

Carole James

L E A D E R



because everyone matters



Platform 2005

bcndp.ca

Making life better and more affordable for ordinary British Columbians

British Columbia holds limitless opportunities for the people who live and work here – all of us who have chosen BC as our home and future.

It's a potential for prosperity we must embrace – a prosperity that can be shared and enjoyed among all British Columbians, because everyone matters.

But that's not happening today in BC. Over the past four years, we've seen a one-sided approach to government, where Gordon Campbell has imposed his political agenda, no matter how much ordinary families are hurt along the way.

Gordon Campbell & the BC Liberals promised to make things better for everyone, but the record betrays that promise:

- They have created dirty, crowded hospitals, where patients are moved into hallways and closets
- In a new century when skill development is more important than ever, they have allowed tuition fees to double, moving post-secondary education and training out of reach for too many young people
- They have cut long-term care, abandoning the seniors who helped build our province
- The fundamental public services British Columbians cherish – our health care, BC Ferries and BC Hydro among them – are being privatized, creating poorer services for families and bigger profit margins for private suppliers
- They have closed 113 schools and cut 2,500 teaching positions, meaning bigger class sizes and less support for individual students
- Their cuts have punished the poor and the most vulnerable, forcing more people onto the streets with no real supports to help them turn their lives around and live more independently

This is a time for new ideas to meet the demands of a growing population and the complicated challenges facing our province. Instead, we've been faced with old-style leadership – a one-sided agenda that punishes and divides people.

The approach of the past four years just doesn't make sense for ordinary families – they can't afford another four years.

We can achieve so much more by working together, ending confrontation, and focusing on solutions that benefit all British Columbians – solutions that make life better and more affordable for every British Columbian.

I'm proud to be leading a New Democrat team that is bringing a balanced, common sense approach to British Columbia. In this document, you'll find our pledge to you – a pledge to rebuild key public services starting with health and education.

And every one of these priorities can be achieved by working together, moving forward with the determined resolve of a society that believes in a better life for all British Columbians.



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**Strengthen
public health care
to reduce waitlists
for key services,
end privatization,
and respond better
to patient needs**



Like all Canadians, British Columbians cherish their public health care and want it protected. While not perfect – as nothing ever is – it has served us well over the years, providing a sense of comfort and security: when we are sick or injured, we know we can receive quality public health care. And everyone is treated fairly, no matter how well off or poor.

Gordon Campbell's record over the past four years shows just how out of touch he is with the rest of British Columbia on health care. His record has become one of dirty, crowded hospitals and increasing waitlists.

The Liberal government is putting patient care at risk by shutting down hospitals, closing emergency rooms and cutting long-term care for seniors. And by opening up more of health care to privatized services, Gordon Campbell is moving BC closer to a two-tiered system where those who can afford it are able to buy their way to the front of the line.

The Campbell Liberals have embarked on a massive health care advertising campaign that had nothing to do with promoting better health and everything to do with furthering their electoral fortunes. Add to that the money that's gone to pay the salaries – and severance packages – of the various CEOs who have come and gone in the new regional health authorities.

This is a time for anticipating future health needs and challenges, and working together on long-term solutions that will keep up with growing demand and improve the level of care for all British Columbians.

Carole James will move British Columbia's health care system forward, developing and delivering innovation in quality public health care. Her solutions lie in prevention rather than privatization. In strengthening hospitals, not closing them. And in listening to community needs, not making arbitrary decisions behind closed doors.

By focusing on innovative ways to reduce waitlists and expand long-term care, community-based prevention and support services, the New Democrat health plan will help people live healthier, get the care they need in their communities, and reduce our reliance on hospital care.

Gordon Campbell's health care record: Spiraling waitlists. Dirty, overcrowded hospitals. Privatized surgeries.

- Increased waitlists a staggering 31% despite his promise to reduce the number of people waiting for surgery.
- Privatized health care services, creating dirty hospitals and poor-quality food.
- Dished out more taxpayer dollars in lucrative contracts to for-profit clinics.
- Broke his promise to seniors to open 5,000 new long-term care beds.
- Closed hospitals and reduced services in communities around the province.
- Wasted millions on thinly-disguised partisan health care advertising – despite promising not to – at the same time he was closing hospitals and making people wait longer for surgery.
- Punished BC's most vulnerable by cutting home care and home support services that help people live independently and out of hospitals.

The New Democrat Plan:

Reducing waitlists and strengthening hospital services

Expand long-term care services, starting by opening 1,000 units in the first year and a total of 6,000 by 2009, to reduce waitlists and make life better for seniors

This must be the starting point for any plan to reduce waitlists; currently, 10-15% of acute care beds are occupied by seniors who are stuck waiting for long-term care beds. Expanding long-term care will reduce pressure on hospitals, cut surgery waitlists and allow seniors to live with the dignity they deserve.

Yet Gordon Campbell has abandoned seniors in need of long-term care.

Four years ago, he talked a lot about his promise to create 5,000 additional intermediate and long-term care beds. He isn't talking much about it anymore.

Not only did he break that promise, he went further by closing more than 2,500 long-term care beds in communities around the province, replacing them with only 1,050 assisted living units.

The Campbell government's mismanagement of long-term care has unnecessarily kept seniors in acute care beds, separated couples and forced others to move away from their families, friends and communities.

The result of this is greater stress on seniors' families and the health care system. Beyond that, the people who have helped build our province deserve better. They've earned better.

Carole James respects their past contributions and present needs. She believes a full range of supports must be available for seniors, from home care and home support through assisted living to complex care and palliative care.

The New Democrats will launch an achievable long-term care expansion plan – beginning with 1,000 units in the first year, and a total of 6,000 by 2009 – that will allow seniors to live with respect and in comfort, and help take pressure off emergency and acute care beds.

Treat them like Mom and Dad – and do it now

You're in an extended care home, nearing the end of a life well lived, when a bureaucrat kicks the crutches out from under you.

"You can't live next to your spouse any more."
"You're moving 80 kilometres away from your family."
"Your situation will soon change, but we don't know when and we can't exactly tell you how."

All these things have happened lately, to the Potvins and the Devines who can't live together any more, to 106-year-old Annie Munro whose pending move to a distant town may have triggered her daughter's fatal heart attack, and to vast numbers among the 35,000 living with uncertainty in residential care in B.C.

And yet the government behaves as though everything's fine.

When Premier Gordon Campbell spoke to the Vancouver Sun's editorial board earlier this month, he said he had simple instructions for health authorities who deal with seniors: "Treat them like you treat your mother."

Whose mother? It's notable that he didn't say, "Treat them like I treat my mother." We can't afford that. His mother has a comfortable, secure home at Arbutus Manor, a private retirement facility, where a one-bedroom suite costs \$3,496 a month.

Vancouver Sun editorial
June 26, 2002

Reduce waitlists and privatization of surgical procedures by:

- **investing \$75 million in a waitlist reduction strategy**
- **creating new, public specialized surgical and diagnostic centres**

Over the past four years, Gordon Campbell’s approach to BC’s health care challenges has been to hand more procedures over to private clinics, shut down hospitals, and close the ER, operating and maternity wards of other facilities.

And we are all living with the results. *Despite his promise to British Columbians to reduce health care waitlists, the government’s own statistics show Gordon Campbell has increased waitlists by more than 30% during his four years in office.* The waitlist for orthopedic surgery – which could improve the quality of life for so many British Columbians – has increased a staggering 83% since his government came to power.

Is this the kind of health care we want for our province? For the next generation of British Columbians?

Carole James believes there is a better way. She would start by strengthening local hospitals and making them more efficient, not by closing them and putting even more demands on those that remain.

The New Democrat health plan would invest an additional \$75 million in specialized procedures in the first year, consistent with a recommendation from the BC Medical Association on cutting waitlists.

The next step is to begin creating regionally based, public, specialized surgical and diagnostic centres – that deal exclusively with day surgeries, for example. This approach is working in other jurisdictions, and can be adopted and customized by BC’s health care system to gain time and cost efficiencies that will allow more procedures and reduce waitlists.

Handing over procedures to private clinics isn’t a solution. Just ask them.

It costs money to provide quality health care and to reduce wait lists, so I’m really battling with how [the government] expects this will improve service and reduce costs.

Dr. Mark Godley
Anesthesiologist and co-owner of the private False Creek Surgical Centre
September 4, 2003

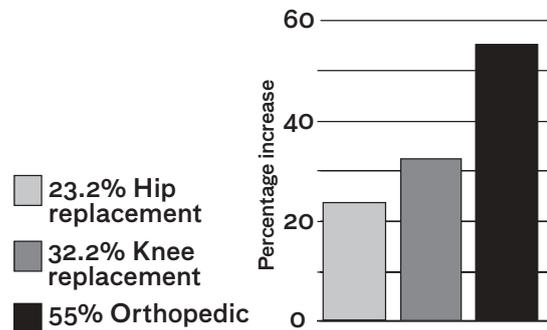
Public Surgical Centres – a case study

In 2001, the Manitoba government purchased the private Pan Am Clinic. Almost immediately the benefits were clear as costs for each cataract surgery performed there were reduced by \$1,000 to \$700.

The savings were directed back into more surgeries at Pan Am. “It flies in the face of those who say the only way to go is private,” said Manitoba Health Minister Dave Chomiak.

According to the clinic’s CEO and medical director, the secret to the centre’s success is that, instead of directing profits to shareholders, what’s left over goes back into patient care. The Ontario Liberals have realized this and are now purchasing private MRI and diagnostic clinics to save money and deliver more services.

Increase in waiting times since 2001



End emergency room backlogs by:

- **funding 200 acute care beds**
- **hiring more nurses**
- **expanding the role of nurse practitioners to BC hospitals**

Things have become so bad in emergency rooms of BC hospitals under the Campbell Liberals that, in one high-profile example, a health authority's CEO was urging hospital staff to free up space by discharging patients.

In the face of severe shortages of acute care beds, perhaps he can't be blamed for making his appeal. But if you were in one of those beds, would you want medical decisions affecting your health to be made by a bureaucrat or by your physician?

The fact is British Columbia's health care system – and, in particular, our emergency rooms – are falling further and further behind demand under the Campbell Liberals. And with pressure building on the front lines, bad decisions will be made. Unfortunately, we've seen some already.

Solving this problem requires work in many areas – including freeing up acute care beds by opening more long-term care units, and increasing access to community-based primary and prevention care.

But investments must also be made directly in our emergency rooms.

Carole James will deliver on that by:

- Funding 200 acute care beds in the first year to reduce pressure on facilities and staff, and help put an end to hallway health care
- Hiring more nurses to support the new acute care beds
- Expanding the role of nurse practitioners to emergency rooms. Nurse practitioners will begin work in BC in 2005 – they bring advanced training that allows them to carry out a broad range of health care services, including diagnosing, prescribing medications, ordering diagnostic tests and managing common acute and chronic illnesses. While experts in community-based primary health care and prevention, Carole James will also make sure their skills are utilized in BC hospitals to deliver better patient care and take the pressure off existing physicians and nurses.

A greater focus on community health care, decision-making and prevention

Stop closing hospitals and emergency services, and require health boards to consult with communities on any significant changes to services

Improve public accountability through local elections for some health authority board positions

Over the past four years, Gordon Campbell has closed down hospitals and ER wards. Adding to that, unilateral decisions to privatize housekeeping and food services are creating dirty, overcrowded hospitals serving inedible meals.

These changes are drastic and being pushed through without consultation with the people who use the services and pay for them through their taxes. Gordon Campbell has made health authorities responsible to his office, not the communities they serve. Appointments to the Boards of health authorities by the Premier lead to a political agenda rather than a community service.

Carole James will make sure local health care planning better meets the health needs of local communities, not the political needs in Victoria.

Health authorities must be the tie between communities and Victoria – she will make sure those communities and residents are listened to by ensuring some Board members are elected and directly accountable to the residents they represent. New Democrats will make sure regional health authorities make no significant service changes without first consulting and involving local communities and residents.

Improve access to front line health care by investing in community-based prevention and primary care – adding 12 new Family Health Care Centres

Gordon Campbell has ignored the reforms necessary to improve British Columbians' access to primary health care services. The federal government has provided BC with \$15 million a year since 2002 to improve the way front-line services are delivered, but they continue to decline and wait times continue to grow.

Too many families do not have a family physician and have to rely on drop-in clinics or emergency wards for front-line services. That's not good health care.

We need a primary care system that focuses on health promotion, disease and injury prevention, and management of chronic conditions. Families need access to care outside the regular – and limited – office hours most physicians are able to offer. And we can make sure the most appropriate care is provided by the most appropriate professional by having interdisciplinary teams of health professionals working together.

That is Carole James' goal. She believes in new preventative approaches that work for people in their communities – that by giving people more choices and greater control over their family's health care, we will create a healthier British Columbia. And help keep people out of hospital.

The New Democrat plan will leverage new federal primary health care dollars to:

- double the number of Family Health Care Centres, where people’s family practitioners would work cooperatively with pharmacists, nurse practitioners and other health care providers.
- better integrate and promote primary care resources such as BC NurseLine and BC HealthGuide, which can act as triage services that help direct people to the best care option for their particular problem.

Improving primary health care and prevention services is just common sense – helping people find ways to live healthy and safe is less expensive than treating illness, disease and injury after it occurs. And it provides better care for people.

Increase British Columbians’ access to family doctors by making it easier for highly skilled foreign trained doctors to set up practice in BC

BC requires hundreds of new physicians each year to replace those who retire, move away, or cut back on their practice. And that’s not counting the growing demand created by our increasing and ageing population.

In all, there are 200,000 British Columbians looking for a physician for them and their families, while the number of BC general practitioners accepting new patients has dropped to 599 in March 2004 from 1,420 in April 1999, according to the BC Medical Association.

The real challenge is we’re not alone in this. BC is competing with other provinces for physicians, particularly family practice doctors. And those other jurisdictions are making it far easier for physicians to make up their minds while the Campbell government has done nothing to keep pace.

We must transform our health care ‘system’ from one in which a multitude of participants, working in silos, focus primarily on managing illness, to one in which they work collaboratively to deliver a seamless, integrated array of services, from prevention and promotion, to primary care, to hospital, community, mental health, home and end of life care.

Roy Romanow

Building on Values:
The Future of Health Care in Canada

Keeping families healthy through prevention and primary care

The 30-year-old Reach clinic in East Vancouver is considered a primary health care “success story”, keeping individuals and families healthy through:

- An emphasis on disease prevention, health promotion, health education and ambulatory services;
- A team approach – multidisciplinary health professionals working together for the well-being of the patients (including physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, social workers, health promoters, and nutritionists);
- One-stop shopping – a range of primary health, social and related services are in one location, making it easy for patients to access these services; and
- Accountability to the community and to the funders through an elected volunteer board of directors made up of community representatives.

Alberta, for example, funds 23 family practice residencies and 5 specialist residencies for foreign-trained doctors coming to that province each year. In BC, there are only six residencies available to foreign-trained doctors, and none available for specialist residencies.

