

New Era REVIEW

Four Years of Action - New Era Promises Made And Kept

The government was sworn into office on June 5, 2001, with a four-year mandate to build a New Era of hope and prosperity for all British Columbians. It was a mandate for change and renewal, based on a platform of 201 specific commitments that the government promised to undertake.

Nearing the completion of its four-year term, the government has completed work or advanced significant progress on over 95 percent of its New Era commitments. This represents 194 priorities fulfilled or ongoing as the government works to revitalize the economy, restore sound fiscal management and put patients, students, and people first.

In some cases, the actions taken to date represent initial steps towards completion of commitments, or concrete actions towards goals that are ongoing. The government will continue to work on all of these initiatives. The following is a summary of progress made to date.

The "90 Day" Agenda:

<p>✓ Introduce a dramatic cut in personal income taxes, within 90 days.</p>	<p>Done. Income tax cuts averaging 25 per cent were fully implemented in January 2002. This included a 28 percent cut for those making \$30,000 or less. Following Budget 2005, the BC Tax Reduction personal income tax credit will further reduce or eliminate provincial income taxes for 730,000 British Columbians. Most individuals earning up to \$16,000 a year will pay no provincial income tax and those earning up to \$26,000 will pay lower personal income taxes.</p>
<p>✓ Pass real Balanced Budget legislation, to make balanced budgets mandatory by our third full budget and to hold all ministers individually accountable.</p>	<p>Done. Under the <i>Balanced Budget and Ministerial Accountability Act</i>, passed in August 2001, 20% of ministers' salaries is withheld pending compliance with ministry and government budget projections.</p>
<p>✓ Pass real Truth in budgeting legislation that ensures all provincial finances are fully, accurately and honestly reported under Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.</p>	<p>Done. The Budget Transparency and Accountability Amendment Act was passed in August 2001. British Columbia is the only province in Canada required by law to introduce balanced budgets prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting principles.</p>
<p>✓ Restore education as an essential service under the Labour Code to ensure that no child's right to an education is denied during school strikes and lockouts.</p>	<p>Done, under the <i>Skills Development and Labour Statutes Amendment Act</i>, passed in August 2001.</p>
<p>✓ Pass Merit Employment legislation, to restore a professional, non-partisan public service, appointed strictly on merit and not on patronage. Restore a professional, non-partisan public service, based on merit – not patronage.</p>	<p>Done. Legislation passed in August 2001 strengthens merit-based recruitment by establishing a Merit Commissioner – appointed by unanimous recommendation from a special legislative committee – to audit hirings and report directly to the legislature.</p>

<p>✓ Establish a “Waste Buster” Website for taxpayers to help identify, report and stamp out government waste.</p>	<p>Done. The Web site went online in August 2001.</p>
<p>✓ Restore workers’ democratic right to a secret ballot vote on certification under the Labour Code and ensure the same rules apply for certification as de-certification.</p>	<p>Done, under the <i>Skills Development and Labour Statutes Amendment Act</i>, passed in August 2001.</p>
<p>✓ Restore all workers’ right to negotiate contracts by outlawing sectoral bargaining.</p>	<p>Done, under the <i>Skills Development and Labour Statutes Amendment Act</i>, passed in August 2001.</p>
<p>✓ Restore open tendering on government contracts to allow fair competition for businesses and provide better value to taxpayers.</p>	<p>Done, in open cabinet, July 2001. The new Procurement Services Act was passed April 2003.</p>
<p>✓ Appoint an independent task force to review the options, models, costs and effectiveness of private sector pay equity legislation, and make recommendations to the Legislature.</p>	<p>Done. The task force reported to the legislature in February 2002.</p>
<p>✓ Eliminate the HCL union-only “hiring hall” requirement on highway construction projects and government-sponsored silviculture contracts.</p>	<p>Done, in open cabinet, July 2001.</p>
<p>✓ Eliminate government subsidies to businesses that give some companies an unfair advantage over their competitors.</p>	<p>Done. The Industrial Development Incentive Fund was reduced by \$100 million to prohibit any new loans; 22 other government subsidy programs were eliminated in January 2002.</p>
<p>✓ Pass a Community Charter to outlaw provincial government “offloading” of costs onto municipal governments, and to give local governments greater autonomy and better planning tools to reduce pressure on property taxes.</p>	<p>Done. <i>The Community Charter was brought into force on Jan. 1, 2004.</i></p>
<p>✓ Appoint an independent public inquiry into the fast ferry fiasco and the mismanagement of BC Ferries.</p>	<p>Done. The review was completed in December 2001, and a new structure for BC Ferries announced in November 2002.</p>
<p>✓ Ensure that Crown corporations are subject to local zoning and land-use by-laws.</p>	<p>Done. Crown corporations have been advised to honour the policy, and a cross-government working group has been established to formally implement it.</p>
<p>✓ Scrap photo radar, to put police officers back on the street, enforcing traffic safety.</p>	<p>Done. The photo radar program ended in June 2001.</p>
<p>✓ Establish a fixed provincial election date under the BC Constitution Act, to ensure provincial elections must be held on a fixed date every fourth year, or immediately if any government loses a confidence vote in the Legislature.</p>	<p>Done. Under the <i>Constitution (Fixed Election Dates) Amendment Act</i>, passed in August 2001, the next election is scheduled for May 17, 2005.</p>
<p>✓ Establish a fixed date for the tabling of the provincial budget, and a set legislative calendar.</p>	<p>Done. The <i>Budget Transparency and Accountability Amendment Act</i> establishes the third Tuesday in February as budget day. The government has also established a set calendar for sittings of the legislature.</p>
<p>✓ Establish a new Premier’s Council on Technology to help bridge the “digital divide” and recommend strategies to enable all British Columbians to participate in and benefit from increased jobs and opportunities in the new economy.</p>	<p>Done. The Premier’s Technology Council has released six detailed reports and is developing strategies to make B.C. one of the world’s top 10 technology centres by 2006..</p>

<p>✓ Repeal the NDP's "fixed wage" legislation that has added huge costs to taxpayers on public construction projects.</p>	<p>Done. The <i>Skills Development and Fair Wage Repeal Act</i> was passed in August 2001.</p>
<p>✓ Restore workers' right to their pensions by repealing the law that allows some pension plans to suspend pension benefits for early retirees who choose to continue working in their previous field of employment.</p>	<p>Done, under the <i>Skills Development and Labour Statutes Amendment Act</i>, passed in August 2001.</p>
<p>✓ Conduct a comprehensive audit of the Province's finances within 90 days and make the results public.</p>	<p>Done. The independent financial review, completed in July 2001, identified a major structural deficit that must be addressed through measures to control spending and revitalize economic growth.</p>

A New Era of **Higher Paycheques:**

<p>✓ Cut the base personal income tax rate to the lowest rate of any province in Canada for the bottom two tax brackets, on the first \$60,000 of income, within our first term. (pg. 5, 11) Honour this commitment without cutting funding for health or education.</p>	<p>Done. Since January 2002, British Columbians have paid the lowest base rates of personal income tax in Canada on their first \$60,000 of income. In addition, the top marginal rate is the second-lowest in the country. Following Budget 2005, the BC Tax Reduction personal income tax credit further reduces or eliminates provincial income taxes for 730,000 British Columbians. Most individuals earning up to \$16,000 a year will pay no provincial income tax and those earning up to \$26,000 will pay lower personal income taxes.</p>
---	---

A New Era of **Accountability:**

<p>✓ Honestly balance the budget, without cutting funding for health care or education.</p>	<p>Done. The government introduced two balanced budgets in February 2004 and February 2005. Total funding for healthcare across government has increased by \$2.3 billion since 2000-01, from \$9.5 billion in 2000-01 to \$11.8 billion in 2004-05, and will rise a further \$1.5 billion over the next three years to \$13.3 billion by 2007-08. K-12 education base spending is being increased by \$253 million over the next three years (which includes \$150 million lift for school districts for the 2005-06 school year) and advanced education base funding will rise by \$196 million over the next three years.</p>
<p>✓ Increase funding for the Auditor General's Office, to help identify and prevent waste, and to increase value-for-money.</p>	<p>Done. The Office of the Auditor General's gross operating budget has increased by over 27 per cent since 2000, from \$7.845 million in 2000/01 to an estimated \$9.970 million in 2005/06.</p>
<p>✓ Eliminate the use of Special Warrants, to prevent government from spending your money without prior legislative approval.</p>	<p>Done, under the <i>Budget Transparency and Accountability Amendment Act</i>, passed in August 2001.</p>
<p>✓ Establish service plans that include measurable performance standards and targets for all programs that are annually audited and published, for all taxpayers to see.</p>	<p>Done. Three-year ministry service plans were released in February 2002, with the government's first provincial budget.</p>
<p>✓ Require Crown corporations to be directly accountable to a committee of the Legislature for their financial management and budget plans.</p>	<p>Done. The Select Standing Committee on Crown Corporations, activated in August 2001, is responsible for reviewing Crown corporations.</p>

A New Era of **Hope**:

