

Premier Gordon Campbell
Kicking Horse Canyon Upgrade Announcement
March 5, 2003

Check Against Delivery

A year ago, we set our sights on creating a strong new Canada-British Columbia partnership, and it's important to note that the \$336 million in federal and provincial funding the Prime Minister announced today for transportation infrastructure improvements is part of the tradition of cooperation to build a stronger country.

One hundred and thirty-two years ago, Canada decided to build a railway that would unite British Columbia with the rest of the country. Our transportation infrastructure today is no less important than it was then.

Thank you, Prime Minister, for working with us to start the project of opening up the Kicking Horse Pass – opening up the doorways between Canada and British Columbia, the doorways to opportunity, the doorways to economic development.

The Kicking Horse Canyon is a spectacular piece of roadway. It has also been a very dangerous stretch of the Trans-Canada Highway. Since it was built in the 1950s, there have been no significant upgrades.

Together, the government of Canada and the province of British Columbia have already announced \$60.5 million to replace the 45-year-old Yoho Bridge in the Kicking Horse Canyon; \$8.4 million to improve the Victoria Road Intersection at Revelstoke; and \$11.9 million to replace the Woods Overhead structure and upgrade 1.5 kilometres of Highway 1 west of Revelstoke. With this \$125-million partnership announcement today, we are able to move forward with replacing the Park Bridge – the most critical section of the highway through the Kicking Horse Canyon.

The total cost of upgrading the Kicking Horse Canyon over a period of years will be \$670 million, and I appreciate the Prime Minister saying that this is a project that Canada and British Columbia share together.

A year ago, I met with the Prime Minister in Ottawa and we talked about the challenges we face in building and creating a border infrastructure that works for our open trade economy.

Our trucking industry in British Columbia has estimated that they lose up to \$60 million a year because of the bottle necks at the borders. A total of \$15 billion a year in goods crosses our border to the United States – almost fifty percent of our total exports. Our \$9-billion tourism industry is dependent on border infrastructure and border crossings that work and make it easy for people to flow back and forth between Canada and the United States.

Today's announcement of \$211 million in partnerships for eight border crossing improvements is a strong commitment to strengthening our trade, to strengthening our economy and to strengthening the Canada-British Columbia partnership.

Finally, Prime Minister, I appreciate the commitment you have made and your government has made to help us as we move forward to look at the feasibility of a rapid transit line connecting Richmond and the airport to Vancouver.

In the last several months, the Prime Minister has shared his vision of Canada with British Columbians, and we have had the opportunity to share our vision of Canada and our vision for British Columbia with the Prime Minister. Together, there is nothing that we can't accomplish.

On behalf of all British Columbians – Canadians who want to strengthen our country and unify our country just like you – thank you very much, Prime Minister. Merci beaucoup.