Carole James will make it easier for foreign trained doctors to complete residencies and set up practice. In the first year, the New Democrat health plan will more than triple – to 20 – family practice residencies for foreign-trained doctors, and create five new residencies for specialists.

Improving services for BC's most vulnerable people

Increase funding for home care and home support services to help seniors and others with chronic illness live independently and to take pressure off emergency rooms and acute care beds

If seniors or those with a chronic medical condition can live independently with a bit of help from government rather than occupying an acute or emergency bed, it makes their lives more fulfilling and reduces the costs to government. The numbers from a 2003 study for the Victoria Centre for Aging back that up: the annual costs to government for a person with moderate care needs is \$9,624 when they live at home; if they are forced to live in an institution, those costs skyrocket to \$25,742.

It's a straightforward formula. That's why the Campbell Liberals' decision to cut by one-third the weekly home care and home support visits to many seniors just doesn't make any sense. It ends up costing BC taxpayers more money, and punishing seniors and other vulnerable British Columbians.

Need a doctor?

After my medical exams, I was trained as an internist for five years, which is a must in the German medical system. I also had one year of X-ray training. Later I specialized in cardiology. I became a senior physician in a 500-bed hospital, responsible for three regular wards and an 18-bed intensive care unit.

At the age of 39, I was appointed medical director of internal medicine with four senior physicians and 14 ward physicians under my direction in a 300-bed hospital. Because of my knowledge in internal medicine and cardiology, I received a German medical board licence to train my physicians in internal medicine.

Here in BC, I applied for a licence at the College of Physicians and Surgeons. The response was devastating! I was told that I couldn't take the exams to qualify.

I would be proud to serve my community or help the doctors in 100 Mile House hospital with my knowledge.

Dr. Axel Roose

Bridge Lake, BC

Op/ed column in the Vancouver Sun

February 18, 2005

Carole James believes in the value of home care for the province and the people who use it, and will increase funding to home support services that will enable one more visit each week for up to 25,000 new and existing home care users. **Making this investment will allow people to live independently, saving acute and long-term care beds for those with more complex health care needs.**

Invest in community based mental-health and addiction services, especially for people living on our streets

Prevention services work. Cutting those services deepens the cycle of poverty, homelessness and addiction – it may save money today, but it will cost more tomorrow. And in both cases, it punishes people at their most vulnerable.

Over the past four years, the number of British Columbians who have found themselves on the streets or grappling with mental health or addiction problems has grown significantly. The services they rely upon to meet these challenges simply haven't kept pace.

Carole James believes that public health and community-based programs are not only a necessary feature of a compassionate society, they make economic sense. The New Democrat health plan offers a more holistic approach that includes:

- Earlier identification and support for people at risk through expanded outreach programs
- Investments in crisis management and detox beds to support people in times of their greatest need
- Expanded community-based recovery support and counseling for people who are transitioning back into the community

The municipalities and community agencies are ready to contribute – it's time the provincial government met its full obligations. The New Democrat plan would double the mental health and addictions services budget, particularly in the areas of prevention and public health services.

The overnight searches by the City's Tenant Assistance Program estimate that at least two-thirds of the street homeless have severe addictions to drugs and/or alcohol.

Homeless Action Plan
City of Vancouver 2004

Campbell government's attitude: Not my problem

When confronted with the question of increasing homelessness among people with mental health problems, the Campbell government washed its hands of the problem: "If Vancouver needs more housing to get the mentally ill off the streets, then the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority should look at ways of making that happen."

Minister responsible for mental health,
Gulzar Cheema
January 26, 2004 to the Vancouver Sun

Open the doors of educational opportunity



In this century – in a complex, diverse society with a changing economy that demands more and higher skills – education is everything.

And it's now a lifelong commitment. Research has shown us that the reading advancements children make before kindergarten can bring unparalleled success through the school years and beyond. And literacy and skill programs for adults enrich their personal and professional lives.

For some reason, Gordon Campbell has been able to see only the bottom line, not the benefits. He has treated education simply as a cost where savings can be made – not as a strategic investment that creates a more highly skilled population and workforce, and a stronger foundation for a more diversified economy.

For four years, we've seen what his approach brings: larger classes, closed schools, child care cuts, unprecedented tuition fee increases, and an apprenticeship program in chaos. And all of that will create even more problems and higher costs down the road. It just doesn't make sense.

Carole James believes there can be no more important investment for British Columbians and their future. She believes in maximizing people's potential, not holding them back. The New Democrats' education plan will expand access to affordable and innovative education opportunities, and position BC as a leader in lifelong learning and skill development.

**Gordon Campbell's
education record:
Increasing class sizes.
Spiraling tuition.
Restricting opportunities.**

- Closed 113 schools in communities all over the province, a dozen of which were in single-school communities.
- Cut over 2,500 teaching positions and increased class sizes across BC.
- Froze education funding for three years while downloading millions of dollars of cost pressures onto our local school boards.
- Cancelled the universal child care program and siphoned off federal child care dollars for other programs.
- Cut special education teachers by 17.5%, teacher-librarians by 23.4%, and English as a Second Language teachers by 20%.
- Lifted the tuition freeze and allowed tuition fees to more than double, moving education out of reach for too many.
- Eliminated the successful grants program for post-secondary students.
- Cut apprenticeships and industry training.
- Reduced opportunities for adults to finish high school and new Canadians to learn English.

The New Democrat Plan:

Creating a strong learning foundation for BC children

Create affordable, quality, child care to help all parents earn a living and improve early childhood development opportunities for BC children

Over the past four years, Gordon Campbell has:

- cancelled the universal child care program
- eliminated funding for before - and after-school care
- cut subsidies to low-income parents
- reduced the number of people who qualified for subsidies
- used federal dollars targeted for child care on a whole range of provincial programs

His cuts and mismanagement of federal child care dollars punish parents who are trying to get an education or support their family. Even worse, his actions fly in the face of current research that shows how important early childhood development and learning is for education success down the road. Gordon Campbell's approach is outdated and out of touch.

Carole James believes child care is a key to strengthening our economy and the future of BC children. The New Democrats will ensure that all federal dollars targeted for child care are spent on child care, and will work with the federal government to support the universal child care program now being planned by the federal government.

For over ten years, the Vancouver Board of Trade has supported public expenditures on children in their early years as good public policy... New research has provided evidence that investment in our children's early development before they go to school can prevent many social problems and that the economic payback is spectacular.

Vancouver Board of Trade
July 1999

Any reasonable industrial and educational strategy requires high quality child care... for every \$1 invested in licensed child care there is a \$2 benefit.

**Gordon Cleveland
and Michael Krashinsky**
Department of Economics,
University of Toronto

The New Democrat plan for child care

Carole James will introduce legislation to enshrine a made-in-BC interpretation of the four key principles the federal government has attached to its child care funding. It adds a distinct fifth principle aimed at guaranteeing public accountability:

Quality

One of the best ways to assure quality is through the licensing process. A priority focus should be strengthening the quality non-profit sector.

Universality

The plan must be inclusive of all regardless of level of ability or income.

Accessibility

The plan must move to make childcare available and affordable in all communities.

Developmentally focused

Increased training opportunities in both ECD and Special Needs for childcare staff is essential to promoting physical, cognitive, cultural, social and emotional development.

Accountability

Government spending in this area should be subject to an independent audit and tied to specific timelines and targets.

Ensure BC children’s success in the classroom by:

- **reducing class sizes to give students more support and attention**
- **increasing teacher librarians, counselors and special education support**
- **increasing funding for kids with special needs**
- **improving opportunities for aboriginal children and inner city kids**

Even Ralph Klein gets it

The Alberta government has recognized the importance of decreasing class size. Ralph Klein’s government has launched a plan to hire more than 2,200 teachers to reduce maximum class sizes.

Research results are clear: the smaller the class size in the K-12 system, the better the learning for each student. Gordon Campbell’s record is just as clear:

- 2,500 teaching positions cut – that’s a 7.7% reduction even though enrolment has declined only 3%
- special needs educators cut by 17.5%
- teacher-librarians down 23.4%
- English as a Second Language teachers reduced by 20%

It all adds up to bigger class sizes around the province and less individual attention for students in the classroom.

It’s time to re-invest in education. That means reducing class size and hiring the educators we need to get the job done. For our children. For our future.

Stop arbitrary school closures and create a dedicated fund to help school boards deal with declining enrolments

In a community as small as this, if you take away the school, you take away the heart of the community.

65-year-old grandmother, whose two grandchildren attended Forest Grove elementary just outside 100 Mile House. It closed in June 2004.

Gordon Campbell has argued that it is school boards, not his government, that are closing schools. But by freezing education funding and offloading costs to school boards, he has created an environment where boards are desperate to cut costs or they will break the law requiring them to balance their budgets.

Closing schools following a comprehensive analysis of student enrollment decline is one thing; forcing school boards to arbitrarily close schools because of cost pressures simply makes no sense. Here’s why: most education costs are tied directly to individual students, rather than the schools they attend. So closing schools saves very little money, as costs simply follow students to their new schools. But the disruption and costs that school closures add to families and communities are immeasurable.

BC's New Democrats know this is a time to open the doors of education, not close them. Areas with declining enrollments will have access to a dedicated buffer fund that will help them through enrollment transitions, allowing school boards to make decisions based on educational and community priorities rather than Gordon Campbell's narrowly defined "bottom line".

Connecting high school students to apprenticeship and training programs while in high school

Approximately four out of five youth work in the service sectors, in jobs with lower than average pay, high turnover and limited futures. In many cases, they are there because the traditional university/college route during their high school years just wasn't for them. Those two choices shouldn't be their only options.

But the Campbell government has no stable plan for expanding those options. In the area of trades training, they eliminated a program to have students register in industry training programs while still in high school; the program they recently re-introduced simply doesn't meet the workforce demands of regional industries or the training needs of students.

Carole James wants to strengthen the link between what and how students learn in high school with the careers they want in the future. She will expand their opportunities by doubling funding for the ACE IT program, which allows students to earn high school and apprenticeship credits at the same time.

Fund a plan for a complete seismic upgrading of public schools in 10 years

In the last provincial budget before Gordon Campbell came into office, \$123 million was identified for seismic upgrading of BC schools. He cancelled that initiative in his first budget – another result of his reckless tax cuts.

Valuable time was wasted until the Campbell Liberals finally determined in the past year that they should do something about making schools more earthquake resistant after all. But they are going to take 15 years to do it.

Carole James believes the safety of our children at school is paramount. The New Democrats will begin work immediately on a ten-year plan to improve the safety of the buildings students are in every day through a comprehensive seismic upgrading program.

Improving access and affordability for British Columbians in advanced education and training

Work with labour, business, and educators to double the number of apprenticeships in four years, starting with a 25% increase next year

While BC has experienced minor skill shortages in the past, they don't come close to the trends we're facing today:

- By 2010, for the first time ever, more British Columbians will be leaving the workforce than entering it, as baby-boomers retire in large numbers
- Technology changes will demand that workers have higher skills
- An increasingly global economy will mean that BC's skilled workers are more mobile and can go where the best opportunities are

British Columbia needs to prepare. But right now, we aren't doing that. Other jurisdictions are moving ahead of us in developing a skilled workforce that is prepared for the demands of the future workplace.

At a time when expanding advanced education options is more important than ever, Gordon Campbell has been making it harder for young British Columbians to get the education and training they need.

Apprenticeships are a key part of those expanded options, yet the Campbell government has torn apart BC's apprenticeship program, and is offering no long-term plan for meeting the growing needs of BC industries. Instead, we have young women and men stuck in waitlists for industry training programs – and those waitlists are in sectors that have a high demand for workers.

Carole James wants to encourage innovation in education, and to give ordinary people the chance to get ahead in life. More options lead to better choices – for individuals and our province's economy. BC's New Democrats will renew and expand our province's apprenticeship program through a three-point plan:

1. Increasing by 25% the number of British Columbians participating in apprenticeship and trades training over the next year.
2. Establishing a table to bring together business, educators and labour to develop innovative ideas that will encourage employers to sponsor apprentices.
3. Improving resources for employers and apprentices – including job-matching, monitoring and counseling – to help make sure workers complete comprehensive apprenticeships with a broad base of skills and make a successful transfer to the workforce.

Make education more affordable by freezing tuition fees at 2004 levels and restoring grants for students in their second, third and fourth years of study

Gordon Campbell is driving tuition fees for universities and colleges out of reach for too many young British Columbians. In fact, for three years running, BC has had the largest tuition fee increases in the country, with students and their families paying an additional \$1,980 for a year at university and \$1,665 at college – on average, double what they were in 2001. And if Gordon Campbell is re-elected, students will continue to pay more and more, as fee increases will be tied to the rate of inflation.

To make it even harder for students and their families, he has eliminated grants – sending the message that advanced education is there for only some students, if they’re well enough off to afford it.

The results of all this: **enrolment is down at 10 of BC’s 22 colleges, particularly in northern and rural institutions, as young people and their families simply can’t afford it anymore.**

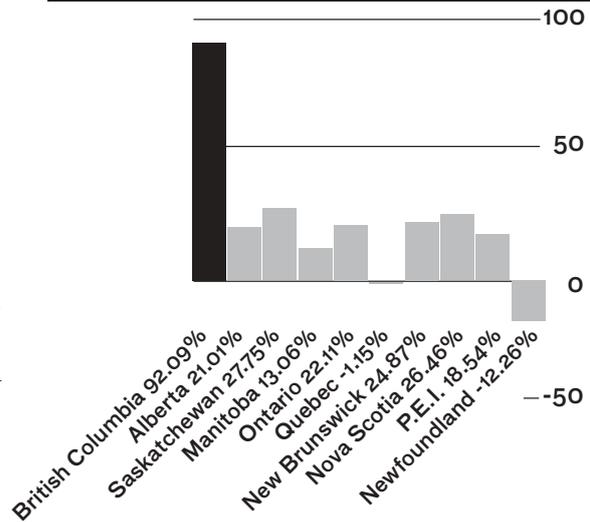
Carole James wants to make education and training more affordable by freezing tuition fees at 2004 levels, compensating institutions for revenue lost from the Liberals’ proposed tuition fee increases. And she will improve financial assistance for learners, and restore grants for students past first year so they can afford to complete the education they’ve started.

The New Democrat plan will make sure that 25,000 new spaces that are affordable and accessible for people throughout the province are added to BC’s colleges and universities by 2010.

If the transition period has been tough on BC students, who barely have time to recover from one round of [tuition fee] increases before they are hit with another, the Province’s parsimonious attitude has made it more painful still.

Globe & Mail
February 9, 2004

Percentage Change in University Tuition Fees by Province 2001 – 2005



[Government should] reinstitute a modest system of needs-based grants for low-income students enrolled in post-secondary institutions, to operate alongside existing student loan programs.

BC Business Council
2005 submission to the government’s Finance Committee

Ensure access to developmental programs like Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs

More than 40% of adults in British Columbia have low literacy skills. Many would have problems applying for a job, understanding a prescription or reading to their kids. Unemployment for those with low literacy and skill levels is 26%, compared with 4% for those with high skill levels. High school completion and English language training are critical for people to move successfully into the workforce.