<p>✓ Protect private property rights to prevent government from expropriating assets without fair compensation.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The <i>Protected Areas Forests Compensation Act</i>, passed in May 2002, ensures compensation for the establishment of parks and protected areas. Legislation was passed in May 2002 to provide a settlement with Carrier Lumber.</p>
<p>✓ Modernize the Residential Tenancy Act to properly protect renters and landlords in plain language everyone can understand.</p>	<p>Done. The new <i>Residential Tenancy Act</i> was passed in November 2002.</p>
<p>✓ Restore an independent BC Utilities Commission, to re-regulate BC Hydro's electricity rates.</p>	<p>Done. The independent BC Utilities Commission regulates hydro transmission, generation and distribution services in B.C. – including the terms and rates of transmission services.</p>
<p>✓ Establish regional transportation authorities that are accountable to local taxpayers and give local communities more control over their transportation needs and planning.</p>	<p>Initiated. Work is expected to resume in 2005, including full consultation and implementation to meet this commitment.</p>
<p>✓ Require taxpayer approval by regional referendums prior to authorization of any new type of TransLink tax or levy.</p>	<p>Ongoing. No new types of taxes have been approved.</p>
<p>✓ Not sell or privatize BC Rail.</p>	<p>Done. Under the new BC Rail Investment Partnership, BC Railway Co. remains a provincial Crown corporation, with the tracks, railbed and right of way protected under public ownership. BC Rail has not been sold or privatized. The numerous benefits of the partnership include: the elimination of BC Rail's debt of more than \$500 million; a \$135-million Northern Development Initiative; creation of a \$15-million First Nations Benefits Trust; 600 new rail cars to increase capacity for forest shippers; creation of a Chicago Express line that moves goods from Prince George to southeast markets two days faster than is currently possible; creation of a new district rail office, wheel work and systems shop in Prince George; \$17.2 million for a new container port in Prince Rupert and \$15 million for rail upgrades; \$4 million to support expansion of the Prince George Airport; and restoration of third party passenger rail service.</p>
<p>✓ Protect BC Hydro and all of its core assets, including dams, reservoirs and power lines under public ownership.</p>	<p>Done. Under the government's new Energy Plan and the BC Hydro Public Power Legacy and Heritage Contract Act, BC Hydro must not sell or otherwise dispose of protected assets.</p>
<p>✓ Designate BC Ferry routes as an essential service, to ensure that water transportation routes are not shut down by labour disputes.</p>	<p>Done. The <i>Coastal Ferry Act</i>, passed in March 2003, designates BC Ferries as an essential service.</p>
<p>✓ Introduce greater competition in auto insurance, to create increased choice and reduce motor vehicle premiums.</p>	<p>Done. The <i>Insurance (Motor Vehicle) Amendment Act</i>, which comes into effect in fall 2004, levels the playing field between ICBC and private insurers for optional insurance. The <i>Insurance Corporation Amendment Act</i>, passed in May 2003, made the B.C. Utilities Commission the independent regulator of ICBC's basic auto insurance rates. Proposed regulation changes have been published for consultation.</p>

<p>✓ Implement a flexible, innovative program to increase the supply of affordable housing.</p>	<p>Done. Since June 2001, through BC Housing we have built or committed funding to over 8,400 new subsidized housing units across the province. The range of housing options include units funded under the Provincial Homelessness Initiative, Independent Living BC, Community Partnership Initiatives and the Provincial Housing Program. By 2006/07, through the Independent Living BC program, 3,500 independent living spaces for seniors and persons with disabilities will be built in co-operation with other levels of government, the regional health authorities, and the private and non-profit sectors. In 2005/06 the provincial government has allocated \$172 million for subsidized housing - the highest level of annual funding ever in B.C.</p>
<p>✓ Focus resources on improving Northern and rural transportation.</p>	<p>Ongoing. As part of the Heartlands Economic Strategy, the province is investing \$2 billion in transportation infrastructure over three years, with increased resources going toward rehabilitating and improving highways, rural side roads and oil and gas roads in the Heartlands. This will be paralleled by a further \$1.3 billion investment through federal cost-sharing and partnerships.</p>

A New Era of Prosperity:

<p>✓ Cut the “red tape” and regulatory burden by 1/3 within three years.</p>	<p>Done. Between June 2001 and June 2004, B.C.’s regulatory burden was reduced by over 144,000 requirements achieving a net reduction of 37 per cent. This program of regulatory reduction has continued, and as of December 2004 we have seen a further net reduction of more than 1,100 requirements.</p>
<p>✓ Make the Workers’ Compensation Board more responsive to workers’ and employers’ needs.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Reforms to sustain the system in the future were passed in June 2002, reforms to improve the appeals process were passed in October 2002, and a new board was appointed in December 2002. A new Workers’ Compensation Appeal Tribunal was in place March 1, 2003, to provide fair and timely final appeals.</p>
<p>✓ Increase access to Crown lands and resources, to create jobs in tourism, mining, forestry, farming, ranching, and oil & gas.</p>	<p>Done and ongoing. A maximum of 140 days has been set to process applications. An integrated agency, Land and Water BC, was created in February 2002 to co-ordinate land and water applications. Amendments to the <i>Oil and Gas Commission Act</i>, passed in May 2002, streamline permitting and application reviews.</p>
<p>✓ Phase out taxes on investment and productivity to stimulate economic growth and job creation, in keeping with our commitment to balance the budget and protect health care and education funding.</p>	<p>Done. Between June 2001 and June 2004, B.C.’s regulatory burden was reduced by over 144,000 requirements achieving a net reduction of 37 per cent. This program of regulatory reduction has continued, and as of December 2004 we have seen a further net reduction of more than 1,100 requirements.</p>
<p>✓ Stimulate tourism with a plan to improve operators’ ability to successfully compete for visitors from around the world.</p>	<p>Done. Announced a new provincial tourism strategy to enhance tourism marketing, and promote community and resort development. This includes doubling the annual marketing budget for Tourism B.C. to \$50 million, providing \$25 million to the Union of B.C. Municipalities (UBCM) to create a five-year tourism marketing plan, granting \$2million to each of the six regional tourism marketing organizations; completing an action plan for resort development; and posting new welcome signs at all entrances to the province.</p>

<p>✓ Aggressively support and champion British Columbia's bid to host the 2010 Winter Olympics.</p>	<p>Done. B.C. won the 2010 Olympics on July 2, 2003. British Columbia's total commitment to the 2010 Olympics is \$600 million, which includes our half of the venue, medical and security costs which are being shared with the federal government. Contributed \$10M to athlete development program, Own the Podium. Created 2010 Olympic Secretariat to deliver opportunities to communities and businesses across BC. The Province is committing \$20 million towards an Olympic/Paralympic Live Sites program that enables British Columbia's communities to participate in the spirit of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. 2010 LegaciesNow is working with over 90 Spirit of BC Community Committees around the province to help them identify and leverage Olympic, Paralympic and other community opportunities.</p>
<p>✓ Push for provincial control over the management and revenues of BC's offshore fisheries, to improve fisheries management and protect fishery jobs.</p>	<p>Done and ongoing. Three fisheries are now being managed through a joint decision-making process, and we look forward to the Federal response on implementing the Pearse-Macrae recommendations. BC continues to work through the Pacific Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers (PCFAM) to ensure federal policy reflects provincial objectives for the management of the Pacific fisheries.</p>
<p>✓ Eliminate the backlog and delays in Crown land applications, which have cost over \$1 billion and 20,000 lost jobs.</p>	<p>Done. The backlog of 1,536 Crown land applications has been eliminated. Delays were addressed by redesigning and simplifying the application process, cutting processing time in half.</p>
<p>✓ Encourage mineral exploration, which has dropped by 80% under the NDP.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Government has developed a comprehensive and integrated Mining Plan for B.C. that will build on government's support-to-date for the industry. Budget 2005 announced \$110 million to enhance resource development, which includes an extension of the Mining Exploration Tax Credit for 10 years, \$18 million for implementation of the provincial Mining Plan and improvements to mining safety and services, and \$25 million towards a new geoscience centre. This builds on recent growth in mining in the province, which includes spending on exploration topping \$130 million in 2004 -- more than four times the \$29 million spent in 2001.</p>
<p>✓ Consider the Northern Development Commissioner's forthcoming report on offshore oil & gas.</p>	<p>Done. A scientific review panel report was released in May 2002. \$2 million has been provided to the University of Northern BC addressing recommendations of the Science panel. A dedicated offshore oil and gas team, established in January 2003, is consulting First Nations and local governments and working with the federal government to ensure offshore oil and gas resources are developed in a scientifically and environmentally responsible manner.</p>
<p>✓ Increase funding for the British Columbia Arts Council to promote and support BC arts, music, artists and culture.</p>	<p>Done. Budget 2005 allocates an additional \$3 million annually to the BC Arts Council budget beginning in 2005-06. It also establishes a one-time \$25-million Arts and Culture Endowment Fund. As well, the province has established a \$20-million Spirit of B.C. Fund and the \$12-million ArtsNow program through LegaciesNow to support arts and cultural components leading up to the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.</p>
<p>✓ Make the Agricultural Land Commission more regionally responsive to community needs.</p>	<p>Done. The <i>Agricultural Land Commission Act</i>, passed in May 2002, establishes a new structure and six regional panels.</p>

A New Era of **Employment:**

<p>✓ Give workers and employers greater flexibility in Employment Standards to negotiate mutually beneficial relationships that help them compete and prosper.</p>	<p>Done. Amendments to the Employment Standards Act, passed in May 2002, allow workers to negotiate more flexible work schedules, and impose the strongest mandatory penalties in Canada. Employment Standards regulations for specific sectors have been reviewed to ensure the rules attract jobs and investment to B.C. while continuing to provide protection for vulnerable workers.</p>
<p>✓ Focus on reducing BC's youth unemployment, which is the worst of any province west of Quebec.</p>	<p>Ongoing. As of February 2005, 44,300 more youth were working than in December 2001 -- that represents a 16 percent growth. Furthermore, youth unemployment rates in February stood at 12.5 percent, 2.4 percent lower than just one year before. In December 2004, the youth unemployment rate was 11.3 percent -- the lowest provincial rate since August 1990.</p>
<p>✓ Work with employers, post-secondary institutes and the Industry Training and Apprenticeship Commission to increase training and apprenticeships in trades and technical sectors.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The Industry Training Authority established in January 2004 is working to increase the number of trainees by 30 per cent over three years, and has approved new credentials and training. Government has provided \$1.9 million toward 25 pilot projects to help more high school students move into post-secondary trades training and jobs, and another \$1.2 million for a province-wide program to encourage high school students to register in industry training programs. In addition, the province has invested \$39.2 million in a new campus for trades and applied learning at Kwantlen University College in Cloverdale, and \$6.5 million to buy and refurbish a building that will allow the College of New Caledonia in Prince George to relocate and expand several trades training programs.</p>

