



HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICE OF THE HON. HEDY FRY, P.C., M.P.

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B.C. COMMUNITIES, UNEMPLOYED AN AFTER-THOUGHT FOR HARPER CONSERVATIVES

VANCOUVER – A report released in Vancouver today by federal Liberal infrastructure Critic Gerard Kennedy shows that the Harper government has all but ignored British Columbia's communities and families in need of economic stimulus help.

Only five percent of funds pledged for B.C. were creating jobs there as of September, according to the first government figures made available on the flagship Infrastructure Stimulus Fund and released by the Parliamentary Budget Officer. This puts B.C. among the last in the country in jobs created and projects promised under federal stimulus, and is in stark contrast to Conservative advertising claims that 80 to 90 percent of the Economic Action Plan was underway.

"This is the largest federal effort to combat the recession and aid recovery, and B.C. is being sorely left behind," said Mr. Kennedy. "British Columbians should be offended by their treatment and even worse by all of the expensive and exaggerated claims the Harper Conservatives have been making," he said. "On the basis of this information, it's clear that there has been no strong voice advocating for B.C.'s interests within the Harper government."

The delays also create problems in terms of additional costs and the threat that projects will not be completed on time and have their funding revoked.

The report also highlights the positive effect Liberals have been having on improving the distribution of funds across the province.

"We have been listening to British Columbians and voicing their concerns in the House of Commons," said Hedy Fry, MP for Vancouver Centre. "There has been a total lack of commitment by this Conservative government to help the people of BC rise out of this state of economic decline."

Mr. Kennedy praised all five Liberal MPs from B.C. who have been vigorous in fighting, through advocacy and use of the media, for a fair sharing of funds based on need and not on political affiliation.

"For my community, like so many others in BC, there has been an unconscionable delay with infrastructure projects, all because the Conservative funding model does not work for these difficult economic times," said Sukh Dhaliwal, Liberal MP for Newton-North Delta. "The Harper government ignored the will of Parliament to expand the gas tax transfer. The result is there in black and white: an unprecedented breach of the trust of working families in BC."

"The Harper government's economic plan for BC has been all signs and no substance," said the Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh, MP for Vancouver South. "It is time the Conservative government stopped misleading British Columbians and got to work instead on meaningful economic recovery for BC families."

The distortion of dollars promised by the government, on average, for projects in Conservative-held ridings over opposition ones has dropped from 250 percent last April to just 15 percent after announcements for Vancouver expected today.

"Certain British Columbians have still been treated shabbily by the Harper government by being made to wait for a fair share. They are as Canadian and as deserving as anyone else," Mr. Kennedy added. "But they suffered because B.C. Conservative MPs have tried to improve their re-election chances at the expense of job opportunities for people who are really in need."

Nine out of 10 top recipients of the three main infrastructure funds are areas represented by Conservatives, including four cabinet ministers. The Conservatives have still taken an estimated \$62 million extra for their own ridings out of \$528 million distributed to date after the latest announcements.

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