

Pages 1 through 14 redacted for the following reasons:

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, s.16



**Western Premiers call for a Canada-wide disaster mitigation program and agricultural recovery program**

**YELLOWKNIFE (June 22, 2011)** - Premiers strongly encouraged the federal government to work with all provinces and territories to quickly develop a new long-term Canada-wide disaster mitigation program. They also urged the federal government to consider supporting special compensation programming in light of the unique circumstances and magnitude of the 2011 floods and forest fires.

Severe natural disasters have significantly affected the lives and livelihoods of many families across Canada. Many have experienced unprecedented flooding in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Quebec, and the communities of Slave Lake, Alberta has been devastated by wildfires.

Several First Nations communities also continue to experience flooding on a regular basis and are among the most vulnerable communities. Premiers encouraged the federal government to develop a long-term mitigation strategy to protect against severe and continued flooding in First Nation communities. This strategy should also address northern and aboriginal communities experiencing major impacts on critical infrastructure as a result of changes to the permafrost caused by climate change.

The same weather conditions responsible for ongoing flooding in parts of the Prairies are also severely impacting the agricultural sector and the entire rural economy. Millions of acres have been flooded or have gone unseeded and cattle producers may have to reduce their herds because of pasture damage and inadequate forage. Premiers directed their Ministers of Agriculture to work together and with their federal counterpart to prepare specific proposals for joint support programs to address these urgent concerns.

Premiers offered their profound thanks to the emergency service workers and volunteers who have worked to mitigate damage and secure communities and families across Western Canada. Premiers also highlighted that the federal government has been an important partner in the flood fight, and in dealing with the effects on

communities from wildfires, by providing strong support through the Canadian military, when needed, and the national Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA).

Premiers discussed ongoing disaster prevention and relief efforts within their provinces, noting that recovery efforts are far from over. Premiers acknowledged the importance of existing positive collaboration between provinces and territories for preparing for and dealing with natural disasters, including the mutual sharing of expertise and aid during emergencies.

Manitoba will host a national meeting this fall of all key agencies involved in disaster management to review the flood and forest fire outlook for 2012 and identify areas where improved joint planning, preparation and coordination may be possible. Premiers encouraged the federal government to participate fully in this meeting.

Provinces and territories have gone to great lengths to prepare for and prevent disaster damage. Repairing and rebuilding natural disaster damage, especially year-after-year flooding damage, is far more costly than investing in preventative infrastructure. Provincial and territorial investments in mitigation efforts and disaster management have proven extremely valuable for protecting property and reducing damages. For example, in Manitoba, it is estimated that the total Red River Floodway investment of \$1.1 billion has prevented over \$30 billion in claims under the DFAA. In British Columbia, it is estimated that every \$1 million invested in wildfire prevention programs produces approximately \$3.4 million in positive economic, social and ecological benefits.



## **Premiers Looking Outward for Strong and Sustained Prosperity**

**YELLOWKNIFE (June 20, 2011)** - Western Premiers agreed today in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, on the importance of ensuring that infrastructure, policy, and regulations support increased trade with Asia and the United States (US) ensuring strong and sustained economic growth for Western Canadians.

The prosperity of Western Canada is closely linked with efficient trade with key markets in the United States and Asia. It is estimated that one in four jobs in Western Canada is directly supported by international exports. Further, nearly half of Western Canada's gross domestic product is dependent on exports to these markets, which will grow as world demand for Western Canadian goods, services and expertise increases.

### **Enhancing the Canada-US Economic Relationship**

Western Premiers are encouraged by the Canada-US Beyond the Border Working Group and Regulatory Cooperation Council initiatives. Western provinces and territories have long worked to advance concrete border-thinning measures that support economic growth and increase smart border security. Premiers welcome the opportunity to work with the federal government on practical, high-impact changes that will have positive outcomes for border trade and economic growth. Premiers acknowledged the importance of balancing security interests with enhanced trade.

Sustaining and enhancing the Canada-US economic relationship is crucial to the continued prosperity of Western Canada. Exports from Western provinces and territories to the US support about 987,000 Western jobs and represent 71% of the region's trade. Western provinces and territories account for more than one third of Canadian exports to the US, and ensuring smooth and timely access to the US market continues to be a top priority for Western Premiers.



Premiers emphasized the need for provinces and territories to be full partners in the Beyond the Borders and Regulatory Cooperation Council initiatives and agreed on several key changes, including:

- creating a smarter border that focuses limited resources by:
  - eliminating wasteful duplication of inspections; for example, Canada's carrier manifest system could mirror that of the US;
  - reducing permitting bottlenecks; and,
  - improving access to trusted traveller programs and developing preclearance processes to alleviate border delays.
- recognizing the equivalence of Canadian and American safety standards for food and agricultural products to reflect the integrated North American agricultural sector. Premiers expressed their ongoing concern with Country of Origin Labelling ;
- facilitating access for Western Canada's energy and forest products; and,
- enhancing the efficiency of the border by improving infrastructure, including at key Canada-US gateways and corridors.

Western Premiers also maintain strong relationships with Western Governors and other state and national decision-makers in the US. They committed to partner with the Canadian federal government, regional organizations, (e.g. Pacific Northwest Economic Region, PNWER) and industry stakeholders to develop and advance a smarter, more economically accessible, and safer border for Canadian and American citizens and businesses.

British Columbia Premier Christy Clark will be conveying the messages of Western Premiers to their US counterparts at the upcoming meeting of the Western Governors' Association.

### Harnessing Our Potential in Asia

Asia is home to over half of the world's population and accounts for a greater share of global economic output than the US and European Union combined. Since 2002, Asian markets have grown by an average of 8.9% per year, compared with 4.9% globally. About two-thirds of Canada's overall exports to Asia come from Western Canada.



## **Premiers work to support healthy families and safer communities**

**YELLOWKNIFE (June 22, 2011)** - Western Premiers committed today to share expertise and pursue opportunities to work together in a preventative, integrated approach to supporting healthy families and ensuring safe communities.

### **Safer Communities**

Premiers welcomed recent positive efforts by the federal government to address issues of public safety, including the elimination of two-for-one credits for time served in pre-trial detention.

Premiers noted the importance of providing law enforcement and courts with the proper tools to adequately address serious violent crimes, deal with emerging trends in organized crime, and to ensure criminal records properly reflect the severity of violent offences committed. In their discussions, Premiers:

- encouraged the federal government to work with provinces and territories to examine all approaches that would help make communities safer from home invasions, carjackings, pre-meditated crimes (such as armed robberies involving knives), and abuse and victimization of the elderly;
- directed Western Justice Ministers to examine issues related to the possession of body armour and unlawfully fortified buildings and vehicles. Existing provincial and territorial legislation has been effective in addressing these issues but could benefit from the coordination of approaches across jurisdictions;
- encouraged the federal government to engage provinces and territories in efforts to reform the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* (YCJA) to meet shared federal, provincial and territorial objectives, including amending the YCJA to deal more effectively with serious and repeat young offenders;

- called on the federal government to address First Nations and Inuit policing needs by ensuring adequate funding for First Nations Policing; and,
- expressed concern regarding possible federal funding reductions to the National Police Service (NPS) and called for the federal government to fully engage provinces and territories in the upcoming review of the NPS to ensure continued and appropriate levels of funding and services.

