

## **Martin promises more money for cities**

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**VANCOUVER** - Incoming Prime Minister Paul Martin has repeated his commitment to sharing the federal gas tax with municipal governments, giving them a steady and predictable stream of revenue.

"No matter how long it takes, we are going to provide Canadian municipalities with a portion of the federal gas tax," he told delegates to the Union of B.C. Municipalities convention in Vancouver.

The federal government collects 10 cents on every litre of gas sold at the pumps. Municipalities have asked for half of that money back to help pay for infrastructure.

Martin didn't say how much money municipalities could expect or when it might be coming. But he says it will be significant.

"We're not simply going to do this for a token. It's going to have to be reasonable amounts.

"But really the timing, the phasing in and the amounts I think will have to wait until we are able to sit down at the table," says Martin.

**\*FOR THE RECORD: Paul Martin also spoke Thursday about western alienation.**  
**(Runs 1:40)**

Despite of the lack of specifics, most municipal politicians at the convention were pleased with the gas tax announcement.

"A man of that stature makes that kind of promise in front of that many people with every media outlet in B.C. there, a pretty good chance it might happen," says former UBCM president Jim Abrams.

In the past, some senior federal government officials have expressed concern about losing any of the roughly \$5 billion that Ottawa collects from fuel sales every year.

**\*FROM SEPT. 24, 2003: Martin gets first-hand look at fire damage**

On Wednesday, Martin had a tour of the fire damage in Kamloops and Kelowna and promised he will do everything he can to speed up federal aid for the area.