BC AMBULANCE TO BE INTEGRATED INTO HEALTH SECTOR UNITS

VICTORIA – Labour Minister Murray Coell announced today that he will not direct the Labour Relations Board to create a standalone bargaining unit for unionized employees of the BC Ambulance Service.

Coell’s decision follows the March 11, 2010 announcement by the Ministry of Health Services of a new ambulance service model for the BC Ambulance Service. Under the new model, the BC Ambulance Service will be integrated more closely with the health-care system.

Following that announcement, the Ministry of Labour launched a consultation process that included representatives from unions, the BC Ambulance Service and key stakeholders, to receive input into which bargaining unit structure should be established under the integrated service model in the health sector. The minister had two options – either direct the Labour Relations Board to create a new bargaining unit for the employees, or not direct and thereby cause the employees to be integrated into existing health-sector bargaining units. Coell was aided by a report prepared by senior staff outlining the input of stakeholders.

The Labour Relations Board, on application by one or more interested parties, will now determine where unionized employees of the BC Ambulance Service will be placed within the existing five health-sector bargaining units. The process, which involves hearings, could take a few months.

The bargaining units in the health sector are: Residents; Nurses; Paramedical/Health Science Professionals; Health Services and Support – Facilities Subsector; and Health Services and Support – Community Subsector. CUPE Local 873, the BC Government and Service Employees’ Union and the BC Nurses’ Union will continue to represent unionized BC Ambulance Service employees as part of one or more of the multi-union bargaining associations.

A copy of the report outlining the input of stakeholders is available at: http://www.gov.bc.ca/lbr/attachments/bcas_bargaining_unit_consultation.pdf.

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