



PROVINCIAL THRONE SPEECH HIGHLIGHTS

The August 25th, 2009 Speech from the Throne outlined the economic challenges British Columbia faces amidst the global recession, as well as the impact of the recession on provincial discretionary spending. The speech also sought to highlight a series of initiatives designed to strengthen British Columbia's economy while simultaneously protecting health and education services.

Highlights of Interest to Local Governments

Finance

- Introduction of the 12% Harmonized Sales Tax (HST).
- The Province will introduce amendments requiring a balanced budget following four years of deficits, instead of two.
- Government will reduce discretionary spending and target resources where they are needed most.
- There is no new funding available for public sector wage increases.
- The Province will review all Health Authorities, Boards of Education and Crown corporations in the year ahead to improve service and lower costs.

Economy

- A new comprehensive Asia Pacific Gateway

Authority will be pursued with the federal government. Through it, government will redouble its efforts to open up the critical Northern Corridor with its massive potential as a trade and transportation corridor.

Health & Education

- The additional \$1.6 billion in transition funding from the federal government for implementing the HST will help protect vital health and education services.

First Nations

- Government reiterated its commitment to the goal of reconciliation with First Nations.
- Government will pursue new treaties, as well as agreements on shared decision-making and benefit sharing with First Nations.

Environment

- Government reiterated its commitment to the Climate Action Plan and targets.
- British Columbians will be consulted on new statutory protections to further safeguard the environment from cosmetic chemical pesticides.
- A Species at Risk Task Force will be established to report out to the government with recommendations by June 2010.
- Green energy will be a cornerstone of British Columbia's climate action plan. Electricity self-sufficiency and clean, renewable power generation will be integral to our effort to fight global warming.
- The BC Utilities Commission will receive specific direction to ensure the phase out of Burrard Thermal and to act on the BC Energy Plan and Climate Action Plan.
- A new Green Energy Advisory Task Force will be appointed to complement the work of the BCUC's long-term transmission requirement review.
- Government will act to outlaw the international export of British Columbia's garbage and landfill waste.

Local Government Authority: Finance & Development

- Working with B.C.'s municipalities, the Province will examine all government-imposed costs and legislative frameworks — from property assessment to subdivision regulations and other development tools — with a view to reducing both capital and operating costs for housing in B.C.

Legislation

- Government will legislate a new Residents Bill of Rights to set out clear commitments to care and to the rights of residents living in residential care facilities.
- The *Police Amendment Act*; *Labour Mobility Act*; *Insurance Amendment Act*; *Strata Property Amendments Act*; and *Wills, Estates and Succession Act* will all be reintroduced.
- Government will introduce legislation to restrict cell phone use while driving a vehicle.
- Government will legislate labour mobility for all Canadians wanting to work in British Columbia and to advance open trade with Alberta under the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement.
- A new Wood First policy will be legislated to require all public buildings to use wood first as their default building material, inside and out.

For further details on the Throne Speech go to: www.leg.bc.ca/39th1st/2009_Aug_ThroneSpeech.pdf