



Government Announcements

- The Province has changed the financing model for the new 10-lane Port Mann Bridge to a design-build, fixed-price contract. The cost remains the same at \$2.46 billion. [Read more](#)
- Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Premier Gordon Campbell announced an additional \$350 million of federal funding for the 11-kilometre Evergreen Line rapid transit project from the Lougheed Town Centre in Burnaby to the Coquitlam Town Centre, via Port Moody. The construction project is expected to create 8,000 direct and indirect jobs between its start in 2010 and completion in 2014. [Read more](#)
- New regulations to help protect consumers who get short-term loans from payday lenders have been introduced by Solicitor General John van Dongen. New regulations set maximum charges, ban issuing more than one loan to a borrower at a time, and prohibit rolling one loan into another with new charges. [Read more](#)
- Health Services Minister George Abbott announced \$20 million in program funding that will reduce ER wait times through financial incentives for delivering more timely care. Based on a pilot program in four hospitals in Vancouver Coastal Health, the program expands to four more hospitals in the Fraser Health Authority. [Read more](#)
- Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources Minister Blair Lekstrom launched the 2009 Infrastructure Royalty Credit Program, which will make \$120 million in royalty credits available to encouraging infrastructure development in the industry. [Read more](#)
- The Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources announced that the Feb. 25 oil and gas land rights sale generated \$17.6 million in bonus bids, bringing the fiscal year total to over \$2.409 billion. [Read more](#)
- The provincial government is investing an additional \$3 million in language training to help new immigrants improve their English skills and succeed in the labour market and workplace. [Read more](#)
- Individuals, groups and First Nations will be able to tap into new forestry opportunities with Forests and Range Minister Pat Bell's announcement of two new woodlot licences on Malcolm Island and a third near Gold River. [Read more](#)
- Tourism, Culture and the Arts Minister Bill Bennett announced more than 260 grants totalling more than \$6 million to artists and cultural organizations in British Columbia. The funding goes to funding include museums, community arts councils, and festival societies as well as arts education and training organizations. [Read more](#)
- Forests and Range Minister Pat Bell and Community Development Minister Kevin Krueger announced \$500,000 is going to the Western Silviculture Contractors' Association for the delivery of four safety programs designed specifically for their industry. [Read more](#)
- The province promoted made-in-British Columbia hydrogen and fuel cell technology to global markets at the 5th International Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Expo in Tokyo last week. [Read more](#)
- The province is investing \$8.1 million to help conserve and manage a dozen heritage properties across the province. Tourism, Culture and the Arts Minister Bill Bennett said the sites are popular tourist attractions and also proud monuments of the past. [Read more](#)

Question Period Topics

- Liquor Tax Increase
- Budget Revenue Projections
- B.C. Rail Court Case
- Government Action on Gang Violence
- Redeployment of Police and Justice System Resources
- B.C. Hydro Rates
- Impact of Carbon Tax On Forest Industry
- Budget Provisions for Carbon Tax Rebates to School Districts and Municipalities
- Ferry Fares
- Meat inspection regulations
- Budget provisions for community development trust
- Government support for Vancouver Island forest workers
- Cost of Port Mann Bridge
- Port Mann Bridge Toll Contract

Opinion Leader Roundup

- *Vancouver Sun* columnist Vaughn Palmer took a look at an idea being explored by the B.C. Government and leaders of B.C.'s First Nations that would see legislation introduced – possibly before the May election – that would formally recognize aboriginal rights and title in B.C. The legislation would also aim to reorganize the current 200 recognized First Nations as 30 aboriginal governments. [Read the article](#)
- Though more political than legislative, Vaughn Palmer has an interesting column on how the new riding boundaries in the coming election could impact the election out comes. He points out that if the last election had been done on the new boundaries, there would have been a closer finish. [Read the article](#)

Status of Bills

BILLS DEBATED

Government Bills

- Bill 2 - [Budget Measures Implementation Act, 2009](#)

Reports Tabled

- Public Service Benefit Plan Act, annual report, 2007-2008
- Revised Schedule 1 for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2009