

The Editors  
Ming Pao and Sing Tao

RE: Op-Ed on the B.C. presence in China, by Jenny Kwan Aug 7, 2006

It is heartening to see Ms. Jenny Kwan catch up to the provincial government in advocating for a stronger relationship between B.C. and the Asia Pacific. In fact, British Columbia's Asia Pacific Trade Council was established last year by the Premier Gordon Campbell to serve as an advisory group to help leverage the Province's unique gateway location and natural links with the region.

Premier Campbell recognized an opportunity to market B.C. as the North American Gateway to the Asia Pacific, and gathered a group of people who could suggest ways to implement his vision. The Council includes business, community and academic representatives whose goal is to recommend how to increase investment and trade.

We received a very thorough report from the China/Hong Kong Market Advisory Group in June this year. It contains over 60 recommendations, including an entire section on expanding linkages between B.C. and China/Hong Kong. The Province has already started recruiting for in-market representatives to work on the ground in Asia and they will be in place before the end of the year.

I agree with Ms. Kwan that advertising is one way to promote B.C. However, if she did some research on this issue before making her claims in your newspaper, she would know that British Columbia does not yet enjoy Approved Destination Status from the Chinese government; we are prohibited from advertising as a tourist destination.

It is reassuring that Ms. Kwan and her colleagues are beginning to understand the opportunities that exist between B.C. and the Asia Pacific. The Government of B.C. will certainly appreciate her support as we move forward with the new trade and business ventures underway.

Honourable Colin Hansen  
Minister of Economic Development  
and Minister responsible for the Asia-Pacific Initiative