A New Era of **Sustainable Forestry:**

<p>✓ Establish a working forest land base, to provide greater stability for working families and to enhance long-term forestry management and planning.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Enabling legislation passed in October 2003, and a final designation is expected in 2004.</p>
<p>✓ Streamline the Forest Practices Code to establish a workable, results-based Code, with tough penalties for non-compliance.</p>	<p>Done. The new Forest and Range Practices Act was passed in November 2002 and regulations came into effect in January 2004.</p>
<p>✓ Cut the forestry regulatory burden by one-third, within three years, without compromising environmental standards.</p>	<p>Done. In fact, the forestry regulatory burden has been reduced 50 per cent.</p>
<p>✓ Apply 1% of all direct forest revenues, not including "super stumps," to global marketing of BC's forest practices and products.</p>	<p>Done. A product development and international marketing fund was established in March 2002. To date, over \$27 million has been provided to develop new opportunities in international markets. In January 2005, the Minister of Forests officially opened the Dream Home China presentation centre in Shanghai, designed to showcase B.C. wood-frame construction and wood products. Villas and a low-rise apartment building are also planned on the Dream Home site. China and Taiwan have adopted building codes for wood-frame buildings and China is undertaking research that will enable imports of Mountain Pine Beetle wood. In 2002, BC Market Outreach Network was established and promotes B.C.'s sustainable forest management to international customers around the world.</p>

✓ Create a market-based stumpage system that reflects global market realities and local harvesting costs.	Underway. A market-based timber pricing system was introduced for the Coastal forest industry in February 2004; it will be introduced in the Interior later this year.
✓ Either fix or scrap Forest Renewal BC, starting by removing the political appointees on the Board.	Done. A new Forest Investment Account has been established, to focus resources on land-based activities, marketing and value-added growth.
✓ Invest in research to promote forest stewardship.	Ongoing. To date, more than \$20 million has been invested in forest research and science under the new Forest Investment Account.
✓ Protect private property rights in treaty negotiations.	Done. Private property rights are protected under B.C.'s publicly endorsed principles for treaty negotiations. This principle is part of four recently signed Agreements-in-Principle.
✓ Work to expedite interim measures agreements with First Nations, to provide greater certainty during treaty talks.	Ongoing. The province's economic development fund provided support to 145 projects worth \$26.3 million to First Nations throughout B.C. A total of 82 treaty related measures valued at over \$4.2 million were granted to advance treaty negotiations.
✓ Increase the Allowable Annual Cut over time through scientific forest management, proper planning, and incentives to promote enhanced silviculture.	Ongoing. The allowable annual cut has increased since June 2001 to address the mountain pine beetle, and a new Forest Investment Account has been established to improve forest management.
✓ Eliminate "waterbedding."	Underway. The market-based timber pricing system introduced on the Coast in February 2004 eliminated waterbedding. A market-based timber pricing system for the Interior will be introduced later this year.

A New Era of **Environmental Stewardship:**

✓ Adopt a scientifically-based, principled approach to environmental management that ensures sustainability, accountability and responsibility.	Done and Ongoing. Sustainability principles have been adopted for major policy initiatives, regional moratoriums on grizzly bear hunting have been implemented, and new regulations have been put in place for salmon aquaculture to provide one of the world's most comprehensive regulatory regimes.
✓ Pass real comprehensive ground water legislation to improve the quality of British Columbians' drinking water.	Done and Ongoing. Government passed the Drinking Water Protection Amendment Act in October 2002. Regulations governing the protection of groundwater were implemented in November 2004. As part of the Province's \$16 million Safe Drinking Water Action Plan, in May 2004 government appointed a provincial drinking water officer to work with health officials to ensure British Columbians' drinking water is safe and clean. In February 2005, government also announced an \$80 million program to improve drinking water and waste water infrastructure in communities.
✓ Oppose the Sumas 2 power project and phase out Burrard Thermal.	Ongoing. The province, together with residents of the Fraser Valley, won a favourable decision at the National Energy Board and is now opposing Sumas 2 in its Appeal to the Federal Court of Appeal. B.C. is also appealing a recent extension granted by Washington State to the Sumas 2 air permit. The government's Energy Plan confirms the goal of phasing out Burrard Thermal.
✓ Ensure mining or logging is not permitted in parks.	Ongoing. Amendments to the <i>Mineral Tenure Act</i> , passed in May 2002, create a two-zone system that clearly defines parks, ecological reserves and protected heritage property as closed to mining.

<p>✓ Acquire and preserve Burns Bog</p>	<p>Done. In March 2004, a final deal to permanently acquire and preserve Burns Bog was announced by Premier Campbell, together with the federal government, the GVRD and the Corporation of Delta.</p>
<p>✓ Create a BC Trust for Public Lands to encourage and facilitate the expansion of public lands through private land donations.</p>	<p>Underway. Amendments to the Land Title Act help facilitate private donations of land for public purposes.</p>
<p>✓ Pass a Living Rivers Act to protect and improve BC's river systems with scientifically-based standards for watershed management, enhancements to fish-habitat, and a 10-year program to correct past damage.</p>	<p>Underway. The province established a Living Rivers Trust Fund in October 2002 to provide stable funding for watershed restoration projects, and a comprehensive strategy to repair past damage is being drafted.</p>
<p>✓ Work to develop an internationally accepted standard for "eco-labelling" of BC forest products.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Almost all major forest companies now comply with one or more international standards. The new Forest and Range Practices Act upholds B.C.'s world-renowned high environmental standards.</p>
<p>✓ Maintain the longstanding ban on bulk water exports.</p>	<p>Done. The ban has been maintained.</p>
<p>✓ Replace the NDP's blanket moratorium on grizzly bear hunting with a proper peer review by scientists and biologists, and local moratoriums where grizzly populations are endangered.</p>	<p>Done. The blanket moratorium was replaced in July 2001 with regional moratoriums and proper peer review by scientists and biologists.</p>
<p>✓ Ensure that major capital spending decisions and land-use decisions involving the Agricultural Land Reserve, new parks, land claims and tenure reform are decided by Cabinet in public, and not behind closed doors.</p>	<p>Done and ongoing. Cabinet has made policy decisions publicly on new parks, the Agricultural Land Reserve, four Agreements-in-Principle (all approved in Open Cabinet), and the Lions Gate Bridge project.</p>
<p>✓ Promote clean and renewable alternative energy sources, like wind, thermal, solar, tidal, biomass and fuel cell technologies.</p>	<p>Ongoing. In September 2003, the province announced the largest purchase of clean energy in B.C.'s history. Government support for IPP development has resulted in over a billion dollars in past and planned investment by the IPP sector. The 16 IPP projects from BC Hydro's 2003 Green Call for Power, could create up to 1000 construction jobs and generate enough electricity to meet the needs of 180,000 homes.</p> <p>Under the province's Energy Plan, the goal of deriving 50 per cent of new power from clean sources is providing independent power producers with opportunities to develop clean energy sources like micro-hydro, cogeneration, wind, solar and fuel-cell power. A comprehensive Alternative Energy Strategy is under development. This includes the creation of an Alternative Energy and Power Task Force, and tax measures in Budget 2005 to promote the use of cleaner, alternative energy sources -- such as PST exemptions for energy efficient heating and PST relief for the purchase of hybrid vehicles. BC Hydro has committed to offsetting any incremental impacts on the environment over the next 20 years. The Environmental Assessment Office has also certified two wind farm projects.</p>

A New Era of **Connectivity:**

<p>✓ Work to extend high-speed, broad-band Internet access to every community in BC through wireless technology, cable, phone lines and fibre optics.</p>	<p>Ongoing. NetWork BC, launched in February 2004 will connect all communities in B.C. by 2006 and build the next-generation voice and data network for B.C.'s extended public sector.</p>
--	---

<p>✓ Use public assets, like roads, railways and power lines to leverage rapid growth in communications infrastructure and broadband capabilities.</p>	<p>Underway. A new partnership announced in April 2004 with Telus and the Columbia Mountain Outreach network will link Kootenay communities. With the creation of LWBC, the province has streamlined the process of gaining access to provincial rights of way to leverage rapid growth in telecommunications infrastructure.</p>
<p>✓ Provide incentives to make computers and Internet access more affordable for all families.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The government is working with government data networks, the extended private sector, telecommunications vendors, communities and the federal government to leverage funding to make Internet access more affordable for all families. Community Access Terminals have been installed in all Service BC/Government Agent offices. The province also increased the grants to local public libraries by \$12 million through 2006-07. BC Public libraries provide over 1,200 terminals connected to the Internet for community use.</p>
<p>✓ Put more computers in schools and increase resources to improve computer literacy for students of all ages.</p>	<p>Ongoing. In partnership with the Ministry of Management Services, we are completing Internet upgrades to almost 600 schools around the province. All schools will have high-speed Internet access by the end of this school year. Government is providing \$2.1 million to support 12 school districts that are piloting the use of wireless laptop computers in school. Another \$1.5 million will provide web casting and web conferencing for every rural secondary school and nearly half of the urban secondary schools in B.C. Eight school districts have been selected as e-learning research sites to pilot the integration of technology in rural classrooms and develop models that can be used across the province. Government also invested \$1 million in Computers for Schools BC that will help put 12,000 computers into BC schools. The Ministry of Education is also working with the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services to ensure that all students get the new library card that will provide access to every public library in B.C.</p>

A New Era for **Students:**

<p>✓ Work with the federal government to ensure that our tax treatment of stock options and capital gains is globally competitive.</p>	<p>Done. Lower personal income tax rates (provincial and federal) and reduced inclusion rate for capital gains brought down the tax rate on stock options from 38.5 per cent in 2000 to 21.9 per cent in 2002. Federal changes that delay the time when the tax is triggered on stock options have made the tax treatment of stock options in B.C. very competitive with the tax treatment in the U.S.</p>
<p>✓ Lead annual international 'Leading Edge' marketing missions to promote BC technology and investment.</p>	<p>Done. The first Leading Edge marketing mission was to California in November 2002. The Premier also led trade missions to Houston, Texas in October 2003 and China and India in November 2003. 2004/05 missions included: San Francisco, San Diego, Seattle, Boston, Germany, Italy, North Carolina, Texas, Florida, London (UK), and Idaho.</p>