The NPS includes a range of services that are critical in maintaining a well-functioning criminal justice system, including forensic laboratories, criminal history records, fingerprint identification, toxicology services, and the sex offender registry. For example, as currently funded, the NPS is at least 18 months behind in data entry. It takes crime labs up to one year to process crime scene samples. It needs to be adequately funded to handle the volume of data and to take advantage of scientific and technological advances.

Premiers agreed that violence against Aboriginal women and girls needs the continued attention of all jurisdictions and agreed to coordinate efforts in addressing the issue of violence against Aboriginal women and girls, as crime knows no borders. Addressing this issue goes beyond coordination of law enforcement and involves cross government and cross jurisdiction cooperation. As part of this initiative, Premiers directed their Justice Ministers to consider the root causes of violence against Aboriginal women and girls and report back on progress by December 2011.

Premiers also urged the federal government to proceed with a funding commitment to establish a national police support centre for missing person including resources related to Aboriginal policing services, specifically dedicated to the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls.

### Healthy Families

Premiers are committed to improving the health of families and to supporting government-wide measures that ensure the long-term sustainability and quality of health care systems.

Premiers stressed a shift to a more proactive approach to health by all government departments, the private sector, communities, and individuals. Leading healthier lifestyles can prevent the onset of many chronic diseases, improve health outcomes and

As a trading country, Canada must endeavour to continually expand its international network and trade relationships with established partners and new markets. Asia is a key area for Western growth. As a region, it performed strongly in the recent global recession, and it is quickly becoming a locus of economic power. Canada is ideally situated geographically, economically and culturally to take advantage of these global changes.

Exports to Asia already support over 240,000 jobs in Western Canada, and the region accounts for a rapidly growing 17% of our exports. The dramatic development in Asia is generating a particularly strong demand for food and commodities such as coal, potash, forest products and minerals. Global oil and gas demand is expected to continue to grow as well, creating significant new export opportunities for Western and Northern energy products. Western Canada is ideally situated to meet growing Asian demand with our abundance of energy, food, forest, coal, mineral and fertilizer resources, and related services and technologies.

Premiers also noted that Western Canada is a key gateway for imports from Asia to North American consumer markets, forming a vital link for intercontinental and international trade. To capitalize on these opportunities, the West needs the right tools to move exports to Asia and imports to and through Western Canada. Premiers noted that infrastructure is essential to ensuring that Western Canada takes full advantage of export and import opportunities.

Premiers recognize that the timely development of strategic physical infrastructure and policies necessary to facilitate trade, such as railways, roads, gateways, ports, airports, pipelines and liquid natural gas terminals, are crucial if Canada is to compete successfully in global markets. They agreed to support and encourage the development of viable market options focusing on our competitive advantages.

Western Premiers also reinforced the need for timely approval processes for major infrastructure projects, including those related to commodity production and export.

Western Premiers noted that they intend to underscore for their Council of the Federation colleagues the tremendous opportunities that growing Asian markets represent to the diversification of Canada's export markets and to the expansion of tourism opportunities in Western Canada.



## Open Skies

Western Premiers continued to press the federal government to adopt a true Open Skies policy and pursue agreements with countries of critical trade, tourism and investment importance to western Canada, particularly in Asia and niche markets. Enhancing air access between western Canada and the world will allow businesses to grow and jobs to be created, not only in Western gateways and regional economies, but across Canada.

Western Premiers also continue to encourage the federal government to liberalize existing Air Service Agreements to grant landing rights in Western Canada for partner countries' carriers. Premiers support increased transparency and the inclusion of airports and key stakeholders as observers during air bilateral negotiations.

Western Premiers recognize that the efficient movement of people and goods between commercial centres in a cost-competitive manner is an increasingly important requirement for success in a globally competitive economy. Premiers call on the federal government to improve affordability and remove barriers to international access by further reducing airport rents and substantially reducing the fees, charges and taxes related to air travel in order to help enhance the competitiveness of Canada's aviation industry and economy as a whole. All Canadians would benefit from being able to move goods, services and people more cost-efficiently.

quality of life, and allow government to invest more money in other services. For example, the cost of obesity in Canada is estimated at \$4.3 billion annually. In addition, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a one hundred per cent preventable disorder which results in significant economic and social cost to our health care, social services, education and justice systems along with our families and communities.

Governments are committed to this approach through support services, interventions, and educating Canadians make healthy lifestyle choices as a long-term investment in provincial/territorial health care systems.

Western Premiers are focused on improving the health of families through healthy lifestyles, healthy eating, healthy starts and healthy communities.

Western Premiers welcomed the Prime Minister's commitment to continuing the 6% escalator on the Canada Health Transfer, and look forward to a discussion with the Prime Minister on the negotiation of all major transfer agreements set to expire in 2014. Maintaining ongoing, adequate and predictable federal transfers is critical in providing a range of federally-supported services, such as health care, social services, and post-secondary education.

Territorial Premiers also look forward to an early discussion with the Prime Minister on an extension of Territorial Health System Sustainability Initiative, which expires March 31, 2012

### Pharmaceutical Procurement

Western Premiers encouraged continued efforts, both regionally and nationally, in the area of joint pricing and procurement, and support ongoing efforts to realize cost savings associated with cooperating where possible, particularly in the area of health care. By pursuing measures to take advantage of economies of scale and shared expertise, Western Provinces have the potential for significant savings on items such as operating room supplies (estimated savings: \$14.8 million over 5 years in one jurisdiction), or cardiac Stents for Angioplasty (estimated savings: \$21 million over three years).

For example, BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba have taken steps to maximize value through common group buying organizations. Partnerships include a Western Supply Chain Management Initiative that includes the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations and the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority; and BC's Provincial Health Services Authority and Alberta Health Services.

### 2012 Western Premiers' Conference

Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach, attending his last Western Premiers' Conference, extended an invitation to the Premiers to their next conference to be held in Alberta in Spring 2012.

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## **Western Premiers Focus on Economic Opportunities**

**YELLOWKNIFE (June 22, 2011)** - Western Premiers discussed a number of strategic opportunities to advance policies that will support continued growth and position the West to compete on the global stage.

Western Canadian economies are gaining strength and are once again positioned to lead the national economy.

### Labour Market

Western Premiers agreed on an urgent need for governments, educators and employers to work together to maximize labour market participation and productivity.

Western Canada will face skills shortages in the next decade and, in order to maintain the West's strong economy and prosperity, it is expected that the West will need over one million additional workers, fully one-sixth of the West's current workforce.

Premiers recognize that the productivity of the West's workforce is critical to meeting skills needs and improving Canada's standard of living. Premiers tasked Ministers responsible to prioritize improving labour productivity.

This will complement a renewed focus on improving the skills and labour market participation of Aboriginal people, and continuing to ensure that immigration supports unmet labour market needs.