It's time for BC to take lifelong learning and skill development seriously. Yet under Gordon Campbell's watch, there has been a 10% decline in province-wide enrolment in Adult Basic Education – which allows adults to complete high school – and a 38% drop in enrolment at BC's largest public English language training institution.

BC's New Democrats will target funding and spaces in BC colleges for British Columbians needing to complete high school or get English language training. Improving access; improving participation; improving benefits for people and our province.

VCC cuts faculty

Vancouver Community College announced this week it is proposing to lay off or reduce the hours of about 70 faculty and support staff... The layoffs mean 33% fewer seats in the college's English as a second language and basic education programs, said a VCC faculty association representative, [adding that] most of the students in basic education programs are unemployed, disabled, or working at minimum-wage jobs.

A spokesman for the Students' Union of VCC said: "These programs are the only hope for many in our community who, without basic training, may well end up joining the homeless in the Downtown Eastside."

Vancouver Sun
January 10, 2003

**Rebuild key
public services
to make life
better for
ordinary families**



The Campbell Liberals have cut key public services and punished BC's most vulnerable

- Broke their promise to “make children the number one priority” by laying off hundreds of frontline child protection workers and shutting down the independent watchdog over children at risk
- Eliminated funding to women’s centres and the key services relied upon by hundreds of thousands of women
- Drove up waitlists for affordable housing for low-income families, seniors and others
- Punished the poor and made it harder for people on welfare to re-enter the workforce
- Cut legal aid, hurting those most in need of access to justice

British Columbians are tired of the politics of division – where some people benefit while others are punished, where some are listened to and others are not.

Over the past four years under Gordon Campbell, women in need, seniors, the poor, the homeless and so many others have been abandoned. Those least able to help themselves are being forced to fend for themselves – the services that could help them get back on their feet or live more independently have been drastically cut. They and their advocates have made a strong case to government that funding cuts are punishing many British Columbians, but they have been ignored by the Campbell Liberals.

That’s not the kind of society British Columbians want. It’s not what Gordon Campbell promised in Opposition. But it is reality under his Liberal government.

Carole James has a different vision for British Columbia – where a strong, sustainable and diversified economy brings benefits to all, where people are supported when they need help and are trying to turn things around, where people are respected and listened to.

Under her plan, the New Democrats will rebuild key public services that help people in need live more independent, productive lives.

The New Democrat Plan:

Strengthen child protection and make the Ministry of Children and Families more accountable

In 2001, Gordon Campbell promised to “make children the number one priority.” That he would “stop the endless bureaucratic restructuring that has drained resources from children and family services.” And that he would put “real accountability into the system.”

He has done exactly the opposite. In fact, from day one, his government’s plan to restructure the Ministry of Children and Families has been plagued by administrative chaos, heartless budget cuts, and public controversy – ultimately tearing apart the safety net for BC’s most vulnerable children.

Gordon Campbell cut funding and laid off hundreds of frontline child protection workers.

And he shut down the Children’s Commission and the Children’s Advocate, effectively ending public accountability over how the system cares for and responds to children it is responsible for.

Even then, Gordon Campbell promised that everything would be okay – that the BC Coroner’s Service would take over responsibility for investigating and reporting on children’s deaths. But then he promptly cut the coroner’s service budget, and offered no extra money to pay for investigating new children’s cases. And sure enough, two years after the change, not a single review of child deaths has been completed.

Carole James believes all BC children have the right to a safe, secure home environment – to a good start in life. Anything less is unacceptable.

It’s time to restore the Office of the Children’s Commissioner – an independent, public watchdog that ensures children in the care of the Ministry and those who are at risk in our communities get the help they need. It’s also time to put more resources into the Ministry of Children and Families, and support the transition of services to regionally-based and community-based agencies.

There is currently no way for the public to be certain of the impact on vulnerable children resulting from extensive budget cuts which have not been restored in the most recent budget.

Former Child and Family Advocate
Joyce Preston
Former Ombudsman
Dulcie McCallum
Former Children’s Commissioner
Cynthia Morton
March 10, 2005

We currently have 9,000 children in care in the province of British Columbia. Yes, every once in a while something terrible happens.

Stan Hagen
Minister of Children
and Family Development
March 9, 2005

Independent, open review and oversight has been effectively eliminated. The government did create a child and youth officer, ostensibly as a replacement for the eliminated offices. But whatever has happened behind the scenes, the office has offered almost no meaningful reporting to the public.

Paul Willcocks column
Vancouver Sun
March 26, 2005

There are 9,000 children who are the responsibility of government – the responsibility of all British Columbians. As part of our responsibility, we must make sure their safety, their rights, and their futures are protected.

Restore funding to Women’s Centres and re-establish the Ministry of Women’s Equality

Gordon Campbell has shown no understanding of the situation women face in this province.

In 2001, more than 300,000 BC women made use of the services offered by the 37 non-profit women’s centres around the province. But not anymore. Gordon Campbell cut all government funding to women’s centres around the province that provide counseling, referral and other frontline services to women in need.

And he removed one of women’s strongest voices on his first day in office by eliminating the Ministry of Women’s Equality, another broken promise.

All of this, and more, has resulted in the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women condemning the government of BC, saying the Liberal government’s policies have created particular hardships for women and children in areas such as social assistance, legal aid and support for victims of violence.

Closer to home, the Union of BC Municipalities passed a resolution calling on the government to reverse its decision to cut core funding for women’s centres. And still Gordon Campbell hasn’t listened.

Carole James wants to build a British Columbia where women’s equality is more than just rhetoric, and where women are equal partners in society.

BC’s New Democrats will bring back a free-standing Ministry for Women’s Equality which will have policy development and service delivery responsibilities. And we will restore funding for women’s centres to ensure women in need have a place to go to get help for the violence, poverty, human rights and other issues they face.

And then there’s Doug Walls...

Who is Doug Walls? The former BC Liberal riding association president for Prince George-Omineca is related by marriage to Gordon Campbell.

Which evidently was qualification enough for the Campbell Liberals to appoint Mr. Walls to run the Interim Authority for Community Living – an agency of the Ministry of Children and Families.

Over a period of 427 days, Mr. Walls claimed to work 390 days – the average person would normally work 280 days during that same period – and on a daily-rate contract that added up to \$214,000.

But wait – he told bankruptcy investigators [from his failed car dealership in Prince George] that he was making only \$1,749 a month during that period.

Then there’s also the fact Mr. Walls was paid another \$100,000 in government contracts around the same time, and that a technology society he acted on behalf of had a \$400,000 government loan forgiven without formal ministerial or cabinet approval.

A small window into the Gordon Campbell Liberals’ approach to fiscal management.

We've talked before about, why are [the Campbell Liberals] cutting women's shelters and services for women? A relatively small part of the budget, but it sends a very mean signal to an important segment of society.

Keith Baldrey
Global TV reporter
On Voice of BC
May 19, 2004

Former Supreme Court of Canada judge Claire L'Heureux-Dube called the Campbell government cutbacks to women's programs – including elimination of B.C. government grants to 37 women's centres next month – a tragedy: "Violence against women everywhere in the world is a tragedy, and I think that cutting funds for those institutions [while women are] going through those terrible times is, sincerely, a tragedy," said L'Heureux-Dube, now a judge-in-residence at Laval University in Quebec.

Vancouver Sun
March 6, 2004

Build affordable housing for low-income families, seniors and people with mental and physical disabilities and homeless people

Over the last four years investment in housing for low income families, seniors and people with disabilities has collapsed – the Campbell government put a freeze on the development of 1,700 housing units and cancelled another 1,000 units of social housing. The consequence is more people being forced to live on the streets than ever before.

In all, the waitlists for housing have skyrocketed to 13,000 households, with more than half of those being families with children. And they'll be waiting a long time – an average of three to five years, in fact.

At the same time, the Campbell Liberals have offloaded to regional health authorities all responsibility for shelters that would assist people with addictions or mental health problems get the help they need.

Under Gordon Campbell, there is no provincial leadership on one of the biggest challenges facing British Columbia. People who are at their most vulnerable are being abandoned and told to fend for themselves.

Carole James is ready to provide leadership that will generate real solutions. She knows that safe, affordable housing is key for people trying to get their life together – it is the foundation that allows for fuller, more meaningful participation in our economy and society.

New Democrats will work with municipalities, non-profit organizations and the federal government to build 1200 more affordable housing units to give people the safe and secure foundation needed to move forward with their lives. In addition, increased funding will go towards shelter and detox services that help people address their addiction and mental health problems.

Changes to welfare and rising housing costs are the main reasons [for growing homelessness] given by those dealing with the problem, says Vern Smotuk, a planner with the Greater Vancouver Regional District and the chair of the committee [on homelessness] for the past two years. Added to that are cuts to services for the mentally ill, people with addictions, and young people.

Vancouver Sun
October 18, 2003

Establish Residential Tenancy Offices as an information and dispute resolution resource for tenants and landlords.

In 2004, the Gordon Campbell rewrite of the Residential Tenancy Act came into force and BC's renters – who make up 35% of all households – and their landlords are now struggling to understand and work with the new rights and obligations.

They are doing so without the assistance that used to be available through regional Residential Tenancy Offices. Gordon Campbell shut those offices down even though he knew the new legislation was coming – even though he knows that informed tenants and landlords are less likely to end up in costly and disruptive disputes.

BC's New Democrats will restore closed Residential Tenancy Offices to ensure that tenants and landlords have ready access to the information they need, and have opportunities to resolve disputes through arbitration rather than costly court proceedings.

Fight poverty and treat people with dignity and respect by:

- **helping people make the transition to work and restoring the earnings exemption**
- **better supports for single parent families, people with disabilities, and people who have persistent multiple barriers to employment**
- **ending the annual review of assistance for people with disabilities and repealing the 2 out of 5 year limit**

In 2002, Gordon Campbell unleashed his biggest cuts on those who could least afford them. By cutting the social assistance budget more deeply than any other budget item, he sent a message that he was out to punish the poor.

He cut welfare rates, tried to impose arbitrary, U.S.-style rules that deny assistance to those in need, and – to show how poorly thought through his plan was – made it even harder for people on welfare to get back into the workforce.

No other province has ever brought in anything close to the kind of attack we've seen on British Columbians living in poverty.

The Campbell Liberals' mean-spirited approach does nothing more than push the problem of unemployment onto the streets rather than solve it. For example, while the number of total welfare recipients may be down, the number of people now classified as having persistent multiple barriers to employment is escalating rapidly. The number of homeless people is escalating rapidly in all regions.

Tackling unemployment and welfare reduction is a serious issue demanding serious solutions, not simplistic policies that show no understanding of the complexity of the issue or today's economy, particularly in resource communities.

The New Democrats believe in giving vulnerable people the supports they need and in helping British Columbians on welfare make the transition to work. That includes:

- supporting a transition to work by restoring the earnings exemption
- recognizing the difficulties facing single-parent families and people with persistent multiple barriers through better supports
- helping people address their challenges to lead more fulfilling lives, rather than constantly making them defend those challenges in never-ending reviews

The elimination of the earnings exemption is the single biggest failure of BC's welfare reform initiative since it creates a disincentive to work.

Jason Clemens
Director of Fiscal Studies
The Fraser Institute
October 2002

To the Auditor General: you talk a lot in the report about the negative impact on the recipient population and how the level of anxiety was increased. I don't think anybody would try to argue differently from that. It was a terrible thing to witness and to be part of.

Kootenay Liberal MLA **Bill Bennett**
Public Accounts Committee of the
Legislature
October 2004

Province spent \$5 million to cut 46 off disability: report

The B.C. government spent \$5 million and put disabled people under needless stress to cut just 46 people off government assistance, B.C.'s auditor general said Tuesday.

In a report tabled in the B.C. legislature, Wayne Strelieff said the ministry of human resources pressed on with its review of disability recipients in 2002 without any proof that a great number of them were ineligible.

"The type of review process was not well thought-out," Strelieff said in an interview. "The process was what we call a fast-track one that likely cost more than it should, and unnecessarily increased anxiety within a particularly vulnerable group of people."

In the end, the government found only 400 people – less than one per cent of the ministry's more than 62,000 disabled clients – were ineligible for assistance.

Of those, 40 reapplied and were granted disability status, and 314 began receiving other forms of government assistance.

Only 46 people had their cases closed entirely, the report said.

"The ministry did not achieve the significant cost savings it thought it would by doing the review, as almost all benefit recipients were found to meet the new eligibility requirements," the report said.

[The auditor general] said a simple statistical sample would have quickly shown that very few people would be found ineligible.

"With this simple step, the whole review process could have been less costly and probably less onerous for both the ministry and the recipients," the report says.

Improve safety in communities and make the justice system better by:

- **increasing funding for legal aid**
- **restoring budget for native court workers**
- **giving municipalities the resources they need to improve community policing**
- **hiring 70 victims counsellors**

In 2002, the Campbell Liberals cut legal aid funding by 40%, which meant, as Attorney General Geoff Plant admitted, that “there will be people who will have an even harder time finding access to justice than before.” Women and the poor, in particular, as the cuts meant the Legal Services Society of BC had to eliminate its human rights and poverty law services.

Services offered by native court workers – such as assistance on WCB claims, wrongful dismissal and other kinds of family and civil law – were hit just as hard, with almost half of their budget slashed over two years.

By increasing funding for legal aid and native court workers, Carole James will improve access to legal assistance for the working poor, women, Aboriginal people and other British Columbians.

BC’s New Democrats will also boost community efforts to tackle crime and support victims of crime. For three years, Gordon Campbell broke his promise to share traffic fine revenues with municipalities for policing, crime fighting and traffic safety. Because of this, municipalities were a combined \$65 million short each year of what they needed for community safety. With only nine months left until an election, and under pressure from Carole James and the NDP, the Campbell Liberals finally agreed to hand over traffic fine money to municipalities.

Carole James will send the proceeds from traffic fines to municipalities so they have the resources they need to fight crime and build safer communities.

She will also strengthen community resources further by funding 70 victims counselors to help victims of crime through their recovery period.

Liberals ignore pain of crime victims’ families

If there is an election issue on which BC citizens might gauge the Liberals’ integrity, it is the governing party’s insensitivity and indifference to victims of crime... It used to be that families who lost a son, daughter, mother or father to a drunk driver, violent offender or sexual deviant could turn to one of 70 counsellors working alongside our provincial prosecutors.

But in the drive to shave bucks from budgets four years ago, the B.C. Liberals axed the Crown-based victim services – leaving grief-stricken relatives of the murdered and wounded scrambling for information, unable to lean on the wisdom of a comforting professional during a complex, frustrating process.

