Indeed, that's what the local newspaper has said. The *Surrey Leader*, in an editorial, has said: "The real long-term solution for the bridge, of course, is its full replacement." This particular problem which is a huge

problem in North Surrey and felt very keenly by residents of North Surrey, is simply not addressed in the plan. There's no funding for it. It's regarded as simply a regional responsibility, and it's not addressed other than to say, in a somewhat unthoughtful way, that it be considered as the free alternative.

There are some other opportunities there. Just upstream slightly, for those familiar with the site, there's a rail bridge. That rail bridge is over 100 years old, and there's a real need to replace that rail bridge. As an alternative, one might look for some synergies in terms of truck traffic moving across a new rail bridge connecting the North Fraser perimeter road and the South Fraser perimeter road at that particular location, taking truck traffic off the Pattullo Bridge, again, to deal with the safety issue and move forward in that way.

This particular issue, the Pattullo Bridge, is very strongly felt in my riding. I would be very concerned if the plan were not to address that. At present it simply doesn't, and people have expressed that concern repeatedly to me. With that, I'll conclude.

**R. Chouhan:** This whole issue of Gateway project, needless to say, is very controversial and has pros and cons. That's what we are discussing and debating here today. Unfortunately, there has been no public debate on the whole project. What we have seen over the last few months is some display show with beautiful pictures in New Westminster and Burnaby, but other than that, there has been no meaningful discussion and consultation with the public on this whole project.

Some parts of the Gateway project, as my colleagues have said, are okay, like the perimeter roads — the south perimeter road and North Fraser perimeter road. But for the rest, there's no business plan and no long-term plan. It seems like the government has decided just basically to have an arbitrary approach to this whole issue. The livable region strategic plan is being betrayed by the twinning of the Port Mann Bridge, which is part of this whole Gateway project.

I have asked many questions on this, as has the city of Burnaby, and I'll repeat: based on what evidence would twinning the Port Mann Bridge and widening the number one freeway solve the congestion problem? What evidence is there? So far we have seen none.

[Mr. Speaker in the chair.]

How does this project fit with the priorities in the TransLink strategic transportation plan, the GVRD livable region strategic plan, the GVRD sustainable region initiative, the Vancouver city transportation plan and the Vancouver climate change action plan? No answers so far. Will the additional traffic on an expanded freeway add to the air quality problems and greenhouse gas emissions? If air quality is reduced, have the resulting health costs been factored into the cost of the project?

[1145]

There are so many more questions. Is there an expectation of widened arterial streets in adjacent mu-

municipalities to access the expanded freeway? If so, are the costs of this widening included in the proposed budget? How does this project meet the commitment to sustainability in the Vancouver 2010 Games transportation plan? These are the questions we have asked again and again, but so far we have not received any answer.

The perimeter roads that are part of the Gateway project will help to move goods. That's what we want. The Port Mann Bridge will only move cars, not people and not goods. Light rail from the Fraser Valley into Vancouver is an option. That has not been considered.

The worst part of the whole project is the tolling of the bridge. If the bridge is tolled, people will be forced to go to the Pattullo Bridge, as my colleague has already talked about. That bridge is so unsafe. It's a death bridge. It has already killed enough people. How many more deaths do we need to see before we wake up to the reality?

Not only that, the member for Burquitlam had earlier talked about the benefits of this Gateway project to Burnaby. Let's talk about those benefits. The traffic will be so much increased on McBride street, on 10th Avenue, on Edmonds, on Sixth Street and on Canada Way. Those streets are already congested. By forcing people to use the toll-free alternative, which is the Pattullo Bridge, people will be coming through New Westminster and will be increasing that traffic more so than ever before.

The Gateway project does nothing to mitigate safety concerns and only worsens them. Twinning of the Port Mann Bridge is bad planning and is only a short-term, band-aid approach to governance. I'll ask the government to think about the long-term impact that it could have on the people who live in those municipalities, like New Westminster and Burnaby, and the kind of traffic increase that it will cause.

**H. Lali:** I'm rising to talk about the Gateway project that the government has announced. There are elements of this, obviously, that I'm in agreement with. I know that transportation needs of British Columbians have to be met, and I don't have any problem with that. Having been a former Minister of Transportation and Highways, I know a little bit about what's going on here.

I've got to tell you, hon. Speaker, that a number of the speakers on this side of the House have already talked about how there hasn't been any kind of public debate about this whole project that the government wants to put through. It begs the question: what kind of public consultation was really done? All of a sudden we see the Premier and a minister getting up and making an announcement for \$3 billion in terms of the Gateway project.

Then one also wonders: where does the environment really fit into this in terms of how this is going to be built, how there's going to be an improvement in terms of greenhouse gases and the emissions thereof, and how this is supposed to lower this?

Obviously, if you're looking at better, environmentally sound transportation, those are the kinds of things that actually help to improve the environment, especially in terms of the clean air and the water that we've got to drink and the land that we live on. We haven't

seen what kind of environmental safeguards the government wants to put in place to make sure that this is done in an environmentally sound fashion.

What we've got here is the government actually adding capacity. It's concentrated capacity in one part of the province. If you look at the \$3 billion for this Gateway project that's been announced.... You also have the George Massey Tunnel area, and I think that's about a \$1.7 billion tag in addition to \$3 billion for Gateway. Then you look at the Sea to Sky Highway, which is supposed to be a \$300 million project. Under the Liberals, it was to be \$600 million. Now we're looking at well over \$1 billion by the time it's going to be said and done. Then, to add on top of that, is the RAV Canada line. Again, that's pushing \$2 billion.

[1150]

Right here you have \$8.3 billion going into one small corner of the province. It is the responsibility of the government to look after the interests of all British Columbians. We don't see any fairness or balance here.

