

## **Impacts of Olympics on Community warns against negative consequences**

For Immediate Release

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Vancouver - The Impact of Olympics on Community Coalition (IOCC) warns that negative impacts of the Olympic Games on Vancouver and the Lower Mainland must be mitigated. The warning comes as the Vancouver 2010 Bid Corporation and its partners gather to celebrate the announcement of Vancouver being short-listed to compete for the 2010 Winter Olympic Games.

"In light of all the cuts to health care, education, and social services, the people of BC should have a choice" said Jim Green chair of the IOCC."

Today the IOCC released its key recommendations to the Bid Corporation and its partners, the City of Vancouver, the Province of British Columbia and the federal government. The IOCC urges the Bid Corporation and its partners to implement these recommendations prior to the games and include them in the final Bid Book.

The recommendations include:

### **ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY:**

- 1. Give people a choice.** Hold a referendum to let BC tax payers decide whether or not we should spend up to 6 billion dollars on the Vancouver Whistler Olympic games.
- 2. Provide information on the true cost of the Bid.** The Bid Corporation and its member partners must every quarter, fully disclose costs related to the Olympic Bid.
- 3. Maximize benefits for all British Columbians.** Guarantee that any returns on investments go back into social programs, health and education.

### **HOUSING:**

- 1. Introduce SRO conversion and demolition regulations in the City of Vancouver.** Low-income tenants in SRO hotels in the downtown core are vulnerable to Olympic related homelessness by the conversion of their homes to tourist use prior to and during the games. The City of Vancouver has the ability and is responsible to ensure that the 2010 Olympic Games do not increase homelessness in Vancouver and regulations need to be in place prior to the games to prevent this from happening.
- 2. Prevent market driven displacement of tenants prior to the games.** Prior to most hallmark events, many tenants are subject to substantial rent increases or eviction for minor cosmetic renovations. This displacement enables landlords to cash in on Olympic related temporary residents willing to pay inflated rents. The provincial government must maintain rent increase protection and close the loophole in the *Residential Tenancy Act* permitting eviction for cosmetic renovation.
- 3. Create a meaningful Olympic housing legacy.** A percentage of housing at the proposed Athletes Village will be converted to future affordable housing. Provincial housing programs were recently cancelled and the waitlist for available units continues to grow. The Province should work with senior levels of government, the private sector and the community to create 2010 units of affordable housing around the province for low-income families, singles, seniors and people with disabilities prior the games taking place.

## **TRANSPORTATION:**

1. **Make sustainable transportation legacies.** The Bid Corporation advises that this bid is all about legacies. Ensure that legacies from the Olympics include at least as much long-lasting transit and active transportation investments as road investments. It is not acceptable, for example, to build roads on the one hand, and rent temporary transit services on the other hand. The Bid should leave a legacy of transportation investments that are environmentally-sensitive and appropriate to a major sporting event, for instance a network of greenways, urban trails, etc.
2. **Those who benefit, pay.** Ensure that areas, companies and individuals who benefit from transportation investments shoulder the costs of those investments.
3. **Environmental Assessments for major projects.** Any proposed investments in projects costing more than \$100 million must, before proceeding to a detailed planning stage, undergo a review by the Auditor General, and a full environmental assessment by an independent body that considers:
  - The impact of the project and alternative ways of meeting the needs the project is meant to address.
  - The impacts of carrying out the project and of alternative ways of carrying out the project.
  - The impact of the costs of construction and operation of the project on the future moneys available for buses and other transit and active transportation investments in the region.
4. **Improve regional rail capacity and service.** Improve the speed, frequency and capacity of passenger rail from Vancouver to Whistler and Seattle.