### Immigration

Premiers discussed the benefits immigration brings for western jurisdictions and noted the importance of continuing to attract people with diverse skills. Premiers noted that the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) remains the most effective and flexible



economic immigration tool that western provinces and territories have to respond to regional labour market and economic needs. In 2010, immigration through the PNPs accounted for approximately 41% of economic immigration in Western Canada. These nominees are relieving labour market pressures, supporting regional economic growth, contributing to communities, and supporting population growth.

Premiers noted recent evaluations of the PNPs across western provinces show an overwhelmingly positive assessment of the programs and a general consensus that newcomers are making a positive contribution to provincial and territorial economies. Studies done in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba and Yukon showed satisfaction levels were close to 100% overall by nominees and employers, and found strong employment outcomes, low unemployment rates compared to national averages, and high levels of satisfaction with their communities as a place to live.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada's decision in 2010 to cap the number of nominees per year is detrimental to economic growth in the West and Canada, and a reversal on previous commitments to provinces and territories.

Premiers renewed their call on the federal government to immediately increase PNP caps and increase Canada's immigration target range above the current maximum of 265,000. This increase would help accommodate provincial immigration needs and improve the responsiveness of Canada's immigration programs in all categories. The federal government must work with western provinces and territories to grow their PNPs and ensure that this program remains flexible and responsive to regional labour market requirements. Premiers are open to discussions with the federal government on innovative strategies in order to create room for PNP growth.

Premiers also noted the need for federal assistance to attract a larger number of immigrants through the federal Skilled Worker Program to smaller urban and rural centres in Western Canada.

### Western Electricity and Energy Policy

Western Canada is home to some of the world's significant energy opportunities. The West accounts for over 90 per cent of Canada's oil, natural gas and coal production, produces all of its uranium, and a third of the electricity exported to the United States. Premiers noted that the sustainable development of these resources will be an important contributor to Canada's long-term prosperity.

Premiers noted that major infrastructure investments to transform Canada's domestic and trade-related energy systems are needed and will require pan-Canadian cooperation. Premiers welcomed the recent federal announcement of support for clean energy projects and look forward to discussing opportunities with the federal government for cooperation in the development of regional and national initiatives. Premiers also discussed the challenges faced by the territories associated with development of additional energy sources for the North.

A number of regional and national clean energy projects are underway in the West. Jurisdictions are examining ways to expand their co-operative relationship to increase electricity supply, security and reliability, while enhancing economic development.

Premiers discussed plans for additional growth in all areas of the energy sector, and also noted technologies like carbon capture and storage (CCS), which has the potential to help reduce the world's greenhouse gas emissions. Over 40 per cent of the world's electricity comes from coal-fired generation, and CCS is a transferrable technology that can help to meet growing global energy demand.

Premiers noted the need to continue to support the development of new technologies and transmission infrastructure, and specifically to enhance the reliability and further development of a Western electrical grid. Improvements to western electrical grids can assist in increasing electrical supply throughout the west and north.

Premiers also discussed the need for a comprehensive Canadian energy policy framework, and called for greater intergovernmental coordination on energy policy and clean energy development. Premiers are encouraged by the efforts of the Winnipeg Energy Dialogue, a group of public and private sector stakeholders, on a Canadian clean energy strategy and called for close collaboration with ministerial efforts already underway to develop sustainable and forward-looking solutions for Canada's energy future.

Premiers also agreed to explore opportunities for joint trade advocacy in energy across North America and agreed on the importance of promoting Canadian energy sources to key customers in the United States.

### Environmental Assessment

Comprehensive and scientifically sound environmental assessment reviews are necessary for environmental protection. Duplicative efforts do not contribute to

improved environmental outcomes, they double-count same steps and tie up resources that could be better used elsewhere. Holding up environmentally sound projects slows economic growth through lengthy delays and unpredictable timelines. Citizens are not well served by the duplication of regulations between governments. Canadians would be better served by a "one project, one process" approach.

Provinces and territories welcome the federal government's commitment in the recent Speech from the Throne to address this longstanding issue and work with provinces and territories to take concrete steps to streamline duplicative environmental assessment approval processes. Premiers look forward to fundamental, and timely, amendments to the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* which would substantially reduce duplication and improve the process for all, including consideration of legislated time limits for the conclusion of review processes.

#### Investment Canada Act

Premiers welcome the federal government's commitment to proceed with a review of the *Investment Canada Act* and noted the importance of transparent, timely and stable rules to evaluate responsible foreign investments in Canada. They underscored the importance of ensuring that commitments made by foreign investors are effectively enforced and called on the Prime Minister to partner with them in reviewing the Act. They also noted the importance of ensuring that Canada continues to attract responsible foreign investment that is in the public interest and to provide a clear and welcoming investment environment abroad.

Premiers discussed the importance of ensuring the continued inflow of foreign direct investment to Canada and the value that these investments bring to Western Canada.

Premiers noted that their jurisdictions are home to many of Canada's unique and strategically valuable natural resource opportunities. As part of their development, Canadian and foreign investments have helped to responsibly build these industries for the benefit of our citizens and our economies.

#### Shipbuilding Centre of Excellence

Premiers discussed the federal government's strategy to establish shipbuilding centres of excellence in two locations in Canada to rebuild and refit Canada's large vessel marine fleet over the next 30 years. Premiers agreed that establishing a Western Canadian centre of marine shipbuilding and repair located in British Columbia would



further support economic development across Western Canada by providing a secure and stable revenue stream to support skilled jobs throughout the region.

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## **Premiers Focus on Families**

**VANCOUVER, July 21, 2011** -- Premiers today lent their collective voice to emphasize the importance of families in the decisions their governments make and discussed how to address some of the many challenges Canadian families face. Premiers released a backgrounder showcasing some initiatives launched in their jurisdictions to promote wellness and stronger families.

### **Helping Parents and Ensuring Children have a Good Start**

Providing children with a good start is key to ensuring they grow into healthy adults with the best opportunities to succeed. Providing parents with choice about how to care for their children and making quality and accessible child care both affordable and available is critical.

Provinces and territories have been active in promoting early childhood development and have pursued policies that focus on increased parental choice and improvements in the quality of child care.

Premiers agreed that governments must work together to ensure adequate support for parents – for the benefit of families and the economy. Premiers noted that on their own, the current maternity and parental benefits under the EI program for participating provinces and territories are inadequate to provide the type of support required for many Canadian families to make parental leave a viable choice.

Premiers also noted that poor mental health and mental illness are the number one causes of disability in Canada, far greater than heart disease or cancer. Most Canadians will in some way be affected by mental health or mental illness, be it personally, or within their families. In economic terms, the costs associated with poor mental health in Canada amount to over \$50 billion every year. However, many negative mental health outcomes associated with mental illness can be prevented or effectively managed if addressed before adulthood. Premiers noted that mental health promotion and mental illness prevention are a priority issue and that their jurisdictions are already doing important work in this area. To build on these efforts, Manitoba will host a mental health summit of governments and key stakeholders in Winter 2011. Among the issues to be discussed will be dementia.

Premiers also agreed to work together to find opportunities to address issues related to autism spectrum disorder.

