

Olympics Watchdog Grows Stronger: Two Major Lower Mainland Labour Groups Join The Impact on Community Coalition to Help Monitor Games Development

Vancouver, BC - A news conference will be held this Friday, February 13, to announce that the Vancouver and District Labour Council (VDLC) and the British Columbia and Yukon Building and Construction Trades Council (BCYT) have joined The Impact on Community Coalition (IOCC).

Together, these organizations will act as an independent body that will monitor employment and training issues surrounding the development of the 2010 Vancouver/Whistler Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The press conference will be held at the Maritime Labour Centre at 111 Victoria Drive at 12:00 P.M, Friday, February 13th, 2004.

With the help of the Labour Council and the Building Trades Council, the Impact of Olympics on Communities Coalition (IOCC) will work to ensure that the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (OCOG) keeps the promises made by the Vancouver 2010 Bid Corporation.

Specifically, the IOCC Coalition will be monitoring the promises made in the 2010 Winter Games Inner-City Inclusive Commitment Statement regarding employment and training including "Provid(ing) reasonable wages and decent working conditions for any local worker producing Games related goods and services before and during the Winter Games," and "Creat(ing) training and a continuum of short and long-term employment opportunities for innercity (sic) residents to encourage a net increase in employment."

The coalition will also suggest to the Vancouver Olympics Organizing Committee that a collaborative labour model similar to that used to build the 2000 Summer Olympics Games in Sydney, Australia, be adapted and implemented for the 2010 Vancouver/Whistler Games.

The Sydney collaborative model encourages a harmonious industrial environment that ensures decent conditions and wages, guarantees that facilities are built on time, provides training for employees, and follows all relevant industrial regulations.

IOCC chair Kevin Shoesmith said, "The games need to be developed and organized in such a way that all of our city's and province's residents benefit from them before, during, and after. Our research shows that the Sydney Games were very successful in creating a tripartite collaborative agreement between labour, organizing committee and government. So, we're urging the Olympic Organizing Committee to plan the Games based on a collaborative model."

Wayne Peppard, Executive Director of the BCYT, agrees with Shoesmith: "Juan Antonio Samaranch, former President of the International Olympic Committee, proclaimed the Sydney Olympics 'the best games ever,'" he said. He urges that all future Games use the Sydney Model to achieve the best conditions and the best products. Peppard also said that severe transgressions of labour codes

experienced in Atlanta, Salt Lake, and now in Athens, with worker fatalities, shoddy construction, and cost overruns can all be avoided in Vancouver/Whistler by using Sydney's effort as a template.

Vancouver Labour Council President, Bill Saunders, recently traveled to Sydney, Australia, and met with the New South Wales Labour Council to discuss the labour accord that had been reached for the Sydney games. "By all accounts the Sydney Games were a huge success from every point of view. The construction and operation of Olympic facilities came in on time, on budget and with very few problems. That's the kind of result you get when everyone works together."

"The Olympic labour agreement was such a success that four years later the New South Wales State government is still using the Sydney Olympic labour agreement as a template for all new public construction projects in the State," said Saunders.

Shoesmith said, "the IOCC made 22 recommendations to Bid Corporation in July 2002, 11 of which were directly or indirectly addressed by the Olympic Bid Committee. Those recommendations were the result of nearly two years of input and collaboration from residents and community groups in Vancouver." He said further that he is "convinced that the only way to make the Games all inclusive and sustainable, especially with respect to labour issues is to adopt a model like Sydney's right from day one."

The Impact of the Olympics on Communities Coalition (IOCC) is an independent organization made up of citizens, community groups, non-profits and NGO's and is dedicated to ensuring that environmental, social, transportation, housing, economic and civil rights issues associated with the Vancouver/Whistler 2010 Olympic Games are addressed from a community perspective.

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