<p>✓ Restore BC as a world leader in E-government, to give all citizens and businesses better on-line access to core services, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.</p>	<p>Ongoing. A new government Enterprise Portal was introduced in September 2003. The Registry Statutes Amendment Act, passed in April 2002, provides for online filing of forms and documents and reduces costs associated with paper filing. E-filing changes have also been made to the Mineral Tenure Act, Petroleum and Natural Gas Act and Motor Vehicle Act. The Government Authentication Project has commenced; it will implement a common approach for all ministries, central agencies and statutory public bodies to identify, authenticate and authorize users to access BC Government services delivered online and through other service delivery channels. In January 2005 government launched Mineral Titles Online allowing claims to be entered over the Internet without staking. In the first week of operation claims were entered with a value in excess of the value of claims for the entire preceding year</p>
<p>✓ Use on-line procurement technology to save costs and maximize taxpayers' value-for-money on all major government purchases.</p>	<p>Underway. The new BC Bid, launched in February 2003, is the first fully electronic two-way bidding system in Canada. In November 2003, the province launched pilot projects in four ministries, setting the stage for paperless purchasing and payment in all ministries by September 2004.</p>
<p>✓ Cut the cost of paper flow by digitizing all government data, forms and information possible.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The province is establishing a system to manage government's electronic records in support of e-service delivery. The <i>Registry Statutes Amendment Act</i>, passed in April 2002, provides for online filing of forms and documents and reduces costs associated with paper filing. E-filing changes have also been made to the <i>Mineral Tenure Act</i>, <i>Petroleum and Natural Gas Act</i> and <i>Motor Vehicle Act</i>.</p>
<p>✓ Double the annual number of graduates in computer science, and electrical and computer engineering, within five years.</p>	<p>Ongoing. In 2005/06, 825 new seats will be funded for computer science and electrical and computer engineering as part of our commitment to double the number of student seats in these fields. This brings the number of funded spaces in these programs to almost 8,000. Government has added more than 3,000 seats since 2002/03. Ministry staff are working with participating institutions to track increased graduates from this initiative.</p>
<p>✓ Increase investment in technology research and post-secondary skills and training.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The province launched a \$45-million Leading Edge Endowment Fund in April 2002 and announced a \$7.5-million B.C. regional innovation chairs program in February 2003. Through its continued commitment to the B.C. Knowledge Development Fund, since 2001 government has also committed \$160 million for research infrastructure throughout B.C. In total, government has committed more than \$900 million to research, innovation and access at post-secondary institutions.</p>

A New Era for **Knowledge Workers:**

<p>✓ Maintain and increase education funding levels by increasing revenues through economic growth.</p>	<p>Done. Budget 2005 announced that base funding for K-12 education would rise by \$253 million over the next three years. This includes in 2005-06 an increase to direct funding for school districts by \$150 million -- the largest single increase in a decade. BC will be investing a record \$7,097 per student in 2005-06, an increase of \$881 per student since 2000/01 even though enrollment has declined by 30,000 students over the same period. Furthermore, government has provided districts with over \$153 million in one-time grants since taking office in 2001.</p>
--	---

<p>✓ Establish specific goals and outcomes to measure the success of educators in public schooling.</p>	<p>Underway. New accountability contracts have been established, district review teams make school boards publicly accountable for student achievement, and School Planning Councils are responsible for developing an annual plan for each school, including goals and outcomes for improvement.</p>
<p>✓ Devote more of each education dollar to improving the quality of education, and less to bureaucracy.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Ministry of Education savings were passed on to districts through one-time grants of \$153 million since 2001/2002: \$42 million in 2001-02, \$50 million in 2002-03, \$32 million in 2003-04, and \$29 million in 2004-05. A new, simplified funding formula gives school districts the flexibility to allocate funding to meet the needs of their students. The province and 45 school districts have formed a new buying group that will help districts save up to \$14 million on computer software and videos used to teach students. As a result of further Ministry savings this year, more than \$30 million has been invested in parent advisory council grants, literacy innovation grants, School Community Connections, and to train principals and vice-principals</p>
<p>✓ Support more flexibility and choice in public schooling.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Amendments to the School Act give students the choice to attend any school in the province, provided space is available, while requiring districts to create catchment areas to ensure students can attend their neighbourhood schools. More than 1,650 schools are now offering nearly 5,000 choices, including community, neighbourhood schools, traditional schools; Aboriginal education programs; French immersion; special needs services; pre-school; distance electronic learning; and programs in technology, fine arts, dance, sports and trades. Government introduced a new Web-based tool for parents and students to provide quick and easy access to information about educational choices available in B.C.'s public schools.</p>
<p>✓ Give local school boards more autonomy and control over the delivery of education services, subject to provincial curriculum and testing standards.</p>	<p>Done. The new funding formula reduces the number of funding categories from 60 to seven, giving boards the flexibility to allocate funds to meet the unique needs of their students. In addition, school districts are now offering nearly 5,000 program choices to meet the unique needs of students.</p>
<p>✓ Give school boards multi-year funding envelopes, to improve long-term education planning and budgeting.</p>	<p>Done. Three-year funding envelopes were provided with Budget 2002 in February.</p>

<p>✓ Work with educators and employers to expand job training and skills development opportunities.</p>	<p>Ongoing. A new Industry Training Authority (ITA) was established in January 2004 to increase the number of trainees participating in industry training by 30% by 2006/07. This newly revamped industry training model creates an apprenticeship system that is industry driven, more flexible, and competency-based that attracts more young people to trades, addressing the skill demands identified by industry as the province moves towards 2010. As of January 31, 2005, there were 18,985 apprentices registered, up by 4,309 or 29 per cent from 14,676 on March 31, 2004. There were also nearly 11,000 students enrolled in entry-level trades training programs at British Columbia's public post-secondary institutions. These results put the ITA well ahead of schedule in its plans to increase the number of apprentices and other trainees by 30 per cent in three years. Growth in youth participation under the new ACE-IT program is also exceeding targets. While 400 students were expected to enrol in the first intake, actual registrations are estimated to be greater than 1,100. Up to 900 students are forecast to participate in the second intake later this year. In addition, institutions will use some of the growth under the plan for 25,000 new spaces over six years to create new spaces in skills shortage programs, including trades</p>
<p>✓ Maintain current funding arrangements for independent schools.</p>	<p>Done. The cap has also been lifted on enrolment in distance education programs offered by independent schools, continuing the commitment to provide parents and students with more choice.</p>
<p>✓ Provide teachers with more technology training.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Eight school districts have been selected to pilot state-of-the-art electronic learning programs that will include training for teachers. Funding has been provided for new tools for teachers, including web casting for professional growth; an online literacy course to focus on new strategies to improve literacy; a literacy research project and expansion of the supervision of learning program. To date, four web casts have been held for teachers – two on literacy and two on numeracy, with two more scheduled on assessment.</p>
<p>✓ Eliminate the PST on basic school supplies purchased by Parent Advisory Councils, which volunteer their time and effort to raise money for public schools.</p>	<p>Done. Budget 2002 provided PST refunds on purchases by Parent Advisory Councils.</p>
<p>✓ Guarantee that parents of students attending schools are entitled to volunteer their services, provided it does not result in the displacement of existing staff services.</p>	<p>Done. The <i>School (Protection of Parent Volunteers) Amendment Act</i> was passed in August 2001.</p>
<p>✓ Ensure that music, arts and physical education curriculums are fully funded in BC's public schools.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The new graduation program that began in September 2004 requires music, arts and physical education as areas of study in the graduation portfolio. Government announced a \$150 million increase in operating funding for school boards for 2005-06 and identified arts and music programs as priorities for future school board spending. Government provided \$2.5 million to 2010 LegaciesNow to develop an arts and recreation summer camp program for students in Kindergarten to Grade 7. The Province is investing more than \$15.5 million over five years in a plan to help make B.C. students the healthiest and most physically active in Canada. This includes expanding the Action Schools! BC program to grades K-9 province wide by 2010 and developing a secondary school model. The first-ever forum to promote health in BC Schools was held in January 2005.</p>

<p>✓ Improve school accreditations.</p>	<p>Done. Amendments to the <i>School Act</i> passed in May 2002 create a new accountability cycle – including new accountability contracts with districts – which requires each school, district and the Ministry of Education to review performance measures and develop goals and strategies for improvement. As well, in October 2003, the B.C. College of Teachers established new standards of competence to strengthen teacher accountability.</p>
--	---

A New Era of **Advanced Education:**

<p>✓ Establish a “Leading Edge Endowment Fund,” based on a cost-sharing partnership with the private sector, to establish 20 permanent BC Leadership Chairs across the province in the fields of medical, social, environmental and technological research.</p>	<p>Done. The \$45-million fund has been launched and the first chair established for spinal cord research. Under the fund, in 2002, the province provided \$2.2 million to fund two chairs in aboriginal early childhood development. An additional \$7.5-million B.C. regional innovation chairs program was announced in February 2003. In June 2003, 17 new projects received approval-in-principle for \$32.25 million under the Leading Edge Endowment Fund, focused on the following: prostate cancer, genetic medicine, depression, aboriginal environmental health, aboriginal early childhood development, cognitive neuroscience, cattle industry sustainability, tourism and sustainable rural development, salmon conservation, marine ecosystems and integrated energy systems.</p>
<p>✓ Support the 5% tuition cut and tuition freeze and fully fund it in the current fiscal year to offset costs to post-secondary institutes.</p>	<p>Done. The freeze was maintained for 2000/01, followed by a 5% reduction in 2001/02. After extensive consultation we restored the ability of institutions to independently set tuitions to fund improvements to student services -- such as expanding access and increasing assistance for low-income students. In the Speech from the Throne delivered on February 8, 2005, government confirmed that beginning in September 2005 tuition fee increases would be limited to the rate of inflation. Budget 2005 has further committed to increasing funding for post-secondary education by \$196 million over the next three years as part of our plan to add 25,000 post-secondary spaces by 2010 -- the largest expansion of seats in 40 years.</p>
<p>✓ Consult with educators, students and administrators on the hidden costs to students and institutes of previous tuition freezes that were not properly funded by government and that have reduced student access and reduced course offerings.</p>	<p>Done. Legislation granting B.C.’s public post-secondary institutions autonomy over tuition-fee levels was passed in April 2002. In the Speech from the Throne delivered on February 8, 2005, government confirmed that beginning in September 2005 any tuition fee increases would be limited to the rate of inflation. Legislation will be passed this fall to give effect to this measure.</p>
<p>✓ Strengthen our network of colleges, institutes and on-line learning throughout the province.</p>	<p>Ongoing. This government has committed to adding 25,000 seats to our public post secondary system by 2010. Close to half of those seats will go to our excellent network of colleges, university colleges and institutes. We launched BCcampus in the fall of 2003 to provide learners with a single point of contact for distance education courses and programs offered at all publicly funded post-secondary institutions in B.C. In the spring of 2005, BCcampus will implement the second phase of development of the portal with a coordinated online application and registration system at four pilot institutions as well as launch a suite of online learner support services. In addition, the province allocated 1,080 online student spaces to public post-secondary institutions in 2005/06.</p>
<p>✓ Increase research funding for colleges, universities and institutes.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Since June 2001, B.C. has committed over \$900 million to enhance post-secondary research and access.</p>