The Province
March 9, 2005

**Stop
privatization to
help make life
affordable and
build a stronger
future**



Higher costs and lower service:

The Gordon Campbell privatization record

- Increased hydro rates, privatized key parts of BC Hydro, and stopped BC Hydro from building low cost sustainable electricity
- Increased ICBC rates and moving BC towards a private car insurance system which would mean huge hikes in car insurance premiums
- Increased ferry fares, privatized BC Ferries and is putting the future of many ferry routes in doubt
- Shut out BC companies from competing on major BC projects
- Privatized hospital services and threatening health care for BC patients
- Sold BC Rail despite his promise not to
- Wasted \$6.5 million on the failed scheme to privatize the Coquihalla highway
- Provided massive financial support to the privatized RAV line – with taxpayers taking the risks for the private operators

Shouldn't BC families get the best deal possible for the key public services they use every day, like electricity, ferries and car insurance?

Based on his four-year record, Gordon Campbell doesn't seem to think so. He's handcuffed public corporations like BC Hydro and ICBC, so they can no longer offer the best service or price they could be. And if he's re-elected he'll privatize even more of the important services and public assets that British Columbians rely on.

Carole James believes there's a better way: Our major public corporations that have served British Columbians well for decades should be strengthened, made more innovative, and kept by – and for – the public. It's time to end the Campbell Liberals' failed privatization schemes.

The New Democrat Plan:

Keep electricity rates low for BC's businesses and families by maintaining public ownership of BC Hydro and letting it develop new, reliable and sustainable clean energy sources

Carole James believes that where it makes sense for BC Hydro to develop new power generation, they should be given the green light.

Gordon Campbell says no. He has broken up BC Hydro, privatized one-third of its operation, and forbidden it from building any new reliable and sustainable energy. This has forced BC to rely on more expensive power from private producers.

The New Democrats believe British Columbia must continue to be a leader in the generation of clean, sustainable energy. We will remove the Liberals' restrictions on BC Hydro, and put a renewed focus on innovative electricity generation strategies and sources that will benefit BC families, help keep BC economically competitive, and protect our environment.

Prevent the soaring auto insurance rates facing drivers in other provinces by keeping ICBC public

Private car insurance means higher premiums. Just take a look around the rest of the country.

Yet that is exactly where the Gordon Campbell government is trying to drive British Columbians. Rather than let ICBC do its business in the best possible way for BC drivers, the Liberal government has interfered in the corporation's business plan and operations, limiting its ability to offer drivers the best possible price. Gordon Campbell even fired his handpicked ICBC president because he argued in favour of public auto insurance after learning how efficient it is.

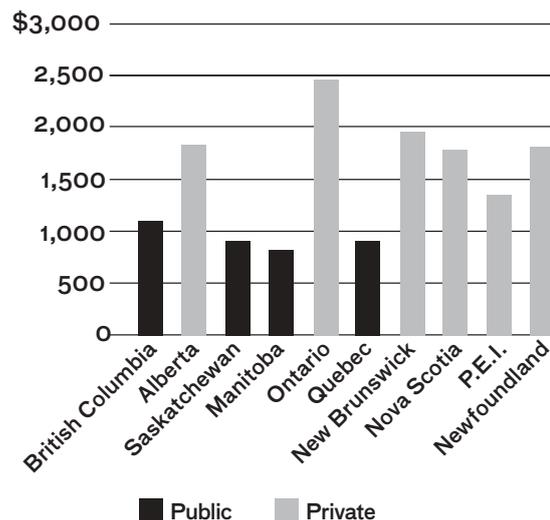
Gas-fired electrical plant gets go-ahead

[The BC Utilities Commission decision to give the go-ahead to the Duke Point electricity plant] is "subjecting all BC Hydro customers to unacceptably high levels of cost and financial risk," according to the [Joint Industry Electricity Steering Committee]... The committee says Hydro's fixed costs will increase \$60 million a year, boosting electricity rates for all customers by at least 2 per cent.

Vancouver Sun
February 18, 2005

Note: Because the Campbell Liberals have forbidden BC Hydro from directly building new electricity generation projects itself, Hydro has been forced to rely on private power instead. One example is the Duke Point project on Vancouver Island, which will increase costs for consumers throughout BC.

Comparison of Public vs. Private Auto Insurance Rates by Province



All of this was done to make sure private insurance corporations are handed a bigger piece of the market – along with the higher premiums they'll force on BC drivers.

Unlike private car insurance companies, ICBC can make innovative investments in road safety and road improvements that reduce accidents and keep rates down.

Carole James believes the best way to keep premiums in line and affordable for ordinary families is to keep car insurance in public hands. And to make sure that any profits generated by ICBC are redirected back into the corporation to lower drivers' premiums, rather than into the pockets of corporate executives through expensive bonuses.

Make the BC Ferry Corporation accountable to British Columbians by restoring it as a crown corporation

British Columbians rely on BC Ferries as an extension of our network of highways – it's a vital service in our daily lives.

Yet without consultation, Gordon Campbell privatized the BC Ferry Corporation, resulting in fare increases and cuts that put profits ahead of service to British Columbians.

Carole James knows that BC Ferries has historically been one of the province's key transportation links, helping bring British Columbians together – and that shouldn't change because of a blind adherence to the ideology of privatization. **She will ensure the service is once again accountable to the public it serves by restoring it as a crown corporation.**

Over the last three years ICBC has generated two thirds of a billion dollars in profits. It is scandalous rates are not going down, especially for good drivers... I don't know of a more bizarre idea – keep rates artificially high in order to convince BC drivers that private insurance companies can compete.

Bruce Cran
National President
Consumers' Association of Canada

Privatized service = higher costs

Privatizing BC Ferries is costing British Columbians more through, for example, GST costs and higher interest charges:

- B.C. Ferries paid unrecoverable G.S.T. of \$8.5 million to Ottawa for the year ending March 31, 2004. This is money the ferry service did not previously have to pay when it was a full, public Crown Corporation. The recent fare increase of 3.8% does not even raise enough revenue to cover the full cost of this additional G.S.T.
- Because of debt costs associated with its new privatized status, in the 2003/04 fiscal year, BC Ferries paid \$22.1 million more in interest charges on its long-term debt compared to the previous year.

Ensure BC companies have equal opportunity to bid in their own province on public projects such as new ferry construction

In moving forward with major public projects, we can't leave BC companies and workers behind, as the Gordon Campbell government did when it sent BC Ferries shipbuilding jobs over to Germany.

For more than 40 years, all new ferries have been built in BC, with the economic benefits staying right here in the provincial economy. Under Gordon Campbell, a BC shipyard was disqualified from even participating in the bidding process for three new ferries – a contract worth \$325 million and providing 4500 person-years of employment.

And British Columbians may never know the details of the Liberals' deal with the German company – it was worked out in secret and Gordon Campbell has made sure that the newly privatized BC Ferry Service cannot be touched by Freedom of Information requests.

Carole James knows British Columbia companies and workers have the skill and experience to deliver high quality products and services. BC's New Democrats will make sure BC companies and workers have a fair chance at bidding on BC projects – from BC Ferries to the 2010 Olympic Games.

Put an immediate end to further privatization of health care services

The Campbell Liberals want to put public tax dollars into the hands of private, for-profit health care companies. And they're staying with their plan even though we've seen the very clear evidence that it's just not working.

In many cases, the privatization of food and housekeeping services has created dirty hospitals and poor quality meals for patients. In one survey of emergency department staff by the BC Nurses Union, 86% of respondents believed the overall cleanliness of the department has declined post-privatization, while 64% said housekeeping practices did not meet commonly accepted infection control requirements.

All we're asking for is a chance to bid. It doesn't cost B.C. Ferries one dollar to let us bid.

Kyle Washington
North Vancouver-based Washington
Marine Group
August 21, 2004

For seniors in long-term care, meal time used to be a highlight of their day," Stephens said. "Now I'm receiving a lot of complaints from them and their families. The health authority is saving money, but what about the quality of life for these people?"

Liberal MLA **Lynn Stephens**
Reported in The Province
November 28, 2004

The regional health authorities are hearing the complaints through letters, public meetings and hospital hallways across the province. The government is hearing it too. But they just aren't listening.

Carole James is listening. **She believes public tax dollars should be spent improving public health care, not the bottom line of for-profit companies, and will put an end to health care privatization.**

Would you like that rethermalized?

In letters to newspaper editors and their MLAs, angry patients and residents – and their fuming family members – have found many colourful adjectives to describe the end product of rethermalization, none of them flattering. Rethermed hospital food has been roundly criticized as being: Too hot, too cold; too bland, too spicy; too hard, too mushy; tasting like salt, smelling like sulphur, or bouncing like rubber. The food has been described in the pages of *The Province* in recent weeks as “peculiar,” “nauseating,” “evil-smelling,” and “inhumane.”

Mike Roberts
The Province
December 19, 2004

WCB orders Sodexo to clean up

A Workers Compensation Board of BC safety officer reported that Sodexo – the for-profit company contracted to do housekeeping work at MSA General Hospital in Abbotsford – “has not provided the workers with adequate information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure the health and safety of those workers in carrying out their work and to ensure the health and safety of other workers at the workplace.”

Abbotsford-Mission Times
November 2004

Keep the BC Rail Port Division in public hands to ensure fair and efficient access to export markets for all BC Businesses

Gordon Campbell misled British Columbians when he said he wouldn't sell BC Rail, and he misled us about how the sale of BC Rail would put the interests of British Columbian businesses first.

Now we're learning the truth about what happens when a multinational company with dominating interests outside of the province has a stranglehold on the important transportation corridors BC businesses rely on to get their products to important export markets.

Despite the scandal of criminal charges involving the planned sale of the Roberts Bank spur line, Gordon Campbell and Kevin Falcon have not put aside their ultimate goal to sell this important economic asset.

Premier W.A.C. Bennett built a publicly controlled Roberts Bank spur line to ensure all BC businesses could have fair access to the port. That's a good reason to continue to keep the BC Rail Port Division in public hands.

Carole James will not sell the Roberts Bank spur line.

Scrapped railway deal cost B.C. \$900,000

Transportation Minister Kevin Falcon confirmed Tuesday that his ministry spent about \$900,000 on investment banking, legal and accounting fees before killing plans to privatize a B.C. Rail line at Roberts Bank near the Tsawwassen ferry terminal last month.

"The good news, from our point of view, is that we believe that a good portion of that will still be valuable information for us to use in the future," Falcon told reporters.

Victoria Times Colonist
April 28, 2004

Campbell's failed privatization of the Coquihalla: Bad for British Columbians. Bad for business.

In 2002, the Campbell Liberals launched a plan to privatize the Coquihalla highway – concocted in secret without any consultation or warning. Unprecedented public backlash forced his government to back down from the privatization scheme, but not before \$6.5 million had been wasted on management consultants, lawyers and communications advice.

"Six-and-a-half million? You're kidding me!" an astonished Dick Dickens told The Province columnist Michael Smyth in October 2003. "That's nearly the amount we had to cut from our school [district] budget this year because of government underfunding," said Dickens, a

Kamloops school board trustee and former co-chair of the Save the Coquihalla Coalition.

At the same time, BC's investment credibility on the national and world stage took a beating.

Twenty-eight businesses had expressed interest in this public-private partnership – investing significant dollars in developing proposals – and were suddenly left in the cold.

"What you don't do is put something on the plate for people to do business and then pull it off at the last minute," noted David Armitage, who sits on the board of governors with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. "That costs money."

**Work with
business, labour
and communities
for a strong
economy for
everyone**



Creating conflict and one-sided policies:

Gordon Campbell's approach to BC's economy

- Failed to bring all sectors together to develop consensus on BC's economic future, preferring instead to listen to Liberal friends and insiders
- Sharply reduced minimum wages for young people by creating the \$6 "training wage" and cut employment standards for all working people
- Soured relations with First Nations by forcing an unnecessary referendum, and set back the treaty process – and the economic stability it brings – by at least two years
- Weakened prospects for value-added forestry and job creation by doubling raw log exports and by detaching timber supply from processing responsibilities
- Failed to reinvest increased resource revenues in the communities that generated those revenues
- Created the largest deficit in BC history
- Deepened the economic divide between rural and urban BC

BC's economic strength has always been based on the extraction and sale of natural resources on international markets. And mining, forestry, agriculture, fishing, and oil and natural gas will continue to create employment and wealth for individuals and communities.

Every government has the responsibility to work with these economic sectors to ensure they are competitive in international markets, and that their activities strengthen communities, respect their workers and protect our common environment.

But British Columbians – particularly those outside the Lower Mainland – know that total reliance on resource industries has led to cycles of 'boom-and-bust'. Times are good when commodity prices and exports are high; families and communities suffer when world markets weaken.

It's time to think ahead and plan a better future. It's time to move towards more stability in resource communities with new economic development based on ideas, skills and the spirit of innovation. We need to move to a position of leadership in innovation and diversification that supports regional business development and a higher quality of life for those in resource communities.

Creating a more diverse and value-added economy requires a fair, competitive tax and regulatory environment, no question. But so much more is needed: a skilled workforce, reliable public services such as BC Hydro and medicare, a commitment to research and to commercialization of new ideas and products, solid transportation and communication infrastructure, and – most importantly – a partnership between the province and communities to develop economic strategies that work to provide stability for businesses, employees, communities and families

This vision of an increasingly prosperous, stable and sustainable economy whose benefits are shared equally throughout our province will not be achieved at exclusive meetings in Victoria between Gordon Campbell and Liberal Party insiders. All regions, all British Columbians, deserve to be partners in that effort.

The New Democrat Plan:

Enable communities to strengthen their own economic futures:

During periods of high commodity prices, return a significant portion of the provincial budget surplus to rural and resource communities for investment in economic sustainability and diversification

When the international market prices for lumber, pulp, metals, oil, or natural gas are high – as they are right now – Victoria benefits from high stumpage and royalty revenues.

Carole James believes these are the times when building for the future must take place.

That's why she would work with BC's regions and communities to help them break out of traditional boom-and-bust cycles. BC's resource and rural communities know better than Victoria what they need to do to diversify and build stronger, sustainable economies.

That's why the Columbia Basin Trust, the Peace River area's Fair Share and Nechako-Kitamaat Development Fund – developed by the NDP in the 1990s – have been successful. A similar model of local control can be used in other regions of BC.

Currently, when the BC government runs a surplus, all of the annual budgeted "forecast allowance" stays in Victoria, and goes to paying down BC's debt. The NDP plan would devote half of unneeded forecast allowances to strategic economic development.

Regional and community leaders – not Victoria-based insiders – will decide how to use those funds to build sustainable, diversified economies: skills training, updated infrastructure, expanding market opportunities, developing new economic sectors, or other initiatives.

Help forest communities plan for the economic impact of the pine beetle epidemic

In forest communities throughout the northern and interior regions of BC, sawmills are running flat out as allowable cuts have increased dramatically in response to the pine beetle infestation. New markets and new products for the expanded cuts must be developed.

Even more important, however, is preparing for the future. While times are good today, what is going to happen tomorrow? Professional foresters forecast that in a decade or so as much as 80% of the pine trees that the forest industry depends on will be killed by this epidemic.

Carole James will return stumpage gains from today's higher harvests to communities affected by the pine beetle epidemic to help them prepare for the future when cuts decrease and jobs are lost. The stumpage from their forests should help to build their future.

The Columbia Basin Trust supports efforts by the people of the Basin to create a legacy of social, economic and environmental well-being and to achieve greater self-sufficiency for present and future generations.