## **Opportunities for Youth**

Premiers agree that increasing opportunities for youth is a priority. Provinces and territories have programs that provide training for youth to help them find work. However, current federal activities in the area of labour market training for youth duplicate programming already in place at the provincial and territorial level. Devolution of federal programming, with funding, to provinces and territories would create a more coherent and integrated approach to labour market training, reduce inefficiencies, and support better outcomes for Canadian youth.

## **Healthy and Active Families**

Premiers agree that healthy living is a priority—not only because it improves the lives of individual Canadians, but also because it makes sense for our health care systems. By strengthening our health promotion, disease prevention and chronic illness strategies and improving the health of Canadians, governments can help make health care systems more effective and more sustainable.

Premiers committed to continue working across departments, ministries and jurisdictions on a more proactive approach to these issues and to promote physically and mentally healthy and active families. They noted that approaches that involve education, justice, housing, social services and other areas are necessary.

For example, Premiers encourage relevant Ministers to work together to improve child and youth health, including accelerating work to increase the number of opportunities for children and youth in the after school time period to engage in healthy active living.

Fifty-nine per cent of adult Canadians and 26% of Canadian children are overweight or obese. Obesity rates in children have almost tripled in the last 25 years. It is projected that in 20 years up to 70% of middle-age Canadians will be overweight or obese. Affected adults die three to seven years earlier than their counterparts. Obesity is difficult to reverse. As such, prevention in childhood is crucial.

Premiers encourage their Ministers of Health/Healthy Living to continue their collaboration on a number of initiatives that could lead to greater overall health for Canadians, including:

- reducing sodium and sugar in prepared foods;
- exploring health-promoting procurement and other guidelines for child care service providers, schools, recreation centres and other places where children and youth gather; and
- prevention, diagnosis, early intervention, research and support to those affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

Actions taken by Canadians to improve their health not only improve their well-being but also improve the sustainability of health systems. Governments can support these positive outcomes through appropriate and cost-effective education and support.

## **Active and Independent Seniors**

Canada's population is aging. In 2009, there were 4.7 million seniors in Canada and this number is projected to double by 2036. Seniors are an integral part of our families and communities. In addition to providing valuable support and assistance to children and grandchildren, seniors contribute a wealth of knowledge and experience to society and are one of the most active groups of volunteers in communities.

Premiers identified three actions as examples of activities governments can take to help older people remain healthy, active and connected to their communities:

- encourage the development age-friendly communities that enable seniors to remain independent and in their homes for as long as possible;
- continue working together to improve Canada's income retirement system; and
- take measures to protect vulnerable seniors from victimization and abuse.

Building age-friendly communities involves developing policies, services, settings and structures across a wide range of ministries. Premiers agree to encourage a government-wide approach be taken to assist in this effort.

Premiers directed Finance Ministers to continue their work on improving Canada's retirement income system.

Premiers welcome the federal commitment to amend the *Criminal Code* to make it an aggravating factor in any offence if a victim is vulnerable due to age. Premiers commit to work jointly with the federal government on this so that progress is made quickly.

Premiers also directed Ministers of Justice to pursue their work with the federal Minister of Justice to examine approaches on how the criminal justice system could address concerns around the abuse and victimization of the elderly.

## **Volunteer and Non-Profit Sector**

Premiers acknowledged the vital role non-profits, charities and volunteer services play in providing services to families in our communities. In the coming year, Premier Clark will host a special summit with non-profits, charities and government to obtain advice on the best way to continue this vital role in the future.

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**For more information:**

**Nina Chiarelli**  
Government of British Columbia  
250-387-0793  
Cell: 250-216-8426  
[nina.chiarelli@gov.bc.ca](mailto:nina.chiarelli@gov.bc.ca)





## **MEDIA BACKGROUNDER**

### **Provincial and territorial initiatives to promote wellness and stronger families**

**VANCOUVER, July 21, 2011** – All provincial and territorial governments are active in the area of families and family health, including programs for children, parents and seniors. The following is a sampling of the many initiatives underway in provinces and territories to promote wellness and stronger families.

#### **ALBERTA – Active Alberta**

The Government of Alberta has long recognized the importance of recreation, active living and sport to the lives of Albertans, and has been closely involved with partners to develop a ten year plan to refocus initiatives in these areas. This new policy -- *Active Alberta* -- is a province-wide initiative designed to counteract the trend toward inactive, sedentary lifestyles and inspire Albertans to become more active every day. In collaboration with non-profit organizations, other levels of government, the private sector, individuals, and other stakeholders, Active Alberta goes beyond raising public awareness to address six key objectives:

- encouraging more Albertans to more active, more often;
- ensuring Alberta communities are more active, creative, safe, and inclusive;
- enabling Albertans to remain connected with nature by exploring the outdoors;
- engaging Albertans in community-based recreation and volunteer activities;
- coordinating with partners to provide quality recreation, active living and sport opportunities; and
- ensuring Albertans have opportunities to achieve athletic excellence.

In meeting these objectives, Active Alberta will ensure Albertans enjoy a high quality of life, improved health and wellness, strong communities, economic benefits, and personal fulfillment, through recreation, active living and sport. More information can be found at: <http://tpr.alberta.ca/activealberta/default.aspx>

#### **BRITISH COLUMBIA – Healthy Families BC**

The \$68.7-million Healthy Families BC strategy will help families make healthy choices and introduce innovative approaches to challenges facing BC's health care system.

The four-pronged Healthy Families BC strategy will support families and communities in the following key areas:

- **Healthy Lifestyles** – supporting British Columbians in managing their own health and reducing chronic disease by working with physicians to ensure consistent delivery of proven prevention initiatives.
- **Healthy Eating** – initiatives aimed at supporting healthy choices, in the home, the school and the community and creating environments that support the provision of healthier foods and make their choice easier.
- **Healthy Start** – helping the most vulnerable families in British Columbia get the best start in life.



- **Healthy Communities**— encouraging British Columbians to lead healthier lives where they live, work, learn and play.

One component of the Healthy Start initiative will be the implementation of the Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) program, which provides additional support for the most vulnerable clients – young, first time, low income parents and their children from pregnancy through two years of age.

Another component is the Prescription for Health program, which will give BC doctors additional tools to conduct medical assessments and work with patients to develop a health promotion and illness prevention plan that best suits their medical needs and personal situation. Patients may identify a lifestyle change goal, which will be documented by the physician on a Prescription for Health.

More information regarding Healthy Families BC can be found at:  
<http://www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/>.

### **MANITOBA – Healthy Child Manitoba**

Healthy Child Manitoba is a long-term, cross-departmental strategy to put children and families first. Guided by Canada's only legislated committee of cabinet dedicated to the health and well-being of children and youth, the province has developed a network of supports including:

- **Healthy Baby**, aimed at improving the health of Manitoba's most vulnerable babies and mothers. Prenatal benefits and education supports have resulted in fewer low weight and premature births, and a dramatic increase in breastfeeding rates.
- **Roots of Empathy**, helping school-aged children understand the feelings of others by introducing babies and their mothers into classrooms. It has cut the number of Manitoba kids getting into fights at school in half and is currently being expanded for younger children in child care, nursery school and preschool.
- **Positive Parenting Program**, helping parents create a loving, supportive and predictable home for their kids with easy-to-follow suggestions for small changes that can make a big difference.