<p>✓ Expand training and post-secondary programs to graduate more Care Aides, Licensed Practical Nurses and Registered Nurses.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Since 2001, the government has added over 2,500 new education spaces for nurses in local colleges, institutes, university colleges and universities throughout the province. Almost 800 nurses have been funded to take refresher, qualifying or English-as-a-second-language courses. This allows non-practicing Canadian graduates or internationally educated non-practicing B.C. residents to be eligible to return to nursing.</p>
<p>✓ Develop a Rural and Remote Training Program that provides forgivable loans to BC students attending accredited nursing and medical schools who agree to practice in a rural or remote community in BC.</p>	<p>Done. Graduates from accredited schools in nursing (including licensed practical nurses) and from medical, midwifery and pharmacy schools who began their final year of study on or after Aug. 1, 2000 will have all outstanding BC student loans forgiven at a rate of 33% per year of practice if they have graduated from an accredited post-secondary educational institution and agree to practice full-time, part-time or casual in a publicly funded facility in an underserved area of British Columbia. Students graduating on or after Dec. 1, 2004, in the professions of speech language pathology, Occupational therapy, audiology and physiology, who will be working with children in underserved communities, will have all outstanding BC student loans forgiven at a rate of 33% per year of practice.</p>
<p>✓ Increase the number of medical school graduates over the next five years.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The medical school at UBC is being expanded and will include new satellite campuses at UNBC and UVIC. The all three universities are complete, and the first class of Northern Medical Program and Island Medical Program students have begun their first term of study at UBC in Vancouver. They began studying at UVIC and UNBC in January 2005. Medical-school spaces will almost double, to 224 from 128, by 2005.</p>
<p>✓ Train more social workers to meet the critical skills shortage that has developed under the NDP.</p>	<p>Done. The government funded 20 new post-secondary spaces for social work and child protection in each of the fiscal years of 2002/03, 2003/04 and 2004/05. An additional 14 new seats were allocated for social work programs in 2005/06, and another 20 in 2003-04.</p>

A New Era of **Health Planning:**

<p>✓ Ensure that BC health care is universal, accessible, portable, comprehensive and publicly administered, consistent with the five principles of the Canada Health Act.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Health authorities have established three-year Health Service Plans, updated annually, to reform and renew patient services for each region, along with new province wide standards for care.</p>
<p>✓ Establish provincial health standards that ensure all citizens in every part of the province are entitled to equitable, reliable, high quality health services.</p>	<p>Done. Provincewide access standards have been established for emergency, acute care and specialty services. The government was the first administration ever in this province to implement a system of performance agreements with health authorities, which holds these bodies accountable for the services they deliver and how they are delivered.</p>
<p>✓ Develop performance measures that are annually audited and publicly reported for each health standard, to ensure provincial and regional health authorities are accountable for fulfilling their duties to provide the prescribed levels of patient care.</p>	<p>Done. Accountability contracts and measures have been established, along with three-year health service plans for each authority. The government has also provided health authorities with three-year funding commitments, updated annually, to enable them to plan and act with certainty. Our government is continuing to redesign the health care system so that funding for health authorities is spent efficiently and focused on public health and patient care.</p>

<p>✓ Develop a 10-year human resource plan, that properly provides for the training, recruitment and retention of physicians, nurses, specialists and other health care providers in every area of the province, and that addresses critical skills shortages and staffing levels in under-serviced areas.</p>	<p>Underway. As a first step, programs have been launched to expand the supply of nurses and doctors. Since September 2001, government has committed \$59 million to the nursing strategy, which includes the creation of approximately 2,000 new education spaces for nurses in local colleges, institutes, university colleges and universities throughout B.C. A total of 45 new spaces for nurse practitioners will be added. The province has also increased the number of nurses licensed to practice in B.C. by over 700 since 2001, and has funded more than 700 nurses to take refresher, qualifying or English-as-a-second-language courses. This allows non-practicing Canadian graduates or internationally educated non-practicing B.C. residents to be eligible to return to nursing.</p>
<p>✓ Develop a Hospital Facilities Plan, that identifies each health region's key capital requirements and funding priorities.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The Ministry of Health Services is working with health authorities to develop and implement multi-year capital plans that address immediate and long-term needs in the hospital sector through service redesign and modernizing facilities.</p>
<p>✓ Develop an Intermediate and Long-Term Care Facilities Plan that addresses the needs of our aging population and frees up existing acute care beds.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Health authorities are moving to a new model of home and community care that provides more care options for seniors, including 3,500 new independent housing spaces with support services through the Independent Living BC program. Residential care facilities are being upgraded and new facilities are being built where needed to ensure British Columbians with complex care needs receive the care they require.</p>
<p>✓ Develop a Medical Machinery and Equipment Plan that ensures existing medical diagnostic and care equipment is adequately staffed, fully utilized and properly maintained, and that provides for future investments in new equipment and technologies.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The Ministry of Health Services is working with health authorities to develop a more strategic approach to capital planning and management, including maintaining and updating equipment, by developing multi-year capital asset management plans. To assist health authorities in meeting their identified needs, \$200 million in federal funding from the 2003 First Ministers' Accord on Health Care Renewal is being allocated for investment in diagnostic and medical equipment and training of specialized staff. The ministry has established a committee to advise on new technologies and priorities for improving health care delivery.</p>
<p>✓ Develop a comprehensive Technology Plan to assist health care professionals in delivering faster, more effective treatment to patients through new information technology and telemedicine.</p>	<p>Underway. The province is funding \$15 million in tele-health programs across B.C., including a new filmless medical imaging system launched in April 2003. Tele-health programs provide emergency and trauma, pediatric, maternity and mental health services for 30 communities. BC's CIO Council has developed a strategic plan on the main goals and priorities to support the health system and health service delivery, as well as a tactical plan. The ministry and its partners are also developing a strategic plan on the Electronic Health Record, as part of a comprehensive technology plan to assist health professionals and improve patient care across the province.</p>
<p>✓ Establish a Rural and Remote Health Initiative to ensure all families get the care they need, where they live, when they need it.</p>	<p>Done. The province has funded \$58.5 million in incentives and benefits to attract doctors to rural practices. It established a rural specialist locum program to ensure continuous coverage during the recruitment process and introduced the first Interprofessional Rural Program in Canada to place students from various health professions in rural areas for training. In addition, the province has invested \$6 million in rural travel programs that are being developed in four health authorities to provide access to services to meet the needs of their residents.</p>

<p>✓ Introduce a Rural and Remote Training Support program that provides financial and travel assistance to health care providers who want to update or upgrade their skills and training.</p>	<p>Underway. The government's Nursing Strategy provided more than 6,000 nurses with continuing and specialty training in much-needed nursing specialties, and the B.C. Ambulance Service has received \$30 million for new measures aimed at strengthening ambulance service across the province.</p>
---	--

A New Era of **Health Quality:**

<p>✓ Maintain this year's overall \$9.3 billion budget for health.</p>	<p>Done. In fact, health funding now accounts for 44 percent of all government spending excluding interest on debt. Spending on health in British Columbia has grown every year, increasing over \$2.3 billion since 2000/01 and another \$1.5 billion over the next three years.</p>
<p>✓ Increase future health care funding as economic growth increases government revenues.</p>	<p>Done. In fact, health funding now accounts for 44 percent of all government spending excluding interest on debt. Spending on health in British Columbia has grown every year, increasing over \$2.3 billion since 2000/01 and another \$1.5 billion over the next three years.</p>
<p>✓ Work with front-line health care professionals to act on their ideas for maximizing the value to patients of every health dollar spent.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The Dialogue on Health in October 2001 brought together 140 professionals, administrators and other experts. The Legislature's Select Standing Committee on Health held hearings in 10 communities and received 700 submissions for its December 2001 report on health-care renewal. Through the 2004 BCMA working agreement, since last fall the BCMA and the Ministry of Health Services have held 30 Professional Quality Improvement Days to provide opportunities for general practitioners, the Province and Health Authorities to work together towards primary health care reform.</p>
<p>✓ Provide health regions and hospitals with 3-year rolling funding commitments (updated annually), to enable them to plan and act with certainty.</p>	<p>Done. Three-year rolling funding commitments, updated annually, were first provided with Budget 2002.</p>
<p>✓ Fully fund and implement the \$125 million mental health initiative.</p>	<p>Done. The government is implementing a \$263-million mental health commitment, including the \$125-million mental health plan and \$138 million for capital and facilities.</p>
<p>✓ Fund health regions at a level necessary to meet the needs of the people who live there, regardless of where a service is provided.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Base funding for health authorities has increased by approximately \$700 million or 13% from \$5.44 billion 2001/02 to \$6.1 billion in 2004/05. Budget 2005 allocates a further \$1.5 billion for healthcare spending over the next three years, a portion of which will continue to enhance health authority funding.</p>