## **ENVIRONMENT:**

1. **Olympic bid efforts should not detrimentally affect air and water quality in the region.** Winter Games can be particularly destructive to the environment since they take place outdoors in relatively isolated, snow-covered mountains that are then suddenly overwhelmed with increased automobile traffic, waste production and energy consumption. Increased infrastructure, attractions and accommodations will undoubtedly have environmental repercussions. The bid process should incorporate waste reduction and recycling systems with respect to planning for its multiple sites. In addition, the bid process should consider more environmentally friendly methods of transportation (walking, transit and ridesharing).
2. **Environmental legislation should not be vetoed in the name of Olympic development.** Environmental studies are frequently deemed too lengthy during the accelerated period of development that occurs with the Olympics. As a result, the Bid Corporation and its partners must ensure that any development resulting from the 2010 Winter Olympics be subject to the environmental assessment act. Environmental legislation and enforcement of that legislation is necessary in order to maintain environmental standards.
3. **Energy conservation strategies must be incorporated from the onset of planning for the 2010 Winter Games.** In order to ensure that environmental impacts are minimized, the Bid Corporation and its partners must develop a comprehensive waste management program including the minimization of waste generation and recycling all appropriate materials.

## **CIVIL LIBERTIES:**

1. **The Olympic Bid Corporation and its partners, in cooperation with the Vancouver Police Department, must put in place protocols that respect the rights of homeless and other marginalized persons affected by events in their area.** The impact of a successful bid on the civil liberties of all Vancouver residents, especially those of marginalized persons who are most likely to be adversely affected, must be minimized. The fundamental liberties of persons to reside, move about and engage in their livelihoods should be protected. This means that there should be no "street sweeps" to remove homeless or drug-addicted persons from city streets, nor should sex trade workers be harassed or otherwise forced to move from their regular places of business without adequate compensation.
2. **Uphold the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* that protects fundamental freedoms such as freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of peaceful assembly.** These fundamental freedoms must be respected. There must be no bans on expressions of dissent and protest and meaningful opportunities for persons who wish to protest must be provided, as for example by providing designated protest areas within reasonable proximity to the events and people against which persons wish to protest.
3. **Implement the Four-Pillar Plan.** The City of Vancouver has been a leader in formulating progressive means to address the problems associated with drug use. A successful Olympics bid would provide the City, together with the senior levels of government, with an opportunity to showcase its leadership in this area through the full implementation of the Four Pillars plan, in particular through the provision of adequate and effective prevention and treatment and harm reduction programs. All levels of government, with the support of the Olympic Bid Corporation, should act immediately to demonstrate their commitment to overcoming one of Vancouver's most pernicious social problems.

#### **COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:**

1. **Protect small businesses.** Small businesses in the downtown core can be negatively impacted by hallmark events such as Olympics. For example, restricted access to Olympic areas both before and after the event can result in loss of business. The Bid Corporation and its partners should create an insurance fund to protect local small businesses against losses incurred due to the Olympics.
2. **Leverage community economic development initiatives for under employed individuals and First Nations.** The Olympics provide a world stage for local business, art, culture and tourism. The Bid Corporation and its partners should use their purchasing power, as well as adapt progressive local procurement policies to support small, local and emerging businesses. The Olympics should also be used to showcase the rest of the province's art and culture and tourism opportunities so that economic benefits flow to all areas of the province.
3. **Provide training and employment for local underemployed citizens and First Nations.** Mega-projects such as the expansion of the convention and exhibition centre (an integral component of the 2010 Bid) provide excellent training and skill building opportunities for local under employed and First Nations residents. The Bid Corporation and its partners should establish training and skill building programs for individuals currently out of the workforce in construction related trades, as well as service jobs. In addition, the Bid Corporation and its partners must ensure that these trained individuals are given the opportunity to find employment before the games (during construction), during the Games (hotel and other service jobs) and after the games (in the on going operation of the expanded Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre).

#### **SECURITY, SAFETY AND SOVEREIGNTY:**

1. **Ensure the safety of the athletes, spectators and the residents.** Implement measures to ensure the safety and security of all Olympic venues and services (e.g.,

transportation). The safety of residents in communities surrounding Olympic venues must be also be considered in all safety planning measures.

2. **Canada must be in control of all security forces.** Ensure that Canadian sovereignty at all times. At no time should our internal security rest in the hands of non-Canadians.

The IOCC will be available for comment at the announcement of the short list on August 28 at the Pacific Coliseum.

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