Mission Statement of the Columbia Basin Trust

Columbia Basin Trust's program model both reflects the diversity and history of the Basin and allows many decisions to be made directly by Basin residents.

2003/04 Annual Report of the Columbia Basin Trust

This action will bring together businesses, workers, First Nations, local governments and community-based economic development organizations to plan a more diverse and sustainable economy.

Restrict exports of raw logs from public lands and ensure that forest communities gain jobs from regional timber harvest

Local benefits from local resources have been reduced during Gordon Campbell's four years in power. And large forest companies have more control than ever before.

For example, the Campbell Liberals no longer require timber to be milled in the communities where it's cut, meaning logging companies can take the timber and walk away. Since Campbell became premier, 11 BC mills have closed down permanently. And Liberal policies mean many more mill closures are coming.

Carole James will stop the Liberals' one-sided resource-use policies. Representation from workers, companies, communities, First Nations and local governments – not just big corporations – needs to go back into decisions about who benefits from our public forest lands, including decisions on raw log exports.

Decisions on new or expanded timber allocation or harvesting agreements must reflect priorities developed by communities and First Nations around job creation, industrial diversification, value-added manufacturing, research, training and other key benefits.

As well, BC's New Democrats will put priority on enhanced silviculture – pruning, spacing and pre-commercial thinning – as a way to encourage more and better wood for advanced manufacturing and value-added uses.

[Carole James'] initiative recognizes the need to invest in the economic future of those communities directly impacted by the pine beetle infestation, including in forestry and pine beetle recovery, transportation, tourism, energy, small businesses and sustainable economic development.

Quesnel Mayor **Nate Bello**
In the Prince George Citizen
November 26, 2004

There is no justification for exports off of Crown land when there is a need for the wood in BC, [former Doman Industries CEO Herb] Doman said. "There were enough logs exported last year to run 10 sawmills in coastal BC," he said.

Nanaimo Daily News
August 7, 2004

B.C.'s economic two solitudes

On the surface, it looks like the 180 employees at Lewis Creek, many who lived in nearby Barriere, were victims of a tragic fire.

But there was another reason why Tolko Industries Ltd. Left... A government policy passed by [MLA Kevin] Krueger's own Liberal party months before the fire permitted Tolko to abandon the Lewis Creek site while retaining rights to the timber supply from the surrounding region. The new legislation revoked a long-standing requirement that linked Crown timber to regional manufacturing plants.

Vancouver Sun
March 18, 2005

Balance the budget

Balanced budgets make sense for the province and for British Columbians. **Carole James will balance the budget and the benefits** – making life better and more affordable for ordinary families.

Resolve land claims and strengthen meaningful consultation with First Nations

Four years ago, Gordon Campbell promised to negotiate “affordable, workable treaties with First Nations.” Instead, against all expert advice, the Campbell Liberals launched a \$3 million referendum that was confrontational and divisive, and ultimately failed to provide the mandate he was seeking.

The result? The Campbell Liberals have set the treaty process back at least two years. The sense of progress and goodwill coming out of the Nisga’a treaty, finalized by the NDP and signed in 2000, has been lost.

Gordon Campbell has also failed to appropriately consult and accommodate First Nations in areas where the Supreme Court has made clear that responsibility exists. That has further undermined important relationships with First Nations and created further uncertainty for business and communities.

Carole James agrees with the Business Council of British Columbia which, in its 2004 report on BC’s treaty process, stated that “the business community in British Columbia, Canada and even internationally is looking for concrete signs of substantive progress and of an increasingly stable investment climate.”

And she knows that the only way forward is by establishing mutual respect, starting with making sure First Nations are appropriately consulted and fairly accommodated on land- and resource-use decisions. And it means clear direction to Provincial government negotiators that when it comes to governance of First Nations lands, self-government agreements will be negotiated within treaties.

A commitment to balanced budgets

Under my leadership, the NDP is making fiscal responsibility a top priority.

We can govern effectively.

We can expand opportunity.

We can build the province we want.

But we can do none of these things if we mortgage our children’s future.

Fiscal responsibility is a first principle of modern progressive governance.

And it’s one I won’t veer from.

The NDP under my leadership will balance the budget.

Carole James

Speech at a reception for Manitoba Premier Gary Doer
January 13, 2005

Treaty referendum a futile exercise

The referendum has delayed the process, increased suspicion and mistrust among aboriginal people, encouraged other British Columbians to deny the reality of aboriginal title and emboldened racist groups like that one in Kelowna proclaiming that a “yes” vote would make B.C. “a better place for white families.

The referendum was not a high point in the history of this province.

It was an exercise in futility by a government without the gumption to take on the responsibilities and leadership for which it was elected a year ago. It was narrow-minded, mean-spirited and a complete waste of effort.

Victoria Times Colonist
July 4, 2002

Scrap the \$6 an hour training wage, prevent the exploitation of children in the workplace, and ensure fair employment standards and strengthened enforcement

Ensure healthy and safe working conditions

All British Columbians have the right to be treated with fairness and respect in the workplace. But many British Columbians have been denied the right to fair treatment by Gordon Campbell's damaging changes to minimum standards for employment.

His one-sided policies have been particularly bad for young people – allowing them to be exploited by paying them less than the minimum wage and making BC the worst in North America for child labour standards. For example, the new rules

mean children as young as 12 may be working up to four hours on a school day and up to 20 hours per week on top of their school hours.

The enforcement of minimum standards for employment was seriously weakened when more than half of the Employment Standards Branch offices were closed and a third of the enforcement positions were cut. Workers are now expected to fend for themselves if they have a workplace problem, using self-help kits that are available only in English.

Carole James would take immediate action on the unfair policies:

- Eliminating the \$6 training wage.
- Bringing back the system of checks and balances for children in the workplace.
- Restoring employment standards enforcement officers that were cut by the Campbell government so that the rights of vulnerable workers – especially children, youth, immigrant and the lowest-paid workers – can be better protected.

Workplace health and safety has also been threatened by Gordon Campbell's cuts – the Workers Compensation Board has closed four offices across the province and eliminated 550 positions. Workplace inspections to monitor whether health and safety rules are being followed have dropped 27% since 2001.

Carole James will protect a person's right to a safe and healthy workplace. And that's why she will make preventing injury and exploitation in the workplace a priority by supporting better education and enforcement of health and safety laws.

Ensure a strategic and competitive tax and regulatory environment that stimulates and supports innovation, job creation and diversification

- **strategic tax reductions for innovation and job growth, e.g. film production tax credits**
- **no corporate capital tax for non-financial institutions**
- **no new taxes on small businesses**
- **reduce regulatory costs while maintaining high standards**
- **work with the federal government to extend EI to self-employed people**

[Victoria Chamber of Commerce] President Jim Tighe isn't sure why the Campbell government changed the labour law to permit people without job experience to be paid \$2 less than the provincial minimum wage of \$8. 'I thought it a strange move.'

Victoria Weekend
January 7, 2005

Public services are a key component of a healthy investment climate. A strong transportation infrastructure, a high quality health care system, and vibrant educational institutions that foster new ideas and provide skilled workers are competitive advantages for BC.

Equally important is a competitive tax and regulatory environment. The New Democrat plan will provide strategic tax incentives for emerging sectors—as was done by the NDP in the 1990s with the film industry and other successful sectors—to help businesses grow, exploit new markets and create jobs.

Small businesses create the majority of new jobs in British Columbia. In 2001, small business tax rates were cut to the lowest level in Canada by the NDP. To ensure growth, Carole James will not introduce any new taxes for small business. In addition, work needs to be done with the federal government so that the increasing number of British Columbians who are self-employed have the option to participate in the Employment Insurance program.

While continuing to identify and remove outdated regulations that hinder economic development and investment, the NDP plan will ensure that regulations designed to protect the environment, consumers and BC workers are respected.

Establish a Premier’s Economic Advisory Council

As we work to make sure BC is competitive on the global stage in the years ahead, our prime responsibility is to make sure all British Columbians have an opportunity to participate in our success. **We will be much more likely to realize our shared hopes and aspirations for our province if we work together.**

Carole James will establish a permanent Economic Advisory Council that brings together leaders from business, big and small, cooperatives and credit unions, as well as municipal and regional leaders, labour leaders, educators and academics.

That council will be a key advisor to the Premier on skills training, investment and research and development – working together to expand economic opportunities and future prosperity. That means strengthening traditional sectors at the same time we explore and expand new sustainable value-added and technology based industries. And it means making sure that all regions of the province are beneficiaries of the investments and results of innovation and diversification.

Utilize the strength of BC Hydro to establish British Columbia as a major world leader in the development of clean, green power

Gordon Campbell is frittering away the huge economic potential of our “crown jewel”, BC Hydro. Because BC is blessed with an abundance of water resources, BC Hydro is a huge advantage for the province’s businesses and communities, providing them with cheap, reliable and renewable electricity.

But by increasing rates for both industrial and residential consumers, forbidding Hydro to generate any new electricity itself, privatizing some business areas and breaking others into separate parts, pushing for coal and fossil fuel electric plants, and embroiling the province in rancorous debates about Hydro's future, **Gordon Campbell has wasted the opportunity to build on the strength of BC Hydro to make our province a leader in clean, green power.**

Carole James will take practical steps to ensure that British Columbians derive maximum benefit from the wealth of electricity resources available in our province. Unlike Gordon Campbell, she will not put ideology ahead of common sense. She will once again permit BC Hydro to build new generating capacity. And she will also use the strengths of BC Hydro to assist small, green electricity projects to reach their full commercial potential.

British Columbia can be at the forefront of wind, solar, small-scale hydro, sustainable biomass and geothermal power generation as well as improving energy efficiency. We can power our economy without dangerously disrupting the planet's climate and adding more and more pollution to our air.

Market BC agriculture with a creative and energetic Buy BC program and ensure the Agricultural Land Reserve is protected to strengthen opportunities for sustainable agriculture

BC's agricultural produce is the best in the world – the result of a vibrant industry that has benefited from the protection of BC's best farmland through the Agricultural Land Reserve and from very strong promotional efforts by the NDP in the 1990s.

The industry's economic contribution to the provincial economy is significant, if often overlooked. The industry contributes more than \$2.2 billion to the provincial economy, providing more than half our food needs and generating employment for more than 200,000 British Columbians. At its heart is the pride of generations of BC families, who have worked hard to keep their farms going through some pretty tough times and money-losing years – in fact, 98% of BC farms are family-owned.

Regrettably, BC's agriculture industry and community was punished when:

- Gordon Campbell cancelled funding for the successful Buy BC program that encouraged British Columbians to eat nutritious, locally grown food.
- The Campbell Liberals took responsibility for the Agricultural Land Commission away from the Ministry of Agriculture and deliberately weakened the protection of the Agricultural Land Reserve, once again giving land developers the upper hand.

Carole James believes government needs to match the energy and commitment of BC's agricultural industry with a marketing initiative that shows people here at home and abroad just how good BC produce is. That's why the New Democrats would reinvest in the Buy BC program.

And she would expand the program's reach by marketing not just BC produce but agri-tourism destinations such as BC's vineyards.

Carole James will restore Ministry of Agriculture responsibility for the Agricultural Land Reserve, ensuring its foremost priority is to protect and sustain BC's farmland. And the New Democrats will renew the Agricultural Land Commission, providing it with a new provincial mandate to protect BC's most valuable farmland and the resources needed to get the job done.

BC is losing business opportunities because our highway systems are flawed...the poor condition of the Trans-Canada highway is driving container trucks south into the U.S.

Building the Road Ahead

B.C. Roadbuilders and Heavy Construction Association

Improve freight and goods transportation on key trade corridors

Gordon Campbell's transportation preoccupation has been the corridor that runs from the Vancouver Airport to Whistler. While the Campbell Liberals are spending more than a billion dollars on public-private partnerships for the Richmond/Airport/Vancouver transit line and the Sea-to-Sky highway, other key corridors and communities elsewhere in the province are left waiting. For example, urgently need improvements to the Trans-Canada between Kamloops and the Alberta border are moving slowly because provincial funds have been diverted elsewhere.

Carole James knows that in all BC regions, highways hold our province together, providing the vital link for communities and those whose jobs rely on the efficient transportation of goods. Whether it's key Lower Mainland connectors, the Trans-Canada, Yellowhead or Crowsnest Highways that link our ports and communities to the rest of Canada, or Highway 97 that binds our province together north and south, Carole James understands that our freight and goods corridors are the lifeblood of the province.

To keep pace with the demands of an increasingly complex economy, **Carole James is committed to a long-term plan to improve freight and goods transportation** by making improvements to major trade corridors such as the Trans-Canada and the Yellowhead highways while also making multi-year investments in rehabilitation of provincial highways in all regions of the province and supporting improved rail, marine and multi-modal freight movement.

Particularly in the major urban areas, these investments will be made so as to maximize economic, social and environmental gains in conjunction with regional transit and land use plans.

Ensure that the 2010 Olympic Games are socially, economically and environmentally responsible, and bring benefits to all regions of the province

The 2010 Olympic Games have the potential to bring significant economic and tourism benefits to our province. Carole James will work with the Olympic partners not just to maximize the benefits in a socially, economically and environmentally responsible manner, but also to leverage those benefits across all regions of our province.

In particular, the Games give us the opportunity to begin strengthening cultural tourism today through initiatives that raise awareness and interest among visitors of the unique arts and culture features of our province and its regions.

The New Democrats would also ensure that all financial dealings and partnerships relating to the Games and involving the Province are open to the scrutiny of BC's Auditor General, to help ensure the public interest is protected.

Protect our environment



More pollution. Increased power to resource companies. Lax enforcement.

Gordon Campbell's record on the environment:

- Eliminated the Ministry of Environment on day one, threatening clear air and clean water
- Cut over 1,000 environmental protection staff
- Cut 800 Forest Service positions and closed 21 Forest Service offices
- Stubbornly keeps pushing offshore oil and gas exploration despite opposition by most British Columbians
- Undermined regional land-use planning and decisions
- Has no effective Kyoto plan, with policies that actually increase greenhouse gas emissions
- Lifted the moratorium on fish farm expansion and refunded over \$1 million in fines to polluting fish farm companies
- Cut services in BC parks and redefined them as "revenue-focused facilities", and imposed higher and higher user fees on park visitors

Sometimes it's easy to forget just how lucky we are. British Columbia's mix of mountains, lakes and rivers, rangeland, ocean, forests and wildlife is unmatched. There simply isn't a better place to live.

Carole James wants to make sure we'll be able to say the same thing a generation from now. And for generations after that.

The New Democrat environmental plan will restore our ability to keep our water and air clean, properly manage BC's forests, make our parks clean and attractive again for the enjoyment of British Columbians and visitors, and ensure the sustainability of our natural resources for future generations.

The New Democrat Plan:

Restore the Ministry of the Environment and improve its ability to enforce air and water quality standards

Gordon Campbell showed his level of commitment to the environment on day one when he eliminated the Ministry of Environment and subsequently slashed enforcement and compliance staff. And he eliminated any requirement to integrate environmental protection in government planning across other ministries.