<p>✓ Replace obsolete hospital equipment and ambulance equipment and ensure all equipment is fully utilized and properly maintained.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Health authorities are working to replace obsolete hospital equipment. In addition to funding from the province, regional hospital districts, foundations and other sources, over \$200 million in federal funding is being allocated to health authorities for this purpose. Additional federal equipment funding of \$66 million, arising from the First Ministers' Meeting in September 2004, will be allocated over the next several years. In December 2004 government announced a \$35-million investment in medical technology to improve access to better diagnostic care including new PET, CT and MRI scanners, as well as other emerging technologies. Already to date there has been a 20 percent increase in CR scanners, a 78 increase in MRI machines, and a 40 percent increase in rural dialysis services. In 2003/04, the British Columbia Ambulance Service (BCAS) continued to upgrade its equipment, purchasing \$1 million of specialized telecommunications equipment, and \$1 million on medical equipment, including stretchers, IV pumps, vital signs monitors, and critical care transport ventilators. In 2002/03, defibrillators were installed on all 450 BC ambulances.</p>
<p>✓ Fulfill BC's obligations under the Canada Health Act to properly fund and provide access to all medically necessary services</p>	<p>Ongoing. Spending on health in British Columbia has increased \$2.3 billion since 2000-01 and will increase an additional \$1.5 billion by 2007-08. Health care spending across government was at a record \$11.8 billion in 2004/05, representing 44 per cent of the total budget (when interest on debt is excluded). This represents an increase of 24 per cent over the past four years. Over the next three years, the province will invest another \$1.5 billion in health care. This funding has enabled investments to improve access to quality health care for all British Columbians</p>
<p>✓ Focus funding on patient care, by reducing waste in the system and eliminating administrative duplication and costs from provincial government mismanagement.</p>	<p>Done. The number of health authorities has been streamlined from 52 to six, to achieve greater efficiency. Health authorities cut administrative and support costs by seven per cent for a total savings of almost \$100 million by 2004/05. These administrative savings are allowing resources to be redirected into direct patient care and making sure the health care system is sustainable in the future</p>

A New Era for **Health Professionals:**

<p>✓ Provide assistance and opportunities to help nurses develop the specialized skills needed in intensive care units, emergency rooms and operating rooms.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The government's nursing strategy has helped B.C. gain almost 700 since 2001. It has also provided more than 6,000 nurses with continuing and specialty training in critical and emergency care.</p>
<p>✓ Increase training spaces and recruitment of foreign-trained nurses and physicians.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Since 2001, we have funded almost 800 nurses to take refresher, qualifying or English-as-a-second-language courses. This allows non-practicing Canadian graduates or internationally educated non-practicing B.C. residents to be eligible to apply for a practicing license. In November 2001, government increased the number of postgraduate entry-level positions at St. Paul's International Medical Graduates program. Postgraduate medical education funding has increased from \$43 million in 2003/04 to \$50 million in 2004/05.</p>
<p>✓ Launch a massive recruitment drive to bring non-practicing RNs and LPNs back into our health care system.</p>	<p>Underway. The government's nursing strategy helped B.C. gain over 700 nurses who are eligible to work here. Since 2001, the province has funded more than 700 nurses to take refresher, qualifying or English-as-a-second-language courses, enabling non-practicing Canadian graduates or internationally educated non-practicing B.C. residents to become eligible to return to nursing.</p>

<p>✓ Increase locum support to relieve pressure and reduce workloads, to enhance health care professionals' quality of life.</p>	<p>Done. Funding for rural locum programs increased by 50 per cent to \$1.85 million in 2003-04 from \$1.25 million in 2001-02.</p>
<p>✓ Increase the number of residency positions in BC's hospitals in the next five years.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Government has introduced a \$134-million Life Sciences Initiative that will almost double the number of B.C. medical school spaces, to 224 from 128, by 2005, and open up new residency positions in B.C. hospitals outside the Lower Mainland. The new Life Sciences Building at UBC; Island Medical Program facility at UVic and Northern Medical Program building at UNBC will be complete by August 2004, making medical training available outside the Lower Mainland for the first time.</p>
<p>✓ Give ambulance attendants better access to training and better life-support and communications equipment needed to capitalize on those skills.</p>	<p>Done. \$30 million was allocated in May 2002 for ambulance services, including funding to upgrade 1,300 rural paramedics to Paramedic 1 level. Defibrillators are now in use on all 450 B.C. ambulances – \$780,000 was spent in 2001-02, plus \$350,000 last year.</p>

A New Era of **Health Services:**

<p>✓ Ensure that appointees to regional health boards are representative of their communities' needs and accountable for their performance in meeting provincial health standards.</p>	<p>Done. Six new health authorities have been established, new boards appointed and new accountability contracts and measures established. Through B.C.'s Board Resourcing and Development Office, board member appointments are carefully considered to ensure necessary skills for the effective management and delivery of health care. For the first time, the province has implemented a system of performance agreements with health authorities, which holds these bodies accountable for the services they deliver and how they are delivered.</p>
<p>✓ Pressure the federal government to restore all of the health care funding withdrawn through budget cuts.</p>	<p>Ongoing. As a result of the First Ministers' Accord on Health Care Renewal, in February 2003, the federal government agreed to provide \$20 billion in new funding for patient care in Canada over 5 years, with an extra \$2 billion if there was a federal surplus in 2003-04. BC's share of the federal funding in 2004/05, including the share of the \$2 billion supplement, is \$529 million (\$398 million plus \$131 million supplement). There will also be an additional \$17 million from the Public Health and Immunization Trust. This money will be directly invested to further improve public health and patient care.</p>
<p>✓ Provide expanded home care and palliative care services to assist chronically and terminally ill patients with supportive home environments, as an option to institutional care.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The province will be releasing an end-of-life care framework that will be used by health authorities to continue to develop compassionate, competent and respectful care for patients at the end of their lives. The palliative care drug benefits program has been expanded, to support seniors and other individuals who are terminally ill by providing medication, medical supplies and equipment at no charge to people who choose to spend their remaining time at home. For patients who require or choose a residential but home-like care setting, where supportive and professional care services are available, the number of hospice beds has nearly doubled since 2001 with more beds planned.</p>

<p>✓ Build a unified, universal, and cost-effective health services information network that will improve care and reduce long-term costs.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The province is working with the health sector and Canada Health Infoway to create a provincial Electronic Health Record Framework that will provide integrated, higher-quality health care with greater efficiencies and few errors. The new Personal Information Protection Act, passed in October 2003, ensures that adequate privacy and security provisions are in place. The NetWork BC plan is building the next-generation public-sector data and voice network that will connect all health authorities in the province.</p>
<p>✓ Increase technology funding and digital infrastructure support to facilitate tele-health options that will expedite and improve treatments, and reduce travel requirements for Northern and rural residents.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Telehealth videoconferencing technology is now in place in 62 communities throughout BC, encompassing nearly 120 dedicated sites in BC's health care facilities. This is up from 11 communities in 2001. Clinical applications link rural or remote facilities with specialists in Vancouver as well as specialists in regional centres.</p>
<p>✓ Develop a rural travel assistance program, to reduce rural patients' transportation and lodging costs to receive treatment that is not locally available.</p>	<p>Underway. The province has invested \$6-million in new rural travel programs that are being developed in four health authorities to provide access to services to meet the needs of their residents</p>
<p>✓ Ensure that patients living at home in palliative or long term care are entitled to the same pharmaceutical benefits as they would have if they were in a hospital.</p>	<p>Underway. The province is reviewing the palliative care benefits program to ensure it provides terminally ill patients in their homes and residential care facilities with medication, medical supplies and equipment at no charge.</p>
<p>✓ Give all citizens better access to their medical records and treatment histories, and enhanced information privacy rights.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The province is working with the health sector and Canada Health Infoway to create a provincial Electronic Health Record Framework that will provide integrated, higher-quality health care with greater efficiencies and few errors. The new Personal Information Protection Act, passed in October 2003, ensures that adequate privacy and security provisions are in place.</p>
<p>✓ Support community services volunteers and repeal the NDP legislation that allowed government to expropriate community health facilities without compensation.</p>	<p>Done. The section of the <i>Health Authorities Act</i> allowing assets to be seized without compensation was repealed in August 2001.</p>
<p>✓ Protect current funding and existing levels of access to abortion services throughout the province, as a matter of confidence in government.</p>	<p>Done. Funding and access to abortion services has been maintained.</p>
<p>✓ Intensify efforts to promote wellness and preventative care through better education, dietary habits and physical activity.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The province launched the Action Schools! BC initiative, which assists elementary schools in promoting physical activity and healthy eating habits. The province launched ActNow BC, a wellness strategy that aims to make the province the healthiest jurisdiction ever to host an Olympic and Paralympic Games. ActNow BC combines cross-government and community-based approaches to address common chronic disease risk factors through programs and initiatives that support healthier eating, physical activity, ending tobacco use and promoting healthy choices during pregnancy. The province also has formed a partnership with the Healthy Living Alliance to strengthen chronic disease support and prevention. In addition, through the BC NurseLine and other components of the BC HealthGuide, British Columbians have 24/7 access to prevention and health care promotion information.</p>

