

News Release

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Better Transit and Transportation Coalition Congratulates the Government for giving the green light to the referendum

Business, labour, environmental, community and other organizations welcomed the Provincial Government's decision to approve the Mayors' referendum proposal on whether there will be increased investments in the region's transit and transportation system.

The province have approved a referendum question that will ask voters to say yes or no to a new 0.5% Metro Vancouver Congestion Improvement Tax. This tax would be applied to the majority of goods and services that are subject to the PST and are sold or delivered within the region. The referendum will be conducted by a mail-in ballot; it will be conducted from March 16 to May 29, 2015.

"We welcome the certainty the date and the question now provides," says John Winter, president and CEO of the BC Chamber of Commerce. "For B.C.'s business community, this allows us roll up our sleeves and start engaging with our customers, suppliers and networks about the need to invest in transportation, in order to grow our businesses and the economy."

"The campaign for a much better transit service with more buses and increased RapidBus, SkyTrain and Seabus service is now on and our members who are transit operators, mechanics, SeaBus and maintenance workers and their union will be strong advocates for the Yes side in the vote next spring," says Gavin McGarrigle, Unifor BC Area Director. "This is our valued transit riders' big chance to actually vote for a greatly improved system that is so urgently needed.

Ian Bruce, science and policy manager at the David Suzuki Foundation added, "With tens of thousands of more people moving to Metro Vancouver every year, choosing to invest in the region's transit and transportation network is vital to move people and goods safely and efficiently. Choosing "Yes" to invest in the region will mean easier commutes with less traffic and more time to spend with family, cleaner air to breathe, and an overall better quality of life."

"The announcement today clears the way for all of us in Metro Vancouver, but particularly in Surrey, to focus on building awareness of the Mayors plan to fight congestion," states Elizabeth Model, CEO of the Downtown Surrey Business Improvement Association. "We are committed to making sure that the public is given the information they need to make an informed decision about what's in the interests of growing our communities in a sustainable way."

The new Coalition's founding members include the Vancouver Board of Trade; Unifor, Canada's newest and largest private sector union; Tourism Vancouver; Downtown Surrey Business Improvement Association; David Suzuki Foundation; Greater Vancouver Gateway Council; and BC Chamber of Commerce.

For more information:

BC Chamber of Commerce – John Winter, 604-376-3577

Vancouver Board of Trade - Greg Hoekstra, 604-640-5450

Better Transit + Transportation Coalition

David Suzuki Foundation – Ian Bruce, 604-306-5095

Unifor Local 111 –Gavin McGarrigle, cell 778-668-6455; Bill Tieleman, West Star Communications, cell 778-896-0964 or office 604-844-7827

Downtown Surrey BIA – Elizabeth Model, 604-580-2321