Instead of fragmenting environmental protection services across a number of ministries, as the Campbell government has done, doesn't it make more sense to integrate conservation, wildlife and environmental protection services? And to ensure that the public – not industry – is in control of setting and enforcing environmental standards?

Carole James thinks so – which is why she would bring those services together and strengthen them through a renewed Ministry of Environment. This will sustain and strengthen our natural heritage for future generations, and help ensure clean air, water and land today and tomorrow.

Continue the moratorium on off-shore oil and gas exploration

Gordon Campbell is trying to sell British Columbians on the idea that offshore oil and gas exploration is not only a good idea, but that it will be in place by 2010.

But nobody is buying it. Even the oil and gas industry is saying there is no immediate business case. Beyond that, this area is a fragile ecosystem – pristine water and unique fish and wildlife. **The Campbell Liberals haven't done their homework on environmental impacts or risk assessment, or done any consultation with communities or First Nations.**

Gordon Campbell is putting his political agenda ahead of common sense.

Carole James will make sure common sense prevails by continuing the moratorium on off-shore oil and gas exploration.

Gordon Campbell is happy to do nothing for beleaguered coastal communities other than offering up false hopes and the claim that by 2010 we will have a booming offshore oil and gas industry... I am always willing to hear the facts and, in accord with the wishes of the citizens of this province, move forward as it best benefits B.C. in the long term... My approach is focused on resource and economic sustainability, environmental protection and community development.

Carole James

Quoted in the Nanaimo Daily News
April 21, 2004

The project is still in a pipe-dream phase.

Conservative Senator **Pat Carney**
Vancouver Sun
April 9, 2004

EnCana Corp. chief executive officer Gwyn Morgan says drilling for oil and gas off the coast of British Columbia remains a low priority for the Calgary-based resources giant.

Globe and Mail Report on Business
April 8, 2004

Work with businesses, labour, communities and the federal government to develop a strong Kyoto plan with measurable goals and targets.

In particular:

- **Work with the federal government to implement improved automobile fuel efficiency standards and cut pollution**
- **Work with communities to improve rail and transit options and to reduce sprawl**
- **Keep at the forefront of energy efficiency standards and renewable energy production**

Global warming is a serious challenge for British Columbians and our economy. Whether it's the mountain pine beetle epidemic, the ongoing threat of severe forest fires, or worryingly low snow-pack levels, rising temperatures worldwide are having a profound effect on BC communities. Working together, British Columbians can do our part to further Canada's effort to reduce global warming.

But the Campbell Liberals have shown a complete lack of leadership on global warming. Their Kyoto plan is weak and ineffective, with many of their policies actually increasing greenhouse gas emissions. For example, they have shown no commitment to effective land-use planning efforts to reduce urban sprawl and the pollution caused by more traffic.

BC's New Democrats will bring all parts of BC society together, to ensure we take proactive steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in our province. Working with the federal government, she will encourage industry's 'best practices' in energy efficiency – which means less pollution from vehicles, buildings, and machinery.

And, because so much of BC's greenhouse gas emissions come from transportation, she will improve sustainable urban transportation and support regional growth strategies by:

- enhancing funding for BC Transit
- accelerating provincial support for rapid transit to the north-east sector of the Lower Mainland
- restoring a multi-year, cost-sharing program for cycling infrastructure
- promoting "smart growth" of our urban communities to reduce traffic-generating urban sprawl.

Greening of U.B.C. an environmental success

The University of B.C. is hoping to set an example for school campuses around the world by meeting its targets under the Kyoto Protocol by next year.

Since it started working to create an environmentally sustainable campus in 1997, UBC has cut carbon dioxide emissions by seven per cent... It cut energy use by 20 per cent... even as enrollment went up 19 per cent...

Since 2000, buildings have been designed or renovated to include natural ventilation, water recycling and efficient lighting. New buildings are built with recycled materials or solar panels...

While the program has cost money in the short term, the university will come out ahead.

"We estimate [the energy savings are] at least a 10-year payback," said Ruth Abramson of the campus sustainability office.

"The annual savings will be close to \$2.5 million, depending on how cold winters are."

"We're actually creating a culture of sustainability," Abramson said.

Vancouver Courier
February 21, 2005

Support and respect regional land-use planning processes

The best land-use decisions are made when local people come together to work through their concerns and differences, creating solutions that provide balance between the environment and jobs.

Gordon Campbell has rejected that approach. Even decisions already reached in good faith are not free of his government's interference. One of the Liberals' first acts was to reopen the South Chilcotin land-use compromise. Three years later, Campbell Liberals announced the size of the South Chilcotin park would be reduced by 21%.

Land-use decisions that support a sustainable economy and value our environment are best made through an open and accountable process that respects the opinions and desires of those most affected by the decisions. **Carole James will respect regional decisions on which land-use solutions will work best for communities and their future.**

Ensure fish farming is environmentally responsible while protecting wild salmon stocks

Take a look at the Campbell government's record on aquaculture:

- They lifted the moratorium on fish farm expansion without any new scientific evidence.
- Slashed the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries' ability to enforce aquaculture rules by cutting its compliance budget.
- Allowed the Minister, John van Dongen, to tip off one of the fish farming industry's biggest players – and a major contributor to the Liberal party – about government's ongoing investigation into its practices.
- Passed a law that gives the Campbell government the ability to overrule local government decisions on aquaculture.
- Then, as a bonus, they refunded more than \$1 million in fines to companies that broke production and pollution rules.

Government has no business selling off our parks

By Bill Wareham

Having participated in the Lillooet land use planning process for four years, I can say that Sustainable Resources Minister George Abbott is seriously misrepresenting history by stating that the Liberal government had to revise the Lillooet land use plan and the South Chilcotin Park boundary because there was no consensus reached by the planning process.

In fact, there was a consensus reached in 2001. The agreement was to deliver two final land use options to government for consideration and to live by government's decision.

The government chose the option presented by the conservation, tourism and recreation sectors. This included a 71,000-hectare South Chilcotin Park, 13 other protected areas and management provisions to ensure protection of critical wildlife habitat. Other important protected area proposals were dropped to accommodate a large South Chilcotin Park designation.

Vancouver Sun
July 28, 2004

BC needs a safer, more sustainable aquaculture industry based on emerging “closed containment” technologies that cut pollution and the escape of Atlantic salmon. Both of these results are needed to protect our wild salmon stocks. Carole James will reinstate the moratorium on open-net fish farms and provide tax credits for investments in closed containment.

It’s a common sense approach that supports coastal communities and jobs, while greatly reducing the risk of disease and parasite transfer to wild fish stocks and the industries and people who depend upon those wild stocks.

Provide better access and service levels in BC’s parks and recreation sites.

BC parks not only provide a source of recreation and education for BC’s children and families, they also contribute \$170 million per year to the provincial tax base from the economic activity they generate.

Gordon Campbell eliminated maintenance in our forest recreation sites and charged higher parking and camping fees in BC’s most popular parks. He opened the door to long-term park management contracts for private-sector companies to operate “revenue-focused facilities”.

The cuts went further: BC is now one of only two jurisdictions in North America – the other being Mississippi – with no government-run interpretive services in its parks. **He even went so far as to eliminate the low-cost special permits that allowed people with disabilities to enjoy BC parks.**

British Columbians have always taken pride in our province’s protection of special natural and wildlife features, and the ability to share those features with the world.

Carole James will renew the spirit of BC pride by restoring services in our parks and forest recreation sites, creating fun, informative and inspirational recreational opportunities for families.

I simply say this – unless there is a sea change in the Campbell government’s attitude toward the environment generally and the wild pacific salmon specifically, they don’t deserve to be re-elected. And if we do, in spite of his appalling environmental record, re-elect him we’re sending a clear message to the Liberals, Federal and Provincial, that we don’t care a damn about our salmon and they can do as they please. So to all of you I say vote Liberal if you must, but do so knowing that you are condemning the wild salmon of British Columbia to a certain death.

Rafe Mair

Editorial broadcast

March 23, 2005

In some of the largest and oldest parks in BC, full-time government staff levels are now down to single individuals.

Strathcona Park on Vancouver Island will have one full-time government employee this year and three seasonal staff. At Alberta’s Kananaskis Country, a park complex of similar size to Strathcona, the provincial government employees 75 full-time people and a seasonal staff of more than 19.

At Mount Robson Provincial Park in northern B.C., full-time provincial government staff will be down to 1.8 this year. Seasonal staff will total 3. At two national parks in BC – Mount Revelstoke and Glacier – the land base is half of what it is at Mount Robson. To adequately conserve those two adjacent parks and protect visitor health and safety, the Canadian government employs 37 full-time staff and a seasonal staff of 39.

Please Hold. Someone Will Be With You.

A report on diminishing monitoring and enforcement capacity in the Ministry of Water Land and Air Protection

West Coast Environmental Law

April 5, 2004

Enhance forest service enforcement and compliance levels

The Campbell Liberals have cut 800 Forest Service jobs – including more than 300 positions in compliance and enforcement – and closed 21 Forest Service offices. Staffing levels have dropped to one-tenth of those in the U.S., despite logging rates that are seven times higher.

These cuts are having a profoundly negative impact on the protection and management of forest lands.

And these staffing cuts are costing British Columbians money, as neither forest company harvests nor the stumpage they pay are accurately measured. If spot inspections were increased, and better scaling and valuing of logs taken from the forest was happening, increased stumpage revenues would easily pay for better forest management.

Carole James would enhance compliance and enforcement services, getting British Columbians better value for timber harvested today and ensuring a healthy forest resource to pass on to our children.

The province has literally slammed the door on traditional wildlife enforcement, locking the door to the offices of conservation officers, eliminating secretarial staff, and directing anyone who wants to report a poaching incident to a faceless call centre in Victoria.

Stephen Hume
Vancouver Sun
May 14, 2003



End conflict and bring balance and openness to government



**Broken promises. Secret decisions. One-sided policies. Eliminating public scrutiny.
The Gordon Campbell record on “open government”:**

Four years ago, Gordon Campbell promised to “create the most open, democratic and accountable government in Canada.” Here’s what happened to that promise:

- Cut the budget for the Auditor General despite a promise to increase the funding for that independent watchdog of government spending.
- Broke contracts with public sector workers and employers that were negotiated in good faith.
- Introduced heavy-handed legislation to override the decisions and bylaws of local communities, giving Victoria ultimate power.
- Denied Official Opposition status to the only MLAs he didn’t have control over.
- Arbitrarily appointed the president of the BC Liberal Party to a high-paid Deputy Minister posting despite a promise to hire public servants openly and on merit.
- Refused to disclose what the government’s extravagant, self-promotional advertising campaigns cost BC taxpayers
- Tabled this year’s budget and ran off to campaign, refusing to allow the Legislature to question him on it or debate the Liberals’ spending priorities.

British Columbians have made it clear they want an end to the conflict and confrontation that has characterized the Campbell government. They want balance, responsible leadership and positive solutions.

Four years ago, Gordon Campbell promised to end the conflict that comes with one-sided politics. But today, we’re seeing a divided province where arbitrary decisions are made in secret, without consultation and imposed on British Columbians – often on those who are least able to fight back.

This is a government that snatched away the special permits allowing disabled people to enjoy BC’s parks, which had a cost to government of only \$200,000. Yet during that same term of office, Gordon Campbell had no hesitation in spending millions and millions of taxpayers dollars on thinly-disguised partisan TV advertising – in fact, we don’t know exactly how many millions of dollars because he refuses to make those numbers public.

It’s time to hold Gordon Campbell accountable for his one-sided approach to government and the damage he’s caused. British Columbians want balance and fairness. And they want to be listened to.

The New Democrat Plan:

End corporate and union donations to political parties

Carole James believes citizens should have every confidence that public policy decisions reflect the broad public interest.

Many citizens, particularly young people, feel alienated from the political process because they believe that organizations contributing large sums of money to political parties have greater influence over decision-making.

Carole James wants to modernize and strengthen our democratic institutions. As a starting point, New Democrats will amend the Election Act to prohibit corporations and unions from giving money to political parties.

Honour contracts with business and labour, restore free collective bargaining, and foster collaboration and balance between workers and employers

Gordon Campbell is leaving behind a legacy of broken contracts – contracts that were signed in good faith and made meaningless by the political agenda of one man.

To get his own way, he has shown he won't hesitate to impose his beliefs on the people who work to keep our province moving ahead.

BC's New Democrats want to bring fair negotiation processes back to the workplace, where the employer and union work through issues and create solutions. Settlements must be decided through free collective bargaining between employers and unions, not by the premier's office based on a political agenda.

Businesses, organizations and individuals must have trust in their dealings with government – breaking that trust is simply bad for people, bad for business, and damages BC's investment environment. Carole James will respect and honour the work put into agreements reached through an open and honest negotiation process.

First of all, I don't believe in ripping up agreements... I am not tearing up any agreements.

Gordon Campbell

In an interview with the HEU Guardian
Immediately prior to 2001 election

The government cannot act against the law. This is what you would expect in a third world country, not in British Columbia. It is absolutely unprecedented.

Michael van Klaveren

President, BC Crown Counsel Association
February 2005

After the Campbell government legislated
against their own arbitration process for
Crown prosecutors

Show respect for local governments by repealing Bill 75 – the Significant Projects Streamlining Act

Before Gordon Campbell was elected, he promised to respect the autonomy of local governments. As premier, he brought in a law that gave his cabinet absolute power to override all local bylaws and decision-making processes of municipal and regional governments.

The voices of communities and the people they elect to local governments may not matter to Gordon Campbell, but they will be listened to by Carole James.

Support the work of the Auditor General; make sure taxpayers have the information they need to know their money is being spent wisely by supporting the work of the Auditor General.

The Auditor General is the independent officer of the Legislature who keeps a watchful eye on government spending and accounting. Like the federal Auditor General, Sheila Fraser, we rely upon the BC Auditor General to raise the alarm when government spending goes awry.

Despite his promises to the contrary, Gordon Campbell made deep cuts to the Auditor General's budget.

By doing that, he sent a message, and that message hasn't changed – public scrutiny of his government's actions is not a priority. Contracting out of public services and privatization schemes are now taking place in secret without full financial analysis. And Gordon Campbell has barred the Auditor General from oversight of the 2010 Olympics, risking hundreds of millions of dollars in public expenditures. This secrecy underlines the "hidden agenda" style of the Campbell government.

Carole James knows that the Auditor General provides a crucial service to ordinary British Columbians – a system of checks and balances that help make sure government is doing what it should with taxpayer dollars.

As a starting point, the New Democrat plan would ensure that the Auditor General has the authority and resources to lift the veil of secrecy shrouding contracted-out services and public-private partnerships, and ensure spending on the 2010 Winter Games is in the best interest of the public.

The Union of BC Municipalities Executive is shocked by the degree of intrusion of this legislation into local affairs. It allows any Minister authorized by Cabinet to replace any local government bylaw, plan, regulation, policy, etc. to facilitate the approval or development of a 'provincially significant project'. Cabinet can make that determination without any prior notice to the local government or the community...