### **NEW BRUNSWICK – Promoting Independence and Healthy Living for Seniors**

New Brunswick is taking action to encourage seniors to be healthy, active and independent for as long as possible. By taking charge of their health, seniors will enjoy an improved quality of life.

The Senior and Healthy Aging Secretariat was established to co-ordinate the implementation of New Brunswick's long-term care strategy *Be Independent Longer*. Actions to date include development and distribution of helpful information for seniors, public awareness campaigns on wellness and active living, the designation of the 3rd week in October as Healthy Active Living Week for Seniors, healthy living sessions in partnership with senior's organizations, telephone reassurance and friendly visiting programs through the Red Cross, funding for community resource centres and day activity centres.

The partnership with Red Cross provides friendly visiting, telephone reassurance and transportation for isolated seniors. Managed by Red Cross these services are delivered by volunteers recruited by RC.

For more information on the Senior and Healthy Aging Secretariat, please refer to:  
<http://www.gnb.ca/0182/index-e.asp>.

### **NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR – Mental Health and Addictions**

Recognizing the profound effect that mental health and addictions have on individuals, families and communities, the government of Newfoundland and Labrador is making significant investments throughout the province in mental health and addictions services to increase awareness and strengthen mental health services. In the last two years alone, the government has invested \$15.9 million to enhance mental health and addictions services.

Through Budget 2011, the government invested \$4.5 million to begin planning of a new mental health facility in St. John's, \$1.1 million to implement new initiatives to demystify mental illness and break down barriers, and \$2.2 million for the placement of five, full-time mental health and addictions counsellors in Nain, Hopedale, Makkovik and Natuashish.

In addition, plans are underway for a provincial public awareness campaign to further reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and to increase understanding of how and when to seek help.

### **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – Career Planning**

In 2008, a unique partnership between the Government of the Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment and BHP Billiton was established to bring two innovative career planning programs to NWT students. *Smart Focusing* for students in grades 8 and 9 and *Career Focusing* in high schools help students to become aware of their "gifts" and the way that these strengths can connect them to various types of work in the world. Students learn about education and training options after school and how to use post-secondary information to understand program pre-requisites in order to 'back-map' their course selections through school.

Results of the two-year pilots indicate that the programs are having a profoundly positive impact on students' ability to make a plan that supports their course selection in high school and transition from school into a post secondary pathway. Whether the pathway involves on-the-job training, apprenticeship or an institution of formal learning, students have a clear understanding of what 'work that fits' looks like for them, why it fits and why they have selected the pathway in their plan.

### **NOVA SCOTIA – Healthy Eating in Child-Care Settings**

Nova Scotia has introduced regulated comprehensive food and nutrition standards under the *Day Care Act* and Regulations. The *Standards for Food and Nutrition in Regulated Child-Care Settings* ensure:

- menus are based on food groups identified by Health Canada
- clean drinking water and food safety
- special dietary considerations can be met
- nutrition education is provided; and
- breast milk is labelled and stored consistently.

The Act also gives centres more support and flexibility in preparing healthy meals and snacks. The new regulations allow centres to develop and change menus based on a clear set of standards for nutrition and provide numerous tools and tips.



For more information on the new *Standards*, please see:  
<http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/families/provider/NewDayCareRegs.html>

### **NUNAVUT – ASIST**

As part of the territorial suicide prevention initiative, the Department Health and Social Services, the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and Health Canada have been working together on the development of a territory-wide suicide alertness and intervention training campaign called *Uqaqatigiiluk!/Talk about it!* This campaign uses the internationally recognized Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) and has been translated into Inuktitut. For more information on the territorial Suicide Prevention Initiative, please see: <http://www.hss.gov.nu.ca/en/Your%20Health%20MHA%20Suicide.aspx>

### **ONTARIO – Aging at Home Strategy**

Ontario recently expanded its Aging at Home Strategy. This initiative provides health care services to approximately 350,000 seniors to help them age in the comfort of their own homes. It permits Ontario's seniors to lead healthy and independent lives with dignity while avoiding unnecessary visits to hospitals, which can ultimately reduce ER wait times. The initiative will benefit seniors participating in approximately 1,400 Aging at Home projects. Investing in better local community supports will help improve Ontario's Alternate Level of Care (ALC) rate. ALC patients are individuals in hospital beds who would be better cared for in an alternate setting, such as long-term care, rehab, or home. By giving seniors the support they need to avoid hospitalization in the first place and helping those who do get admitted return home faster, access to health care will be improved for all Ontarians.

### **PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND – Girls Unlimited**

Through funding from the PEI government, a local community organization designed and implemented a series of girl/caregiver workshops across PEI for girls ages 10 -14 and their parents/caregivers to enhance girl's self-esteem and confidence. The project was designed to provide girls and their caregivers with information to support them in dealing with the emotional, social and cultural issues they may face. There were a number of workshops that took place across the province, including one in the Francophone community and one in the newcomer's community.

Five English language and one French language Girls Unlimited Conferences were held across Prince Edward Island. The conferences were well attended and had positive feedback from the participants. The main sessions for the conferences focused on media literacy, physical/mental/emotional health, self-esteem and body image. This upcoming year, a similar project has been funded to work with young boys in Prince Edward Island.

### **QUÉBEC – 2006-2012 Government Action Plan to Promote Healthy Lifestyles and Prevent Weight-Related Problems**

In October 2006, the Government of Quebec announced its action plan entitled *Investir pour l'avenir* [Investing for the future] and declared its commitment to a collective strategy to improve the quality of life and well-being of Quebecers by enabling them to live in environments that promote the adoption and maintenance of healthy lifestyles. In keeping with that action plan and with two measures outlined in the 2006-2009 Youth Action Strategy, the Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports (MELS), with the participation of the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MSSS) and the Quebec



Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPAQ), published the Framework Policy on Healthy Eating and Active Living. Through this action, it has demonstrated its firm intention to make Quebec academic institutions places where students can eat better and be more active. An initiative such as this is not possible, however, without the commitment and participation of all school community stakeholders and partners, who will need to continue working together to ensure the future of youth and our society.

### **SASKATCHEWAN – Children and Youth Agenda**

In March 2011, the Saskatchewan government announced that is investing more than \$34 million in a new, cross-government approach to the complex issues facing Saskatchewan children, youth and families through the Saskatchewan Children and Youth Agenda. The Children and Youth Agenda identifies funding and programs across several ministries that address common problems facing children and families at risk, such as lower education levels, unemployment and substance abuse. The cross-government agenda will allow for a comprehensive, targeted approach to these challenges. Funding initiatives announced in the March 2011 budget include:

- \$7 million for Adult Basic Education and Provincial Training Allowance targeted to First Nations and Métis students;
- \$2.9 million to increase high school completion rates and improve achievement for First Nations and Métis students;
- \$1 million to develop a 24/7 intensive family support model to prevent children from coming into care;
- \$900,000 to enhance rehabilitation therapies and/or frontline services for individuals with Autism.