<p>✓ Double the Physical Fitness and Amateur Sports Fund to \$44 million, to promote physical fitness and participation in amateur sport.</p>	<p>Done. From 2002/03 to 2005/06, the PFASF was doubled to \$44 million thereby accruing additional interest for BC's sport budget. As well, government is providing an additional \$15 million to the 2010 LegaciesNow Society to promote and support athletes, participants, coaches and sport organizations in the years leading to 2010. Government is also providing \$10 million to the Own the Podium program to support winter and summer athletes striving to represent BC and Canada at the Olympics and Paralympics.</p>
<p>✓ Enhance preventative drug and alcohol efforts, such as addiction counselling for new mothers and the reduction of fetal alcohol syndrome.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The Premier released Canada's most comprehensive fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) prevention strategy in September 2003. BC and its six partners in the Canada Northwest FASD Partnership recently created a 15-member research network board to compile evidence-based information that will guide progressive, inclusive policy, ultimately bettering the lives of individuals and families affected by the disorder. Through ActNow BC, the province is providing new funding for awareness and prevention programs to discourage alcohol use during pregnancy and to reduce tobacco use by British Columbians throughout the province</p>
<p>✓ Work to minimize interjurisdictional overlaps that are adding confusion and costs to health care delivery.</p>	<p>Done. The number of health authorities has been reduced to six from 52, to provide greater efficiency and co-ordination within regions. Savings from this change are estimated to be nearly \$100 million.</p>
<p>✓ Work with doctors, pharmacists and others to find a cost-effective alternative to reference-based pricing.</p>	<p>Done. A consultation panel completed a review of the Reference Drug Program and issued a report with recommendations for ensuring a sustainable, publicly funded PharmaCare program. The review focused on redesigning the PharmaCare program to manage costs effectively and identifying strategies to support appropriate and safe prescribing practices. It also included improved information sharing among physicians, pharmacists and the public to support decision-making, and consultation with health-care providers and other stakeholders.</p>
<p>✓ Provide better home support and home care services.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Health authorities are focusing their resources on direct patient care safety to enable people with high care needs to live in their homes as long as possible. A portion of new federal health care funding received in the fall of 2004 will be used to enhance home care services.</p>

A New Era for **Children & Families:**

<p>✓ Stop the endless bureaucratic restructuring that has drained resources from children and family services.</p>	<p>Underway. The Ministry of Children and Family Development has achieved its budget targets while ensuring that services to the most vulnerable children and individuals are protected. The ministry is eliminating duplication of services and consolidating services between communities and the ministry. Supports for clients are being determined and provided at the community level.</p>
---	---

<p>✓ Increase emphasis on early childhood intervention programs for families with special needs children.</p>	<p>Done. Since June 2001, government funding for early childhood development has increased by \$50 million to \$348 million (as of 2004-05 estimates). Budget 2005 further dedicated an additional \$241 million over the next three years for programs including early childhood screening and enhanced services for children with special needs. In addition, the province has launched Children First learning initiatives in 30 B.C. communities that offer educational, physical and social support, which helps to identify children at risk and prevent crises before they reach school age, as well as 41 Aboriginal early child development projects. As of 2004-05, Infant Development Program funding has increased by \$3.1 million since 2001, and funding for early intervention therapies has increased by \$2.0 million, bringing combined expenditures in both these areas to \$31.1 million.</p>
<p>✓ Target childcare funding to help parents who need it most.</p>	<p>Done. Under the Child Care Operating Funding Program, which took effect April 2003, the number of child care spaces eligible for funding has increased from 45,000 to 77,000. Effective January 2005, through a \$33 million investment about 10,000 more children became newly eligible for funding through child care subsidy and thousands of other families will see their funding increase. For example, for the first time in 10 years, the child care subsidy rate will increase for families of children under 6. Budget 2005 dedicated an additional \$5 million over two years to make additional families eligible for subsidies. As well, in 2003-04 an additional \$3.3 million in annual funding was added to the supported child care program for children 6 and younger.</p>
<p>✓ Focus on early identification of at-risk children, and measures aimed at preventing crisis situations before they arise.</p>	<p>Done and ongoing. The province has created or enhanced 122 family resource centres to help parents with young children, established Children First learning initiatives in 17 communities, directed funding to 37 aboriginal communities for culturally relevant early childhood development programs and funded a Success By 6 partnership with the United Way and the Savings and Credit Unions of BC. \$7.3 million has been reinvested for services for aboriginal children and families, and services to assist families to care safely for their children. Funding for a Provincial Consultant for Aboriginal Infant Development programs has been in place since 2003. This position enables training, co-ordination and development of new programs across the province. Infant Development Program funding has increased by \$2.1 million since 2001. Since April 2003, the province has provided direct funding of up to \$6,000 per year per child, to parents of children aged 6 to 18 with autism spectrum disorder. This is to assist them with the costs of autism intervention services during out-of-school hours. More than 1,700 children are receiving extended autism intervention funding.</p>
<p>✓ Increase child care choices for parents by encouraging the expansion of safe, affordable child care spaces.</p>	<p>Done. Under the Child Care Operating Funding program, the number of eligible funded child care spaces increased from 45,000 to 77,000. The province has also improved the funding formula for major capital projects supporting new child care spaces to benefit small urban and rural communities and support the creation of new licensed child care spaces. The minor capital funding program assists licensed group child care facilities to meet licensing requirements and supports quality and safety in licensed facilities.</p>

<p>✓ Work with foster parents to help them improve care and placements of foster children.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The province has developed a new regional support structure to help foster parents improve care and placement of foster children and provide them with new information resources.</p>
<p>✓ Enhance training, resources and authority for front-line social workers to properly protect children at risk and improve services to families.</p>	<p>Done. In 2002-03, 20 new post-secondary spaces were added for social work and child protection. New legislative and policy options have been introduced that increase the range of services social workers can use to protect children and support families, including options that allow children to be placed in the custody of extended family members.</p>

A New Era for **First Nations**:

<p>✓ Give all British Columbians a say on the principles that should guide BC's approach to treaty negotiations, through a one-time, province-wide referendum, within our first year.</p>	<p>Done. The referendum was completed in May 2002. The referendum principles continue to be applied to treaty negotiations, including to the four recently signed Agreements-in-Principle.</p>
<p>✓ Ask an all-party committee of the Legislature to consult with British Columbians, including First Nations, to draft the referendum questions.</p>	<p>Done. The Select Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs conducted hearings in 15 communities and received 482 oral and written submissions.</p>
<p>✓ Increase efforts to protect and promote aboriginal languages.</p>	<p>Done. In all, the province has allocated over \$4.3 million to aboriginal language preservation, including funding toward the development of FirstVoices.com, an innovative, Internet-based, language-preservation program.</p>
<p>✓ Fast-track treaty talks, to conclude fair treaty settlements.</p>	<p>Done and Ongoing. In the last year, Agreements-in-Principle have been signed with four First Nations: Lheidli T'enneh, Maa-nulth, Tsawwassen and Sliammon. These are based on the publicly endorsed principles for treaty negotiation. Instructions have been issued to all negotiators to identify opportunities for expediting agreements.</p>
<p>✓ Offer to negotiate a delegated, municipal-style of self-government with any First Nation that wants to move beyond the failed Indian Act.</p>	<p>Done and Ongoing. Cabinet has approved B.C.'s approach to governance negotiations with First Nations. This approach has recently been tabled at all Final Agreement tables and the province is now engaging in negotiations.</p>
<p>✓ Increase program funding, together with the federal government, to solve urban challenges and build capacity.</p>	<p>Done. In all, the province has signed over 300 treaty-related measures, economic measures, forestry direct awards, oil and gas consultations and parkland management agreements with First Nations. Notably, under the economic development fund, 145 projects worth \$26.3 million have been approved that promote First Nations participation in shellfish aquaculture, tourism, forestry, and oil and gas sectors, as well as the 2010 Games. Key urban initiatives include the Aboriginal Employment Partnership Initiative, which works toward increased aboriginal participation in the workplace. Recent partner agreements involve London Drugs, the Vancouver Police, and the BC Construction Association. The province has also committed \$120 million over three years in forestry revenue-sharing with First Nations.</p>
<p>✓ Seek clear direction from the Supreme Court of Canada on constitutional questions about aboriginal self-government.</p>	<p>Ongoing. There is a commitment to act where necessary but, as an alternative to the litigation process, the province has developed a new framework for negotiation of self-government arrangements consistent with the publicly endorsed referendum principles.</p>

<p>✓ Double the First Citizens' Fund to \$72 million to support native friendship centers, student bursaries and economic development programs.</p>	<p>Done. Funding has been increased to double the fund over four years.</p>
<p>✓ Create a permanent First Citizens' Forum that will provide aboriginal citizens living on and off reserves a direct means to communicate with government about their priorities and ideas to materially improve their quality of life today.</p>	<p>Done. Two forums have been held, in October 2002 and October 2003.</p>
<p>✓ Devote special attention and resources to addressing the challenges and needs of aboriginal women and youth, and to helping aboriginal families bridge the "digital divide."</p>	<p>Underway. The province has signed a memorandum of understanding to provide First Nations with greater independence in caring for children in need, allocated \$10 million to support aboriginal health programs through regional health authorities, dedicated \$800,000 to an aboriginal healing centre in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, and supported the Nisga'a Lisims Government Network pilot project, which will deliver state-of-the-art, high-speed connections to four Nisga'a communities. The province has signed 10 aboriginal enhancement agreements with school districts and First Nations to improve aboriginal student achievement, and is working with 23 other school districts to conclude enhancement agreements, with the goal of having agreements with all 60 districts by 2005. The NetWork BC project will connect all First Nations communities with schools to high-speed Internet by 2006.</p>
<p>✓ Introduce a legislative framework for legally respecting aboriginal rights protected under the Constitution in the absence of treaties.</p>	<p>Done. As committed in the 2003 throne speech, the government has introduced a legislative framework for the accommodation of aboriginal rights through the provision of forest tenures and revenues to First Nations. B.C. has also signed a reconciliation protocol with the First Nations Summit to establish a new relationship of recognition and reconciliation with B.C. First Nations. A number of cross-government initiatives under this program are moving forward, including a plan to encourage the reintroduction of aboriginal place names.</p>

A New Era of **Public Service:**

<p>✓ Hold open Cabinet meetings at least once a month that are televised and broadcast live on the Internet.</p>	<p>Done. To date, 35 open cabinet meetings have been held.</p>
<p>✓ Give all government MLAs a meaningful new role in policy development and service planning through a new system of Cabinet decision-making.</p>	<p>Done. New government caucus committees have been established to review policies, programs and legislation. Private members have also been appointed to committees of cabinet.</p>
<p>✓ Give all MLAs and citizens a better voice in government through active legislative committees.</p>	<p>Done. All select standing committees have been active since 2001, and the number of public meetings and public reports has increased.</p>
<p>✓ Repeal the NDP "gag law" that restricts third-party advertising during election campaigns.</p>	<p>Done, under the <i>Election Statutes Amendment Act</i>, passed October 2002.</p>
<p>✓ Amend the Election Act to eliminate loopholes on disclosures of financial contributions to parties and to include donations of labour.</p>	<p>Done, under the <i>Election Statutes Amendment Act</i>, passed October 2002.</p>
<p>✓ Introduce free votes in the Legislature, to allow all MLAs to vote freely on behalf of their constituents on matters not specifically identified as a vote of confidence.</p>	<p>Done.</p>