Bill 75 has a Minister assuming all the powers of a duty elected council or board and substituting his/her decision for those of local Councils and Boards which have been developed with citizen input.

Frank Leonard
President, Union of BC Municipalities
In a November 2003
letter to UBCM members

A five-per-cent budget cut has already forced [the Auditor General] to postpone some important undertakings, such as a review of recent education reforms and an inquiry into whether government is collecting all the revenue it could from the burgeoning oil and gas sector.

Next year's he's facing a further 10-per-cent cut, meaning he'll have to scale back even more:

"I will limit work on the government's approach to public-private sector partnerships," [Auditor General Wayne] Strelieff advised. "I will not examine the status of the government's commitment to implement principles of environmental sustainability. I will scale back our planned work to examine the government's arrangement of key risks in the health sector."

Vancouver Sun
December 5, 2003

Will not accept any new applications for gambling expansion; will shut down the secretly launched Internet gambling program; will improve programs that address gambling addiction

We've heard the complicated explanations and denials, but they can't hide the fact that Gordon Campbell and his government broke their promise to hold the line on gaming expansion. It meant big revenues and that was all that seemed to matter. Here's just some of how they went about breaking their promise:

- Eliminated the cap on slot machines altogether
- Began pushing municipal bingo halls to take on slot machines
- Boosted lottery ticket prices
- Secretly brought in online Internet gambling
- Cut penalties to casino operators who break the law – for example, the penalty for allowing minors to gamble was dropped from \$100,000 to just \$250

It's time to say no more. Carole James will freeze all gaming licences that have not already been processed, and will instruct the BC Lottery Commission to shut down the Internet gambling program Gordon Campbell launched. And the New Democrats will move gambling addictions programming to the Ministry of Health – rather than leave it with the Minister responsible for BC Lotteries – and ensure that program is properly resourced.

Gaming in BC – what was said

Children may die as a result of gambling expansion, and their blood will be on the heads of the government that expanded gambling and of the MLAs who voted for it.

Kevin Krueger
As Liberal gambling critic, 1997

I have a positive and constructive suggestion for the minister responsible for gambling: stop the expansion of gambling today.

Gordon Campbell
In Opposition, 1999

No expansion of gambling. Stop the expansion of gambling that has increased gambling addiction and put new strains on families.

Liberal New Era Document
Election 2001

I'm not going to say that none of this is expanded gaming because some of it is... Frankly, I'm sure there will be a lot of people that will say we have broken a New Era commitment... I think there's some validity to that argument that some people may have.

Solicitor General **Rich Coleman**
March 2004

I think we have a moral responsibility to assist people with addictions and that includes gambling.

Mayor **Larry Campbell**
City of Vancouver
November 30, 2004

Extend the mandate of the BC Progress Board to include environment and communities as well as the economy; require the Progress Board to report to the Legislature, not the Premier

The New Democrats will establish a progress board that provides real information and advice on how best to ensure our economy meets the needs of communities and reflects the economic, social and environmental priorities of British Columbians. The Genuine Progress Board will report to people – through the Legislature – rather than the premier’s office, which is happening today.

The current BC Progress Board relies on a very narrow view of the BC economy, based on the traditional indicators of resource extraction, competitiveness and exports. But those may be totally misleading – for example, the current expanded cut to deal with the pine beetle infestation may signal short-term growth, while not measuring the consequences when the accelerated cut subsides.

The Genuine Progress Board will look beyond those traditional measures of progress. **It will include genuine progress indicators that take into account the health and well-being of people and communities, and will give British Columbians advice on how to move away from a boom-and-bust economic model to one that will be sustainable in the long term.**

Establish a public inquiry into the sale of BC Rail

Today, the shares of BC Rail Ltd. are 100% owned by Canadian National, with the right of way leased out to them for a millennium if they want. But still, Gordon Campbell says he’s kept his promise not to privatize BC Rail.

British Columbians know better – he told us one thing and did another by selling BC Rail to a U.S. corporation.

Beyond the broken promise, this privatization deal was mired in government leaks, insider information, secrecy and criminal charges following police raids on the Legislature and the offices of two senior Liberal aides. And yet, Gordon Campbell and his government continue to defend the deal and deny there were any problems with it.

British Columbians are demanding to know how and why their interests were sold out – it was a significant public asset yet the Campbell Liberals continue to withhold details of the deal from the public. The New Democrats will launch a full public inquiry into the sale of BC Rail, so British Columbians will finally know the truth.

[A Liberal government will] not sell or privatize BC Rail.
Liberal New Era Document
April 2001
Did we break that promise? Yes we did, plain and simple.
Blair Lekstrom
Liberal MLA, South Peace River
February 2, 2005

Restore and strengthen a BC Human Rights Commission to promote equality for all British Columbians

Gordon Campbell eliminated the BC Human Rights Commission – making BC the only province in Canada without an independent body to protect the public interest in matters of discrimination and educate citizens about their human rights and responsibilities.

Carole James will establish a strengthened Human Rights Commission that will be proactive in promoting equality for all British Columbians. The renewed Commission will work in partnership with community organizations, schools, trade unions and businesses to develop effective education tools to promote and protect human rights and to prevent discrimination.

Focus new resources on community based immigration and settlement services

This year Gordon Campbell cut community based English as a second language and settlement services to new Canadians, especially in areas outside the lower mainland. He has also cut funding for anti-racism programs.

Carole James understands that all of British Columbia benefits when immigrants are welcomed into our communities with the supports and resources necessary to integrate quickly, ensuring they will be contributing to society and our economy sooner. To start, she will ensure that all new federal funding, approximately \$10 million per year, will be targeted to community based services through a transparent process. And she will restore funding for community based anti-racism programs.

It is outrageous that the legislators of British Columbia are again trying to eliminate this crucial commission. Today's multicultural Canada cannot afford to lose even one of the commission's programs, let alone the entire body that marshals and organizes human rights public education initiatives and monitors and counters systemic discrimination. Fiscal restraint is no excuse for cutting back on human rights protection.

Dr. Karen Mock
Executive Director
Canadian Race Relations Foundation
June 2002

Stop the flow of personal medical information to private U.S. corporations subject to the USA Patriot Act

The Bush Administration's Patriot Act runs against what we, as Canadians, believe in. Carole James wants BC to be no part of it, but Gordon Campbell evidently does not agree.

He is allowing personal medical information about British Columbians to be handed over to private U.S. companies, and therefore subject to the Patriot Act.

And Gordon Campbell is prepared to hand even more information over, even though he was warned by the Privacy Commissioner that "the USA Patriot Act knows no borders." His government recently short-listed three US-owned companies to run BC Nurseline, a 24/7 phone service offering confidential health information and advice.

Carole James would stop the flow of that information and protect the privacy of British Columbians – she would start by putting an end to the Liberal plan to contract out the BC Nurseline service.

...there is a 'reasonable possibility' of unauthorized disclosure of British Columbians' personal information under the U.S.A. Patriot Act.

Office of BC's Information & Privacy Commissioner
October 29, 2004

"I'm completely horrified. It's a complete nightmare," says Michael Vonn, Policy Director for the Civil Liberties Association.

"This could have a chilling effect on people seeking services from Nurseline."

24 Hours
March 29, 2005

Appendix

Costing

Preamble

Restoring balance to deal with public issues and public finances requires ending the “boom or bust” funding of public services.

Three years of excessive budgetary restraint have left many of the public services that British Columbians rely on in tatters. However, the rebuilding of high-quality, effective and efficient health, education, and other programs cannot be done overnight. It must be done gradually, and within the means of the province.

Equally important is transparency and openness in government finances. The Budget Transparency and Accountability Act of 2000 moved BC to a leadership position among provinces in accounting practices. However, accountability has been undermined by the Campbell government’s refusal to allow detailed debate of ministry budgets, and by the existence of large funds whose purpose is unspecified.

Carole James and the NDP are proposing a number of priority initiatives to build quality public services while continuing to balance the provincial budget. In the interests of openness and transparency, this appendix outlines how these initiatives will be funded.

Economic and Fiscal Environment

Although still growing considerably slower than the 4.6% increase in GDP recorded in 2000, the province has now recovered from the near-recession of 2001/02, and is forecast to achieve moderate economic growth in the 3% range for the next few years.

Near record-high prices for lumber, strong demand for oil, natural gas, and metals, and continuing low interest rates have led to buoyant world markets for British Columbia’s resource exports, and to a strong domestic housing market, which is probably at or near its peak. Although the rising value of the Canadian dollar and potential U.S. actions to address mammoth deficits in its federal budget and international trade could have profound effects on British Columbia’s economy, few economic forecasters expect major dislocations in the next few years.

While British Columbia does not control the prices set by international markets, government revenues have benefited from market strengths and low interest rates. Absent unforeseen events that would depress world prices for resource exports or lead to rapidly increasing interest rates, government revenues should continue to grow at rates that will allow additional investments in badly needed services, in refurbishing and construction of neglected public infrastructure, in targeted tax reductions to spur economic diversification, and in reducing government fees.

2005/2006 Revenues and Their Uses

The rash tax cuts of 2001 and the near recession in the wake of the September 11 tragedy blew a huge hole in government revenues and plunged the provincial budget into a record deficit in 2002/03. Far from “paying for themselves,” these tax cuts—which overwhelmingly

favoured big corporations and high income earners—left an ongoing gap in government revenues. Over \$1 billion of tax and fee increases in 2002 and 2003, savage cuts in government programs, and the good fortune of buoyant international markets for BC exports were needed to close the gap.

The budget forecast for 2005 reflects an increase in government revenues—after the estimated \$484 million in proposed revenue reductions—of some \$2.4 billion compared to 2004 estimates. The NDP plan would not increase any taxes or fees, and would maintain the \$400 million forecast allowance and a projected surplus of \$180 million.

However, revenues would be reallocated to focus on priority spending areas. Opportunities for reallocation are significant within the proposed \$26.836 billion of expenses for direct government programs (the Consolidated Revenue Fund). For example,

– Eliminating all non-essential/non-public service advertising within the Ministry of Finance	\$ 9 million
– Reducing the bloated cabinet of 27 ministers to a more historic level of 20 to 22	5 million
– Eliminating promotion of off-shore oil and gas and focusing on consultation and environmental assessment	3 million
– Deferring or cancelling half of the projects in the Campbell government’s un-debated \$238 million “slush fund.”	119 million
– Eliminating one-half of the \$10.5 million lift to the un-debated “sound governance” budget in the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management	5 million
– Cutting in half the budget increase of \$1.6 million for “corporate service” in the Ministry of Energy and Mines, and eliminating the budget increase of \$1.1 million in “service transformation” in the Ministry of Management Services	2 million
– Eliminating the budget increase of nearly \$43 million for “executive and support services” in the Ministry of Small Business	43 million
Total:	186 million

This list of possible cancellations and deferrals of budget increases is not exhaustive. It represents less than two-thirds of 1% of estimated direct government spending. Clearly these and other reallocations of funds to priority initiatives are possible.

In addition, the un-debated 2005 budget contains a “contingencies budget” of \$270 million. This is an extremely large budget for unexpected spending and is far in excess of “contingency spending” in past years. For example, in 2001, the government allocated \$179 million to unexpected ministry spending; in 2002 the figure was \$113 million; and in 2003 it was \$63 million. The books for the 2004 budget have not yet been closed, so a firm number for that budget year will not be available until this summer, but in the first nine months of the fiscal year just \$10 million was allocated from the “contingencies” budget.

The NDP plan proposes to reduce the contingencies budget to \$170 million—still in excess of recent needs for contingency spending. An immediate allocation of \$100 million would be made to priority issues.

The NDP plan projects a surplus at the end of the fiscal year of \$180 million—slightly lower than the \$220 million estimated in the un-debated Liberal budget. This allows for an additional \$40 million in priority spending. The surplus and a “forecast allowance” of \$400 million will ensure that the NDP plan will be accomplished while the budget for 2005 remains balanced.

If the 2005 projections of revenue and expense prove to be accurate, at the end of the fiscal year, that “forecast allowance” will not be needed, and the surplus will be \$580 million. If, and only if, the cushion provided by the “forecast allowance” is not needed, the NDP plan would use half of it--\$200 million--for future economic diversification.

Summary of revenues available for reallocation to priority initiatives:

– From reallocation within ministries	\$186 million
– From immediate allocations of the contingencies budget	100 million
– From lowering the projected surplus	40 million
Total	326 million

Priority Spending Initiatives

Within the framework of a balanced budget, with a projected surplus of \$180 million, with a prudent “forecast allowance of \$400 million, and with a "contingencies budget of \$170 million for unanticipated events, the NDP plan proposes priority spending in the following areas:

Health:

Transfers from the federal government to BC for health care have risen by \$609 million this year. The total budget for health in the province is estimated to rise in 2005/06 by \$702 million to \$11.392 billion—by far the largest ministry budget. But simply increasing health funding by 6.6% will not improve access to health services, increase prevention measures, or assist the most vulnerable in our society; budget increases must be targeted at priority issues.

The NDP plan will not increase total spending by the Ministry of Health. It does, however require setting clear priorities and ensuring that additional resources are devoted to priority issues.

Transfers to Health Authorities are projected to grow from \$6.683 billion to \$7.158 billion in 2005/06: an increase of \$475 million. The NDP plan recognizes that there are many aspects of health care that need more resources and also recognizes that specific needs may vary from region to region of BC.

However, the Ministry of Health must require Health Authorities to target \$304 million for priority issues to make sure health services improve throughout the province:

- Reducing wait lists for surgery and diagnostic procedures \$75 million

The BCMA estimates that increasing budgets by this amount should lead to a 50% reduction in wait lists in four years. Increasing efficiency by using public surgery centres rather than private for-profit clinics should result in reduced costs per procedure and an even steeper decline in wait lists.

- Opening and operating an additional 1,000 long-term care beds \$50 million

In many communities long-term care beds already exist that lie empty and unused. Opening these beds and building others will provide additional services for seniors while reducing pressure on emergency wards and acute hospitals. This allocation includes both operating costs, and the cost of debt servicing of some \$35 million in capital construction.
- Opening additional hospital rooms, hiring more nurses, nurse practitioners and other health professionals to take pressure off emergency wards \$53 million

The specific solutions to easing the jam at emergency wards will vary from region to region. This budget will support opening and staffing an additional 200 hospital beds and other measure to ensure prompt emergency treatment.
- Doubling the number of community health centres by opening 12 additional centres in 2005 \$12 million

This money will be used to cover operating expenses and employ nurses, nurse practitioners, pharmacists, and other health professionals; physicians working in community health centres will continue to be paid out of the existing Medical Services Plan budget.
- Double the spending on prevention and street level services for mental health and addiction services \$34 million

The best way to help the vulnerable coping with mental illnesses or addictions is to increase early intervention and prevention services, open additional detox beds and crisis units, and enhance recovery and support services.
- Increase funding for home support and home care services \$80 million

Improving the ability of seniors and those with a chronic condition to live independently will reduce pressures on both acute care hospitals and on long-term care facilities. This increase will fund an additional 25,000 home care/home support visits a week.
- Provide additional residency positions for foreign-trained MDs \$ 5 million

Increasing family practice residencies to twenty (from the current level of six) and adding five residencies for specialists will increase the availability of doctors in under-served health regions. This funding must be a priority within the \$102 million spent centrally by the Ministry

Education:

After three years of skimming federal transfers for child care and directing them to other programs, after three years of increasing class sizes and laying off public school teachers, and after three years of allowing the largest tuition fee increases in the history of BC's colleges and universities, the Campbell government has robbed British Columbians of the education services they deserve.