For more information on Saskatchewan's Children and Youth Agenda, please see: <http://www.finance.gov.sk.ca/budget2011-12/SSBackgrounder.pdf>.

### **YUKON – Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)**

FASD is a priority issue for Yukon due to the significant impact this 100% preventable disability has on our communities. Yukon's multi-sectoral work in this area, with a focus on prevention, diagnosis, early intervention and support to those affected by FASD, is an example of how Yukon is being proactive to support improved health outcomes and quality of life for individuals and families, along with the long-term sustainability of our government's health and social services. Continuing to support the Canada Northwest FASD Research Network, along with other provinces and territories, and sharing promising practices and evidence-based approaches will also assist in FASD prevention and provide supports and interventions to those affected by FASD. For more information, please see: <http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/fasd.php>.

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**For more information:**

**Nina Chiarelli**  
Government of British Columbia  
250-387-0793  
Cell: 250-216-8426  
[nina.chiarelli@gov.bc.ca](mailto:nina.chiarelli@gov.bc.ca)



## **Premiers Release Strategy on the Global Economy; Plan trade mission to Asia**

**VANCOUVER, July 22, 2011** -- Premiers today released a strategy entitled *Canada in the Global Economy*. They also announced that, within 12 months, Premiers will pursue a joint Council of the Federation mission to Asia with the federal government to advance an ambitious international trade agenda for Canada.

As committed international actors with increasingly sophisticated global connections and capabilities, provinces and territories are an integral part of any international strategy for Canada, particularly given their responsibility for many of the matters addressed in modern trade agreements. The four-point strategy released today by Premiers outlines specific actions to harness the common and individual strengths of provinces and territories and help position Canada strongly in the global economy:

1. Ensure a robust and forward-thinking Canadian trade and investment agenda is in place with appropriate attention to markets including the United States, the European Union (EU), Asia, as well as other emerging markets.
2. Maintain and expand Canada's physical infrastructure and gateway policy to accommodate and encourage the flow of people, services and goods.
3. Facilitate the movement of people – including tourists, immigrants, international students, and business people – and capitalize on the opportunities available to Canada through globally connected Canadians and the linkages they can create between Canada and the world.
4. Build and deepen productive relationships with Canada's trading partners by becoming better educated about international cultures, economies and global connections – and better educate the international community about Canada.

At their meeting, Premiers emphasized the need to intensify efforts in Asia by better promoting Canada and the provinces and territories and realizing economic opportunities for all of Canada.

Premiers agreed that we must better leverage our gateways and land-based borders, plentiful natural resources, value-added manufactured goods, and our broad services sector, to strengthen our relationships with Asia. Canadians' immense personal, cultural and business connections, throughout Asia, coupled with Canada's diversity are also a unique advantage.

Timely development of strategic infrastructure and policies necessary to facilitate trade are crucial if Canada is to compete successfully in Asian markets. Premiers agreed to



support and encourage the development and expansion of infrastructure, ports, gateway, and transportation initiatives focusing on our competitive advantages.

Premiers recognized that Asia represents a critical missing pillar in Canada's trade and investment framework and called on the federal government to enhance access for goods, services and citizens between Canada and Asian markets with a high priority to China, India, Korea, Japan and Singapore.

Currently, Canada has no trade agreements with Asia. The federal government must set a new and ambitious trade and liberalization agenda to guide Canada's engagement with Asian countries. Premiers encourage the federal government to achieve the Canada-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement with the participation of provinces and territories.

Reflecting the importance of two-way trade with Asia to Canada's economic prosperity, the trade mission to Asia will focus on China and India and highlight key sectors of importance to provinces and territories. Building on the federal government's commitment to work with the provinces and territories to advance an ambitious international trade agenda for Canada, Premiers invite the Prime Minister to join them in making this important mission a success.

Premiers noted that this year has been designated as the Year of India in Canada by the Government of India with activities taking place in several provinces. This initiative offers Canadians an opportunity to know more about India, its diversity, its culture, traditions and future. Such initiatives build bridges and enhance relationships and understanding between India and all parts of Canada and illustrate Canada's place in the world as a globally significant market.

*Canada in the Global Economy* stresses the importance of taking advantage of the Beyond the Border Working Group and the Regulatory Cooperation Council to improve upon the mature trade, economic and energy relationship between Canada and the US. Premiers believe that provinces and territories need to have active and meaningful participation in this important initiative. Premiers will continue their discussion on Canada-US Relations when they meet with Washington Governor Christine Gregoire, immediate past chair of the National Governors Association, and Gary Doer, Canada's Ambassador to the United States.

Premiers discussed progress on the negotiations with the European Union to complete a Canada/EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). An ambitious agreement would enhance Canada's access to the European market. A joint Canada-EU study estimates that by 2014, there will be a positive economic impact of \$12 billion for Canada (0.77% of GDP) and \$18 billion for the EU. In recognition that many of the areas covered by the CETA would potentially be under provincial and territorial jurisdiction, the federal government has supported the direct participation of provinces and territories in the international negotiations. Premiers stressed the importance of provincial and territorial participation in international trade negotiations affecting areas of provincial and territorial jurisdiction. Premiers support concluding the CETA negotiations by 2012.



Premiers also recognize that there are many other opportunities and markets important to Canadians and Canadian businesses and committed to continuing to work together to build relationships with other key global markets such as Mexico and the Americas. Premiers noted that Canada's diversity and infrastructure also offer advantages to accessing these markets.

Premiers reiterated their call for an effective partnership between federal, provincial and territorial governments to ensure the best outcomes for immigrants and communities to build a prosperous Canada. Canada's immigration programs must be adaptable and responsive to diverse regional needs and demographic pressures. Provinces and territories are in the best position to assess the needs of their communities and regional economies and integrate settlement and integration services with other human services including education, health, social services, and labour market services.

Premiers agreed that growth in immigration levels for 2012 and beyond is essential to create a flexible, responsive and effective economic immigration program. Provinces and territories must have an equal role with the federal government and call on the federal government to remove arbitrary application ceilings in the Provincial Nominee Program combined with higher levels in the Federal Skilled Worker Program and jointly set overall immigration levels that will sustain economic growth. Jurisdictions must also have a direct role in managing federally funded settlement and integration programming. A number of Premiers expressed an interest in building on the success of devolved models in Québec, British Columbia and Manitoba. Premiers would be pleased to work with the federal government on how to address processing backlogs and the capacity to absorb immigrants into provinces and territories.

Québec is already responsible for selecting immigrants and settlement services in Québec under the Canada-Québec Accord.

Premiers also endorsed an International Education Marketing Action Plan, which supports the goals of *Canada in the Global Economy*. The Action Plan identifies opportunities for federal-provincial-territorial collaboration on marketing aiming at:

- Increasing the number of international students studying in Canada;
- Increasing Canada's share of the international student market;
- Providing more opportunities for Canadian students to study abroad as appropriate ; and
- Retaining a greater number of international student graduates as permanent residents.

