

Shaping up: HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PAST YEAR'S POLICY AND ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES

2009/2010

Government Action

Priority Area:

**Taxation  
&  
Fiscal Policy**

**HST** – July 1, 2010 will see the introduction of a harmonized sales tax ✓

**Debt** – the province has committed that once B.C. returns to balanced budgets, all surpluses will be dedicated to paying down the Province's operating debt ✓

**Corporate tax** – Reductions planned for the next three years will give B.C. a combined federal-provincial rate of 25 per cent, among the lowest corporate income tax rates of the world's major industrialized economies ✓

**Small business tax** – a specific commitment to the elimination of the Small Business tax in BC ✓

**Property tax** – the BC Chamber participated in a review of the Industrial Property Tax system ✓

Priority Area:

**Energy  
Policy**

**Site C** – the province has committed to moving forward on construction of the Site C hydroelectric project ✓

**Clean Energy** – the Act fulfilled a number of BC Chamber recommendations;

- a commitment to develop an export electricity capacity
- an inventory of IPP projects
- merging of BC Hydro and BCTC
- clarification of the role of BC Utilities Commission
- Introduction of smart meters by 2012

**General Service Rates** – during the Negotiating Settlement Agreement negotiations, BC Hydro revised its proposal to reduce the rate differential charged to commercial customers ✓

Priority Area:

**Resource  
Sector**

**Recognition and Reconciliation** – the government will not move forward on a proposed R&R Act ✓

**Certainty** - Coastal Reconciliation Protocol provides guidance around what constitutes First Nation consultation. ✓

**Unified EA process** – BC and Canada sign an Agreement in Principal on which states that it "will avoid the duplication of regulatory measures" ✓



Priority Area:

**Labour  
Market  
Policy**

A new Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications, commits the provinces to a shared vision for making foreign qualifications recognition practices faster, fairer, more transparent, and consistent across the country. ✓

The B.C. and federal governments have extended the BC Skills Connect program ✓

BC signs the New West Partnership with Alberta and Saskatchewan. This agreement represents a comprehensive economic agreement, which will remove remaining barriers to trade, investment and labour mobility. ✓

The Government of Canada announces three contribution agreements addressing labour mobility and foreign credential recognition with the EU ✓

Priority Area:

**Crime  
&  
Public  
Safety**

The Government of Canada introduces improved sentencing; ✓

- repeals 'faint hope' clause
- reintroduces legislation to eliminate the use of conditional sentences for any offence for which there was a maximum sentence of 10 years

The Province continues to invest in supportive housing in communities across the province, including the Province's Homelessness Intervention Project which has exceeded its target by housing over 2,400 formerly homeless. ✓

Capacity at the Riverview facility has been expanded by forty-four beds. ✓

Priority Area:

**Transportation**

**Open Skies** - B.C. Premier Gordon Campbell, Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach, and Saskatchewan Minister of Enterprise Ken Cheveldayoff signed an unprecedented declaration affirming Western support for Open Skies. ✓

**ORV** - The Provincial Government has introduced a new framework for the management of Off-Road Vehicles (ORVs). ✓

**Unified EA process** – Both levels of government continue to invest in critical infrastructure projects ranging from enhancing our export hubs in the Lower Mainland through to investment in forest service roads and critical highway infrastructure such as Hwy 97. ✓

## It doesn't stop there

### PLANNING THE NEXT STEPS:

Over the coming year the Chamber will be looking to develop a number of working groups to engage members in examining critical public policy issues in a more comprehensive way than allowed by the policy development process.

These areas include the future of local government and a look at the wider energy issues. We would welcome participation from members on these working groups as well as your thoughts on other areas of public policy that the Chamber should focus on.

You can email [jgarson@bcchamber.org](mailto:jgarson@bcchamber.org), or call the Chamber office at 604.638.8113.