The NDP plan would add \$107 million to the budgets of the Ministries of Education and Advanced Education in addition to the estimated budget lifts in the 2005 Liberal budget. The Ministry of Education's budget would total \$5.098 billion; the Ministry of Advanced Education's budget would be \$2.033 billion.

Child Care

When a new federal-provincial arrangement is reached on child care, British Columbia can expect to receive increased federal transfers of approximately \$130 million. Since no agreement now exists, the 2005 budget does not contain those additional revenues. The NDP plan would devote all new revenue from a child care agreement to building a universal child care system, based on principles of quality, accessibility, and accountability.

K-12 Education

The NDP plan would increase funding for public schools by \$178 million (\$39 million more than the estimates in the 2005 Liberal budget). Increases would be targeted at the following areas:

- Hiring more than 1,500 new educators and 90 principals and vice-principals \$83 million
By hiring more teachers, teacher-librarians, special education teachers, and other educators, the NDP plan reduces class sizes to 2001 levels and ensures that every child gets more attention.
- Increase funding for special education 26 million
Increasing funding for special needs education would ensure that students who need additional help get it.
- Help school districts deal with costs downloaded over the last three years 50 million
Under-funding of collective agreement costs, MSP premium increases, Hydro rate increases and a variety of other pressures have forced school districts to rob from classroom budgets to pay for other costs. The damage needs to be repaired.
- Provide leadership training for school administrators 5 million
Educational leadership at the school level is crucial to the success of our children.
- Accelerate seismic upgrading program 3 million
Shortening the completion of seismic upgrades for public schools will require an additional \$50 million of capital spending. This will increase the Ministry's debt servicing costs.

- Buffer fund to help school districts coping with falling enrolments 10 million
 Educational quality must be maintained in spite of falling enrolments. School districts facing enrolment declines will have access to transitional funding to allow them to make decisions based on educational and community priorities.
- Double the budget for connecting high school students to apprenticeship opportunities 1 million
 The NDP plan proposes to double apprenticeships in BC. Additional funding is needed to help school districts expand opportunities for students to begin an apprenticeship while still completing their high school education.

Advanced Education

The NDP plan would increase funding for universities, colleges and institutes and student financial aid by \$115 million (\$68 million more than the estimated increase in the 2005 Liberal budget). Increases would be targeted at the following areas:

- Increase apprenticeship funding by more than 25% in 2005 \$20 million
 The 2005 Liberal budget freezes the apprenticeship budget at 2004 levels for the next three years. The NDP plan would double apprenticeship opportunities in the next four years.
- Increase budgets for universities, colleges and institutes 65 million
 This is \$18 million greater than the 2005 Liberal budget estimate because, in addition to expanding post-secondary spaces, including adult basic education and ESL, the NDP plan would roll back tuition fees to 2004 levels. Grants to colleges, universities and institutes will, therefore, be increased by the equivalent of a 2% inflationary lift in tuition fees.
- Restore grants for needy students in their second, third, and fourth year of study 30 million
 The Campbell government cut assistance to students in 2004 and proposes no increase to the Student Financial Assistance budget in 2005. The NDP plan would inject \$30 million into grants for needy students so that the doors of educational opportunity are open to all.

Restoring key public services for those in need:

Women in need, seniors, the poor and homeless and so many others have borne the brunt of the Campbell government's cuts in programs designed to help the most vulnerable in our society. The rebuilding of those services cannot be done overnight or in one year. The NDP plan would immediate increase amounts in the Liberal 2005 budget in the following areas:

- Restore funding for women's centres \$2 million
The cuts to services provided by women's centres revealed just how out-of touch Gordon Campbell is with the situation too many women face in our province.
- Build affordable housing for low-income families, seniors, the homeless, and people with mental and physical disabilities 16 million
The funds needed to operate publicly supported housing vary greatly, depending on the type of facility. This increase will support both the operating and capital costs of opening an additional 1200 units of housing around the province.
- Help people living in poverty and seeking employment 33 million
This funding will improve the programs of the Ministry of Human Resources by:
 - allowing recipients of income assistance to retain a portion of earnings from employment (\$100 a month for singles; \$200 for families): 18 million
 - allowing income assistance recipients to retain a portion of court awarded maintenance payments (\$100 per month): 6 million
 - increasing support payments by 20% for income assistance recipients facing persistent multiple barriers to employment: 9 million
- Strengthen protection of vulnerable children and families 32 million
 - Restore the independent review of services for children at risk which were provided by the Children's Commissioner and the Child Advocate: 2 million
 - Significant cuts have been made to this ministry, and a successful regionalization plan must include adequate community resources to support families and youth; social workers to investigate concerns about children at risk and to work with families to remedy problems; and residential and adoption resources for children who must leave their families: 30 million
- Improve the justice system's treatment of victims and the poor 22 million
 - Legal aid funding has been devastated by the Campbell government; more needs to be done to ensure everyone has access to the justice system: 15 million
 - Increase the budget for Native Court Workers which was slashed in the last two years: 2 million
 - Fund the hiring of an additional seventy counsellors to work with those who are victims of crimes: 5 million
- Open regional residential tenancy offices 3 million
 - Improve tenant and landlord access to information on new legislation and provide better arbitration services by opening offices in all regions.

Economy:

When external markets for BC's exports are robust, government benefits from increased royalties, stumpage, and taxes. If at the end of the fiscal year, the "forecast allowance" is not needed to ensure a balanced budget, half of the allowance (\$200 million) will be used to pay down debt. The other half will be used by communities around the province for investment in measures that will diversify and strengthen regional economies.

In addition, the NDP plan would include funding above that allocated in the Liberal budget for the following initiatives:

- Help interior and northern communities cope with the results of the mountain pine beetle epidemic \$40 million
This funding is an estimate of the additional stumpage the government will collect this year from the increased cuts due to the pine beetle infestation. Spending of these funds will be controlled by the communities affected by the epidemic.
- Restore government funding for "Buy BC" 2 million
The value of this program to the province's farmers and to consumers who value the high-quality agricultural products they produce is far greater than this new funding.
- Improve funding for employment standards 3 million
Without proper funding of the personnel who ensure that the rights of vulnerable workers are respected—especially children, youth, and immigrant workers—employment standards are an empty promise.

Environment:

The Campbell government doesn't even have a Ministry of the Environment; that demonstrates its lack of interest in ensuring we pass on to our children a British Columbia that is at least as clean and beautiful as the one we enjoy today. In this area, as in so many others, the effects of budget cuts on BC's amazing parks and protected areas, on efforts to improve our basic public transportation system, and on protection of our air, land, and water has been devastating. The damage can't be repaired instantly.

The NDP plan does, however, propose increases beyond the allocations in the 2005 Liberal budget in a number of areas:

- Improve the ability of a restored Ministry of the Environment to do its job \$6 million
Over 180 conservation, science and planning officers were eliminated during the past three years, greatly reducing the province's ability to protect environmental values. This increase will allow for the restoration of an additional fifty of those positions.
- Increase funding for "green" transportation 11 million
The estimates in the Liberal 2005 budget actually reduce funding for BC Transit. The NDP plan will increase the budget for public transportation. \$10 million.
And after totally eliminating the cost-sharing program to improve urban cycling infrastructure, the Liberal plan proposes only a one time \$2 million program. The NDP plan will provide \$3 million per year for a multi-year commitment to a cost-shared program: \$1 million

- Maintain forest recreation sites and restore government funded interpretive programs in BC Parks 3 million

All users of BC's parks and forest recreation sites have seen the result of the Campbell government's neglect. Restoring BC Parks and its role as the guardian of our parks and funding interpretative programs is a first important step, as is restoring proper maintenance of the Forest Service's recreation sites which so many use for their families' outdoor adventures.

Balanced and open government:

Bringing balance, openness, and fairness to the operation of the provincial government, respecting all of British Columbia's citizens, and ending unnecessary conflicts is more a matter of values and attitude than of budgets.

There are, however, a few items of the NDP plan that will require spending beyond that in the Liberal 2005 budget.

- Give the Auditor General the funds to do his job properly \$ 1 million

The Campbell government prefers secrecy. The NDP plan will enable the independent Auditor General to give British Columbians the straight goods on the costs and benefits of private-public partnerships, of contracting out public services, and of the 2010 Olympics

- Establish a Human Rights Commission 2 million

British Columbians should have the right—as citizens of every other province do—to have their concerns about violation of their rights heard by an independent commission.

- Restore funding for community based anti-racism programs 1 million

Anti-racism services delivered through local community based organizations are the most efficient way of promoting a fair and just British Columbia.

- Cancel the BC Lotteries Internet gambling program 22 million

Internet gambling is the crack cocaine of the gaming industry. The Campbell government's decision to allow the Lotteries corporation to get "on-line" is the worst example of its broken promise not to expand gaming.

It is anticipated that cancelling the program will reduce revenues by this amount.

- Establish a public inquiry into the sale of BC Rail 5 million

Finding the truth about the costs of the Campbell government's decision to break its promise and turn over the profitable BC Rail operation to one of its competitors will be expensive.

The entire deal is veiled in a cloud of controversy, criminal investigations, and wildly varying estimates of costs and benefits. The people of the province deserve to know what really happened and what it has cost them

Conclusion:

The priority spending initiatives contained in the NDP plan do not represent a large increase in the operational budget of government. Consolidated Revenue Fund expenses would rise by \$40 million above the un-debated 2005 Liberal budget—from \$28.836 billion to \$28.876 billion, and the estimated surplus would be \$180 million, rather than \$220 million.

Carole James's commitment to balanced budgets and prudent handling of finances is demonstrated by incorporating a "contingencies budget" of \$170 million for unanticipated events, a forecast allowance of \$400 million to guard against sudden economic dislocation, and a surplus of \$180 million.

However, the NDP plan does differ significantly from the un-debated 2005 Liberal budget. It reallocates \$286 million from unnecessary spending, election slush funds, and a bloated contingencies budget. And it uses those funds to improve public services for students, for environmental protection, for regional economic diversification, for helping the most vulnerable in our society, and for other issues that the Campbell government has neglected.

Repairing the damage to public services caused by the extreme agenda of the Campbell government cannot be accomplished overnight. But it is not too late to make a better world, and we can start right after the election on May 17.

Capital investments and debt

Long term care capital

In March of 2000, a special steering committee appointed by the Minister of Health issued a report on the costs of continuing care entitled Non-profit Continuing Care – New Projects and Partnerships. That report provided capital and operating estimates for a major five year expansion of continuing care facilities for the elderly who are chronically ill.

Based on an average cost of \$125,000 per bed, the report estimated the total capital cost of 1000 new beds in the first year to be \$125 million. However, of that amount, only \$31.25 million (or 25%) would require public capital funding since the remainder would be financed by non-profit societies using private financing (similar to the successful, long-standing model for B.C. social housing) or by private sector providers relying on provincial per-diem payments for support of their private debt.

Inflation has increased in B.C. since the committee's report in 2000. Based on increases in the consumer price index in B.C. since 2000, the average cost per bed will have increased to \$138,000. Using the same model suggested by the steering committee, that will require a provincial capital investment of \$34.5 million in the first year.

**Increased taxpayer supported debt for long term care
in 2005/06: \$34.5 million**

School seismic capital

After four years of delay, the Liberals have announced a fifteen year plan for seismic upgrading of B.C. schools. They say they'll invest \$1.5 billion over fifteen years.

Carole James and the NDP believe B.C. parents, students and educators have waited long enough for vital safety improvements. The NDP Plan will complete the job five years faster, over ten years rather than fifteen. The Plan invests an additional \$50 million per year in capital investment for school seismic, taking the total annual amount to \$150 million per year.

Increased taxpayer supported debt for 2005/05 for school seismic upgrades: \$50 million.

Transportation capital

One of the most important economic and safety transportation priorities in B.C. is the Trans Canada highway in the eastern part of the province, particularly the Kicking Horse sections near Golden. This section is notorious for fatality and injury accidents, as well as trucking delays that slow the crucial trading link between B.C. and the rest of Canada.

Yet, despite the urgent need, the Campbell Liberals are moving at a snails pace in the Kicking Horse area. Even though Gordon Campbell and former Prime Minister Jean Chretien announced \$125 million in 2003 for cost-shared improvement of the Park (10 Mile) Bridge and approaches east of Golden, today – two years later – not a single contract has been let for this piece of work.

Liberal Budget 2005 allocates only \$26 million over three years for all the Kicking Horse Canyon projects. Only \$11 million will be spent in 05/06.

To move the Kicking Horse improvements into high gear, the NDP plan will double current investment levels by dedicating a further \$11 million for the corridor in 2005/06.

The NDP plan also ensures multi-year investments in rehabilitation of highways in every region of the province.

As well, the plan accelerates completion of the rapid transit line to Coquitlam Centre in the north-east sector of the Lower Mainland. The NDP plan will provide the \$170 million provincial contribution in 2007/08 – two years earlier than currently scheduled.

Increased taxpayer supported debt for transportation in 2005/06: \$11 million.

B.C. Ferries

The “new” B.C. Ferry Services has been removed from public oversight and scrutiny, despite a provincial subsidy of over \$100 million per year and even though its common share is held by the B.C. Ferry Authority, a provincial government entity.

One of the main reasons the Campbell Liberals made this change was to try to hide some \$500 million of B.C. Ferries debt by removing it from the provincial books. But the debt itself has not disappeared. Passengers of B.C. Ferries will continue to pay for this debt through fares, just as before. Only now, the debt has been hidden from the consolidated books of the provincial government, even though it is shown in the financial statements of B.C. Ferry Services, for which the government is the ultimate shareholder.

The NDP plan will end this financial shell game by restoring B.C. Ferries to public accountability and ownership as a commercial Crown Corporation. In Budget 2005, the Campbell Liberals are deceiving taxpayers by claiming total provincial debt is \$37,322 billion and 23.0% of G.D.P. In fact, the debt of B.C. Ferries remains to be paid, so the total provincial debt today is actually \$37,832 – 23.3% of G.D.P.

Impact of the NDP Plan on taxpayer supported debt and debt/G.D.P. ratio

Increased taxpayer supported debt in 2005/06:

Long term care capital:	\$ 34.5 million
School seismic capital:	50 million
Transportation capital:	11 million
Total:	95.5 million

Total taxpayer supported debt for 2005/06

Liberals	\$29.588 billion
NDP Plan	\$29.683.5 billion

Taxpayer supported debt as a percentage of G.D.P.

Liberal:	18.23%
NDP:	18.29%



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