I've talked about capacity. This is adding, basically, more capacity. Putting more cars on the road — if you're looking at twinning the Port Mann Bridge — doesn't solve the problem, because a few years down the line there are going to be more people using the bridge, and you're going to be having congestion and lineups back up again — and again, cars polluting the air. I don't think this government has really thought this out very carefully in terms of making these kinds of announcements.

I talked about rural British Columbia. They talk about a gateway and having Vancouver as a gateway to the rest of the province and doing this Gateway project. The argument used is: "Well, half of the population lives in the GVRD, so we're going to be spending all these billions over there." The fact of the matter is that this government has put a gate at Hope, and if you happen to be living north and east of Hope, there's a gate, and it's closed. It's shut. There are no capital projects, or very few, going past the area past Hope into north and east British Columbia and also onto the Island. Where is the fairness? Where's the balance?

Our roads are falling apart in rural British Columbia, everywhere you go. The Coquihalla Highway. When I left office as Transportation Minister in 2001, there was a \$42 million program that was supposed to come into place to make sure that all three phases of the Coquihalla were going to get a two-inch overlay. Now the minister conveniently tells me, when I talked to him last year in estimates, he can't find the paper. There was no such plan.

All across B.C.... When you talk about the Hope-Princeton Highway, the last time there was any investment done was when the NDP was in office. You look at all of Highway 12, Highway 40, the Trans-Canada Highway, Highway 99, the Yellowhead Highway — all of these highways go across Yale-Lillooet and also other parts of the province there in the Thompson-Okanagan region. But we have seen no projects coming in there aside from the bridge in Kelowna that is well underway.

You see that all throughout British Columbia. Where's the fairness? Where are our billion-dollar programs for rural British Columbia? Why is this government discriminating against the residents of rural B.C.?

Everything is shovelled off the back of a pickup truck into the lower mainland, and here we are sitting in rural British Columbia, where we can't even get \$50,000 or \$60,000 or \$100,000 to do simple gravelling work or to do ditch-clearing or even bush-clearing on the Missezula Lake Road on the Merritt-Princeton road. It's about 30 kilometres, and all we need is a two- or three-year program — \$250,000. This government can't even find small pockets of a few thousand dollars here or a few thousand dollars there to look after rural roads in rural British Columbia, yet they are shovelling money off the back of a pickup truck in the lower mainland.

They're discriminating. They're deliberately discriminating against the residents of rural British Columbia, and that's not fair. We asked this government: "Where's the balance? Where are those passing lanes that need to be built in rural British Columbia? Why is the minister not funding those? Where are those bridges that need to be replaced all throughout rural British Columbia and on the upper half of the Island?"

This government is doing nothing — absolutely nothing — and the last time any kind of substantive moneys were put in there was when the NDP was in government — and yes, before, when the Socreds were in government. But this Liberal government has turned its back on rural British Columbia and the residents who live there.

With the pine beetle, logging truck traffic has increased almost fourfold and in some areas almost up tenfold. Those trucks, with all that tonnage of logs on the backs of the trucks, are eating away at our roads. There's rutting taking place. The structure of those roads is falling in places in rural British Columbia, and this government refuses to deal with those kinds of issues. We need investment. We need fair investment on the part of this government in rural British Columbia. Unfortunately, they are not doing it.

[1155]

I see some rural members of the opposition sitting here in this House. They should be ashamed for standing up here and not speaking up on behalf their constituents. Here we are on this side of the House. We're speaking up on behalf of their constituents, because we need for this government to show some balance and some fairness, but they refuse. They refuse to deal with those issues — those simple issues of crack-sealing in some places; hot-in-place remix; or, even in road surfacing, in the way of seal-coating; and some structural work that needs to be done on a lot of these roads that are falling apart under this government because this government refuses to put money into rural British Columbia.

They are putting billions and billions — \$8.3 billion in total so far and counting — in a small corner of this province. Yet when you look at the rest of the province, which is 80 percent of this province, it's outside of the area south of Hope. There's virtually nothing going in.

We're even having some problems in terms of any kind of extra moneys going into the regular maintenance so that the maintenance contractors can do their jobs properly. This government is starving even the maintenance contractors, because they can't get their job done. We want this government to start putting in some billion-dollar programs for rural British Columbia. That's the only way that they can show that they're fair.

I would love to speak a lot more, but I won't at this moment. I'm going to take my seat, and I want to thank this House for allowing me this opportunity to put the concerns of rural British Columbians on the table.

**Mr. Speaker:** Member for Vancouver-Burrard, and noting the hour.

**L. Mayencourt:** Mr. Speaker, noting the hour.

Well, first, what a bunch of drivel. What a bunch of garbage. What a bunch of cowardice. To not be able to vote on this today is a crime...

Interjections.

**Mr. Speaker:** Members.

**L. Mayencourt:** ...because those members don't want to stand up and say what they think about Gateway in terms of votes.

Do they want us to proceed with the Gateway project or not? Apparently, no, they do not want us to proceed with it. They want us to wait in traffic for years as we did under.... I remember the member for Yale-Lillooet was the Minister of Transportation, and what did they actually do in the years that he was minister? Nothing. Absolutely nothing. As a matter of fact, he didn't even finish the highway to his hometown. We had to do it. We had to do it.

I will reserve my place in this debate because I want to talk about the importance of the Gateway project and why we have only seen filibuster and cowardice from these members today.

**Some Hon. Members:** And noting the hour....

**L. Mayencourt:** And noting the hour, I move adjournment of debate.

L. Mayencourt moved adjournment of debate.

Motion approved.

Hon. C. Richmond moved adjournment of the House.

Motion approved.

**Mr. Speaker:** This House stands adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The House adjourned at 11:58 a.m.





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