



SPEC News Release

Throne Speech: Premier is California Dreamin'

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Vancouver, February 13, 2007- The provincial government continues to mislead British Columbians in its Throne Speech, by saying that the Gateway Program will reduce greenhouse gas emissions when their own studies show the opposite.

"We were told to expect a green plan on par with what Governor Schwarzenegger has done. Instead, the Premier is California Dreamin' and we got more spin than a Florida hurricane," said SPEC campaigner David Fields. "When it comes to climate change, Arnold is the better actor."

Green policy set out by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has become a measure for action on climate change and proof that conservation values are found across the political spectrum.

The provincial government insists on pressing ahead with the twinning of the Port Mann Bridge and expansion of Highway One despite evidence that the Gateway Program will increase greenhouse gas emissions.

A new report from SPEC shows that the Ministry of Transportation cooked the books to minimize the apparent effect of the Gateway Program. SPEC examined the Ministry's report and found that it actually predicts an overall increase of on-road GHG emissions from 4.3 to 5.7 million tonnes per year, or a 31 per cent increase over actual 2003 levels.

"More needs to be done to empower cities to tackle climate change. Cities are best positioned to make the fastest and most effective changes through landuse and transportation policy and through better building standards. Actions speak louder than words and so far this government has shown a complete disregard for cities and citizens in favour of its own pet projects," said Fields.

The SPEC report points out that the GVRD has already shown it is possible to reduce GHG emissions by 45 per cent by 2020 with strategic investment in transit. SPEC and the Livable Region Coalition have promoted a better transit solution for the Highway One corridor that includes increased capacity on SkyTrain and the implementation of a Surrey-Coquitlam Bullet that would cross the existing Port Mann Bridge using priority measures. In fact, an express bus service across the Port Mann Bridge was to be completed this year, according to the TransLink 3 year plan, but has been stopped by the aggressive push for the Gateway Program.

"Through investments in better transit options we can make swift, effective reductions in emissions and build healthy communities- other cities around the world have done the same. By pushing freeway expansion the province is delaying local action on traffic and pollution and undermining an already overburdened public transit system." said Fields.



A region-wide program to replace the Gateway Program could be modeled on Zürich, Switzerland which sets the gold standard for cost-effective public transit. The provincial government admits that nowhere has freeway expansion worked to solve congestion. Last year, the province of Quebec announced an investment of over \$6.5 billion in public transit to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

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