<p>✓ Appoint a Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform to assess all possible models for electing the MLAs, including preferential ballots, proportional representation, and our current electoral system.</p>	<p>Done. The assembly reported its findings in December 2004. Their proposed change to the electoral system will be part of a referendum question alongside the provincial election on May 17, 2005.</p>
<p>✓ Give the Citizens' Assembly a mandate to hold public hearings throughout BC, and if it recommends changes to the current electoral system, that option will be put to a province-wide referendum.</p>	<p>Done. As of March 2002, B.C. is now fully compliant with the Agreement on Internal Trade. B.C. led a successful national initiative to expand AIT rules to Crown procurement practices. Negotiations are underway with Alberta to achieve a comprehensive agreement on trade, investment and labour mobility.</p>
<p>✓ Outlaw donations from charities to political parties.</p>	<p>Done, under the <i>Election Statutes Amendment Act</i>, passed October 2002.</p>

A New Era of **Public Safety**:

<p>✓ Ensure all laws are equally applied and enforced for all British Columbians.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>
<p>✓ Ensure auxiliary police officers are properly trained and armed to protect their communities.</p>	<p>Underway. Government has been working with the RCMP to develop an armed reserve/auxiliary force pilot project. The RCMP are currently completing their proposal.</p>
<p>✓ Pressure the federal government to fulfill its contractual obligation to fully fill all RCMP vacancies.</p>	<p>Done. Vacancies were filled.</p>
<p>✓ Hold the line on court fees, to ensure that everyone has affordable access to our justice system.</p>	<p>Done. Court fees have not increased.</p>
<p>✓ Vigorously defend the Crown's ownership of provincial land and resources.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The province is working with the federal government to provide greater certainty over offshore oil and gas, and fisheries. In addition, the province is reinvigorating the treaty process to provide greater certainty about Crown land and access. The province has also revitalized the treaty process, achieving four Agreements-in-Principle that move B.C. towards increased certainty over the land, in terms of aboriginal title.</p>
<p>✓ Continue to pressure the federal government to scrap mandatory gun registration and put those resources into fighting crime.</p>	<p>Done. The province is no longer administering the registry and has notified the federal government on several occasions about its concerns with the program.</p>

A New Era of **Equality**:

<p>✓ Stand up for the equality of all Canadians and all provinces under the Canadian Constitution.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The province is pressing the federal government to ensure that no jurisdiction bears an unfair burden under the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol, and has aggressively pursued equitable funding arrangements under the First Ministers' Health Accord.</p>
<p>✓ Fight for BC's fair share of federal tax dollars through a more equitable distribution of federal government transfer payments and contracts.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Through the new Canada-B.C. Partnership, the province has secured an additional \$1 billion in investments from the federal government, including funding for the Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre expansion, Olympic venues, transportation improvements and new parks.</p>

<p>✓ Work with other provinces to negotiate a more equitable federal equalization program that is consistent with the Constitution.</p>	<p>Ongoing. In response to a unanimous call from the provinces, the federal government removed the equalization ceiling in February 2003. B.C. continues to work toward a fair, equitable equalization program.</p>
<p>✓ Push to eliminate interprovincial trade barriers.</p>	<p>Done. Since March 2002, B.C. has been fully compliant with the Agreement on Internal Trade. B.C. led a successful national initiative to expand AIT rules to Crown procurement practices. B.C. co-leads with Alberta, the Council of the Federation initiative to broaden the scope and coverage of the AIT. Negotiations are underway with Alberta to achieve a comprehensive agreement on trade, investment and labour mobility.</p>
<p>✓ Ensure that our rural communities have the health and education services they need.</p>	<p>Ongoing. A new education funding formula, implemented in March 2002, provides supplementary grants for districts with unique student needs, enrolment decline and unique geographic factors. Rural health initiatives include expanded medical and nursing education spaces, new health authorities to improve regional services, and forgivable student loans for medical and nursing graduates who practice in rural communities.</p>
<p>✓ Insist on equal, non-discriminatory voting rights for all Canadians in respect of the governments that rule their lives.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Governance agreements accompanying Agreements-in-Principle with First Nations will enable them to form democratically elected and accountable governments. In addition, an amendment to the <i>Election Act</i> in spring 2003 brings the rules for prisoners voting in elections into line with a Supreme Court of Canada ruling in 2002.</p>
<p>✓ Work to ensure that all aboriginal governments have the same legal status in BC as they do in every other province.</p>	<p>Ongoing. B.C.'s publicly endorsed principles for treaty negotiations ensure aboriginal governments have the status and authority necessary to meet community needs.</p>
<p>✓ Invite all Members of the BC Legislature and all BC Members of Parliament to hold annual joint conferences aimed at publicly identifying and overcoming issues of regional alienation within Canada and BC.</p>	<p>Done. The first Provincial Congress was held in February 2002.</p>
<p>✓ Ensure all British Columbians have equal access to legal representation and justice.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The province has restructured legal services, introduced circuit courts and set up a 24-hour call centre, all to stabilize the legal aid system and ensure legal aid is available to British Columbians who need it most.</p>

Comments on New Era commitments not included above:

<p><i>Give property buyers more information about prospective properties by ensuring that notices of known archaeological sites must be registered in the Land Titles Office</i></p>	<p>This commitment is currently underway. To date, government has launched the Remote Access Archeological Data tool, giving property owners, realtors, archeologists and local governments access to archeological information from anywhere in BC. This system is a more effective and efficient way to provide information while protecting the archeological integrity of the sites.</p>
<p><i>Work with non-profit societies to build and operate an additional 5,000 new intermediate and long term care beds by 2006.</i></p>	<p>The province is developing new residential care beds, supportive housing and assisted living spaces to ensure seniors and people with disabilities have a range of housing and care options appropriate to their individual needs. This commitment is currently underway with a revised timeline. To date we have built or renovated over 4,000 units. These units include a portion of 3,500 additional independent living spaces for seniors and persons with disabilities through Independent Living BC, built in co-operation with non-profit, community, municipal and federal partners through the Independent Living BC program. This also includes an extensive program of replacements and renovations for residential care to modernize outdated facilities (some more than 30 years old) and ensure 24/7 quality care for patients with complex care needs. While this emerging need to replace aging stock on top of adding new stock has created challenges, by December 2006 we will be more than halfway to meeting our commitment, and will meet its final goal by the end of 2008.</p>
<p><i>Stop the expansion of gambling that has increased gambling addiction and put new strains on families.</i></p>	<p>In 2002, government moved quickly to transfer the conduct and management of gaming to the BC Lottery Corporation, where decisions were removed from political interference. BCLC now manages gaming based upon government policies that limit gaming activities, market assessments and with local governments ultimately determining whether slot machines or other gaming facilities will be permitted in their communities. While there has been an increase in slot machine in the province, the increases were based on: (1) numerous legal and policy commitments made by the previous government to add slot machines, (2) a decision to protect 7,000 jobs in the horse racing sector by allowing slot machines in race tracks requested by host communities, and (3) policies ensuring the BCLC operates on a market basis. It is important to note that there are currently fewer overall gaming facilities than in 2001. Government has also enhanced the tools to deal with problem gaming, doubling the budget (to \$4 million a year) to fund a comprehensive problem gambling program that includes counseling services, a 24-hour toll-free help line, an informational Web site and training for addiction counselors.</p>
<p><i>Pass a Domestic Violence Prevention Act that would allow police to remove violent offenders from the home, rather than forcing the victims to leave to find safe shelter</i></p>	<p>Government continues to make changes that ensure greater protection to women and families and reduce domestic violence. The Ministry of Attorney General Criminal Justice Branch has reformed its spousal assault prosecution policy placing an emphasis on victim's safety and on finding justice responses appropriate to each case, depending on severity. The Corrections Branch of the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General developed and implemented a number of initiatives including special training of probation officers and targeting policies requiring risk and additional screening safeguards. Further initiatives include: Victim Link (a 1-800 toll free, 24/7 phone line providing immediate crisis support for victims of violence); ASAP Aide for Safety Assessment (a new safety assessment tool); and the Victim Safety Unit (addressing victim safety concerns and providing input into the review of high risk offender releases. The existing Criminal Code provisions combined with those in the Family Relations Act, are working well in this province and achieving the policy objectives underlying the New Era commitment. In addition, government has enhanced protections within communities through returning 100 percent of traffic fines to communities for safety initiatives (\$40 million annually) and contributing an additional \$122 million over three years for RCMP and court improvements.</p>

<p><i>Establish workable recall legislation, to make it easier for citizens to hold MLAs accountable.</i></p> <p><i>Establish workable initiative legislation, to make it feasible for British Columbians to call for a referendum on issues of provincewide concern that fall within the provincial government's jurisdiction.</i></p>	<p>The Citizens Assembly on Electoral Reform has made a recommendation for electoral reform in the form of a Single Transferable Vote system that is to be put to voters as a referendum question on the same date as the provincial election in May of 2005. If the voters approve the proposed reform, significant amendments will be required to all legislation governing elections. Government has chosen to undertake all of the work associated with the outcome of the referendum as well as its New Era commitment at the same time.</p>
<p><i>Fight child prostitution and youth crime with legislation aimed at providing greater protection to children at risk of exploitation and greater parental responsibility for children who commit property crimes.</i></p>	<p>This commitment is currently underway. Stakeholder consultation about legislation and services to protect children from commercial sexual exploitation will be held throughout the province during May, June and July 2004. Safe Care for British Columbia's Children: A Discussion Paper will allow stakeholders, families and communities input as government prepares legislation and designs the delivery of Safe Care services for youth at risk. The proposed legislation will respond to concerns raised about the Secure Care Act, passed in July 2000 but never proclaimed into law.</p>



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

www.gov.bc.ca