The recent federal budget committed \$10 million over two years to promote our broadly recognized quality education systems. Premiers welcome this commitment and encourage the federal government to assist provinces and territories in the implementation of their International Education Marketing Plan.

Provinces and territories will work with Citizenship and Immigration Canada to explore ways to enhance visa processing operations in key markets building on the success of the Student Partners Program. In 2008, international students spent \$6.5 billion in Canada and created over 83,000 jobs. By 2025, the global demand for international education is predicted to quadruple from 1.8 million to 7.2 million students.



*Canada in the Global Economy*, as well as the International Education Marketing Action Plan, can be found at [www.councilofthefederation.ca](http://www.councilofthefederation.ca).

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**For more information:**

**Nina Chiarelli**

Government of British Columbia

250-387-0793

Cell: 250-216-8426

[nina.chiarelli@gov.bc.ca](mailto:nina.chiarelli@gov.bc.ca)



## **Council of the Federation tackles Health Sustainability in preparation for discussions with the federal government**

**VANCOUVER, July 22, 2011** -- As in many countries around the world, Canada's health care systems are facing increasing pressure as a result of changing demographics and more advanced treatments, as well as the evolving needs and expectations of its users.

Having primary responsibility for health care, provinces and territories are best placed to address the challenges and opportunities within their health care systems. Health care continues to occupy an increasingly larger share of provincial and territorial budgets.

Premiers are ensuring that provincial and territorial health systems are increasingly more patient-centred and sustainable. In particular, provinces and territories are:

- shortening wait times for key procedures;
- finding efficiencies;
- improving access to primary care; and,
- emphasizing healthy living, which will improve quality of life.

Premiers acknowledged the Prime Minister's commitment in the recent federal Speech from the Throne to continuing the 6% escalator on the Canada Health Transfer (CHT) while working collaboratively to renew the Health Accord and to enter into a separate agreement with the Government of Quebec regarding the implementation of the renewed Health Accord. Premiers agree that increases in CHT funding should not be financed by reducing other major transfers.

Premiers agreed to meet again early in the new year on an integrated approach to sustainable health. Premiers will work together on identifying key principles that should govern a new agreement on health care with the federal government. Their discussions will also focus on innovations to modernize health care services that will bring savings to be reinvested in health care systems. Premiers directed their government departments to work together to support their discussion in early 2012.

Premiers also discussed progress on two voluntary initiatives that they began last year; the pan-Canadian alliance for medical equipment and supplies, and for common drugs, and on clinical practice guidelines. Premiers are committed to work together, where appropriate, to reduce costs and improve patient care by continuing to pursue opportunities through the alliance. Participating provinces and territories are successfully negotiating access to some of the most costly drugs in the world. Provinces and territories are using their combined buying power to collectively negotiate on drug pricing and are committed to accelerating this work.

Over the last year, provinces and territories have worked with health care practitioners and experts to assess how to overcome barriers related to the quality, coordination and use of clinical practice guidelines. Health ministers have agreed to collaborate on clinical practice guidelines, focusing on 3 to 5 specific ones where better care and cost savings can be achieved. This winter, interested stakeholder groups and governments will be participating in a summit on improving the evaluation and dissemination of clinical practice guidelines.

Territorial Premiers also look forward to an early discussion with the Prime Minister on an extension of Territorial Health System Sustainability Initiative, which expires March 31, 2012.

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**For more information:**

**Nina Chiarelli**  
Government of British Columbia  
250-387-0793  
Cell: 250-216-8426  
[nina.chiarelli@gov.bc.ca](mailto:nina.chiarelli@gov.bc.ca)



## **Nova Scotia to host 2012 Council of the Federation Summer Meeting**

**VANCOUVER, July 22, 2011** --- Premier Darrell Dexter today announced that Nova Scotia will host the 2012 Council of the Federation summer meeting. He made the announcement at the wrap up of this year's summer meeting in Vancouver.

"I look forward to welcoming my colleagues and their delegations to Nova Scotia for the Council's meeting next summer," said Premier Dexter. "It will be a particularly important meeting for us all as the renewal of federal transfers will be fast approaching." Discussions will also focus on families, jobs and the economy.

The Premier also thanked his colleague Premier Christy Clark for hosting the 2011 meeting. "The work of Premier Clark and her team resulted in good discussions and debate on issues that are important for Canadians in all provinces and territories," said Premier Dexter.

The annual Council of the Federation Summer Meeting, which is held on a rotational basis, will be in Halifax from July 25 to 27, 2012. The meeting will also provide Nova Scotia with an opportunity to showcase its unique culture, heritage and diversity.

The Council of the Federation was created in 2003 to promote provincial-territorial cooperation and closer ties between members, foster meaningful relations between governments based on respect for the Constitution and recognition of the diversity within the federation, and show leadership on issues important to all Canadians.

For more information, visit [www.councilofthefederation.ca](http://www.councilofthefederation.ca)

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### **For more information:**

**Shawn Fuller**

Office of the Premier, Government of Nova Scotia

902-424-6600

Cell: 902-240-7575

[fullersz@gov.ns.ca](mailto:fullersz@gov.ns.ca)





## **Premiers support national disaster mitigation funding program**

**VANCOUVER, July 22, 2011** -- Premiers began their final day of meetings by discussing the natural disasters that Canada has experienced recently. Premiers also discussed the upcoming *Investment Canada Act* Review; the importance of citizens' engagement, and announced a new online initiative to enhance the sharing of information on water quality and conservation.

### **Disaster Management**

Severe natural disasters have significantly affected the lives and livelihoods of many families across Canada, including those who have experienced unprecedented flooding and have been devastated by wildfires. Premiers discussed ongoing disaster prevention and relief efforts within their provinces and territories, noting that work related to recent flooding and forest fires is far from over. The federal government has been an important partner in the flood fight and in dealing with the effects on communities from wildfires, by providing strong support when needed. In particular, Premiers thanked the military for their assistance to affected communities.

Provinces and territories have gone to great lengths to prepare for these exceptional situations and previous provincial and territorial investments in mitigation efforts and disaster management have proven extremely valuable for protecting property and reducing damages. Premiers welcome the Prime Minister's commitment to develop a new long-term national disaster mitigation funding program that examines both infrastructure-related and other mitigation strategies. Premiers direct ministers to work with the federal government to develop this program by fall 2011 and ensure it covers the range of events such as earthquakes, fires, floods, storms and marine disasters.

Several First Nations communities also continue to experience flooding on a regular basis and are among the most vulnerable communities. Given the federal government's responsibility for emergency management and response for First Nations communities, Premiers encourage the federal government to develop a long-term mitigation strategy, reflecting the interests of First Nations and the role provincial and territorial emergency management officials play in providing services on behalf of the federal government, to protect First Nations communities against severe and continued flooding. This strategy should also address northern and Aboriginal communities experiencing major impacts on critical infrastructure as a result of changes to permafrost caused by climate change.

Disaster management issues will be discussed this fall in Manitoba at a national meeting of all key agencies involved in disaster management. Provinces and Territories will review the flood and forest fire outlook for 2012 and identify areas where improved coordination may be possible. Premiers encouraged the federal government to participate fully in this meeting.

Premiers also discussed the impact flooding has had on the agricultural sector and the rural economy. Flooding has significantly affected seeding in agricultural land in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta. Cattle producers may also have to reduce their herds because of pasture damage and inadequate forage. Premiers directed their Ministers of Agriculture to work together and with their federal counterpart to prepare specific proposals for joint support programs to address these urgent concerns.

### **Investment Canada Act Review**

Premiers discussed the importance of ensuring the continued inflow of foreign direct investment to Canada and the jobs and economic growth these investments create. Premiers noted that many of Canada's unique and strategically valuable assets fall within their jurisdiction. As part of their development, Canadian and foreign investments have helped to responsibly build these industries for the benefit of our citizens and our economies, consistent with Canadian rules and values.

Premiers welcome the federal government's commitment to proceed with a review of the *Investment Canada Act*. They noted the importance of transparent, timely and stable rules to evaluate responsible foreign investments in Canada. Premiers agreed on the priority of ensuring that commitments made by foreign investors through the review process are effectively enforced. They also agreed on the importance of public dialogue on proposed foreign investments. Provincial and territorial participation in determining what constitutes a net benefit to Canada is essential. Premiers look forward to working with the federal government to review the Act and in particular provide input on how to define what constitutes a strategic asset.

### **Citizens' Engagement**

Premiers welcome the interest of citizens in helping to address problems that affect their lives and note that the increased use of social media is creating new and innovative ways for citizens, especially youth, to engage with political leaders and candidates. Premiers recognize that if processes for engaging citizens are to be meaningful they must be transparent, inclusive and conducted in a manner which provides the opportunity to work through conflicting values and ideas together. Effective engagement is vital in meeting the challenges faced by all jurisdictions and results in decisions that better reflect public values and leads to innovative and collaborative solutions.

One of the best ways to shape the way decisions are made is to engage in the democratic process. Premiers urge Canadians to fully utilize these opportunities, including by voting in federal, provincial, territorial and local elections.

### **Water Information Sharing Initiative**

Last year, Premiers committed as part of the Water Charter to cooperate and share information on water conservation and water quality. Consistent with that commitment, Premiers are pleased to announce that the Council of Federation Water Stewardship Council is embarking on an online initiative to enhance the cooperation and sharing of information on water at the national level. Building on the momentum of the technology

age and more open government, Canada's Water InfoStream is an online listing of major provincial, territorial and federal government water resources. The online catalogue will act as a communications tool to help spread the word to researchers, policy makers, and the public at large about water data and information relevant to their interests and needs, both locally and nationally. The catalogue can be found at [www.councilofthefederation.ca/infostream.html](http://www.councilofthefederation.ca/infostream.html).

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**For more information:**

**Nina Chiarelli**

Government of British Columbia

250-387-0793

Cell: 250-216-8426

[nina.chiarelli@gov.bc.ca](mailto:nina.chiarelli@gov.bc.ca)

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WASHINGTON STATE



BRITISH COLUMBIA

February 10, 2012

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States of America  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, DC 20229

The Honourable Stephen Harper, P.C., M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Langevin Block  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A3

Dear Mr. President and Mr. Prime Minister:

On the occasion of the sixth Washington State/British Columbia Joint Cabinet Meeting, we would like to pledge our support for the Beyond the Border and Regulatory Cooperation Council Action Plans announced December 7, 2011. Perimeter security, economic competitiveness, and regulatory streamlining are initiatives of great significance for all Americans and Canadians. We have committed ourselves to these issues at each Joint Cabinet Meeting and achieved great outcomes by working in partnership. We believe our experience serves as a model as our countries move forward with the Beyond the Border Action Plan (Action Plan). We are committed to furthering this effort and stand ready to share our lessons learned.

Efficient, effective border management is a longstanding priority for Washington and British Columbia. We strongly support your vision of enhanced security, while simultaneously accelerating the legitimate flow of people, goods, and services across the Canada-US border. The British Columbia-Washington Enhanced Drivers' License initiative has demonstrated these principles and paved the way for wider adoption of Radio Frequency Identification-enabled travel documents, which are increasing security while reducing wait times at the border. We are encouraged by the commitment in the Action Plan to increase the benefits of trusted trader and trusted traveler programs, including enhancements to the NEXUS program and related infrastructure at priority border crossings between Washington and British Columbia. We also look forward to the completion of negotiations regarding pre-clearance and pre-inspection covering all modes of cross-border trade and travel.

Rail pre-clearance at Vancouver will significantly reduce travel times for the Amtrak passenger rail service between Vancouver and Seattle and lays the track for upgrading rail services – another step toward the vision of high-speed rail connecting the region. This is a key piece of the world-class transportation corridor we are implementing to support the clean knowledge economy cluster developing in the Puget Sound-Lower Mainland region. We must eliminate issues deterring business travelers from freely crossing the border to seek partners, investors, and skilled workers. We are pleased the Action Plan addresses these issues and ask that as you work to implement passenger rail pre-clearance at Vancouver you include our two jurisdictions in the discussion and development.



As trade and transportation gateways to the Asia Pacific Region, our two jurisdictions have a strong interest in increasing the flow of visitors, investment, and trade between Asia and North America through our ports and airports. A common approach to screening travelers and cargo inbound for North America and the expedited movement of secure cargo across the border under the principle of "cleared once, accepted twice" will reduce costs and wait times, while increasing security through better risk-management decisions.

Washington and British Columbia have a history of cooperative and inclusive working groups. In advance of the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games, we established a bi-national multi-agency working group, which included military, border security, law enforcement, and transportation agencies. The result was a secure, seamless, and welcoming experience for visitors during the events. We also cooperate closely on cross-border transportation actions through the British Columbia-Washington Joint Transportation Executive Council, which is focused on initiatives consistent with commitments made in the Action Plan.

In addition, together with other governments and private sector leaders in neighboring states and provinces, we have built strong cross-border linkages in combating cross-border crime, protecting critical infrastructure and providing mutual aid in response to emergencies. We are committed to working closely with other jurisdictions and stakeholders to maintain support for the shared vision's Action Plans and associated initiatives. We also hope that increased regulatory cooperation will lead to further efforts to reconcile unnecessarily different regulatory measures, especially in high priority sectors for both jurisdictions such as energy, technology, transportation, agriculture, forestry, and mining.

Our experience and cooperation in addressing border security, travel, trade, and regulations demonstrate the positive outcomes expected from the Action Plan. Our administrations are committed to supporting the success of this effort and are prepared to provide support and continued input to the Beyond the Border Executive Steering Committee through officials here in Washington and British Columbia. Working together, we can ensure that the commitments made in the Action Plan are achieved. Please accept our congratulations on these milestone accomplishments. We look forward to working with you to ensure the success of these vital initiatives.

Yours sincerely,

  
Christine O. Gregoire  
Governor of Washington

  
Christy Clark  
Premier of British Columbia

cc: The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of State  
The Honorable Janet Napolitano, Secretary of Homeland Security  
The Honourable Vic Toews, Minister of Public Safety  
The Honourable John Baird, Minister of Foreign Affairs