

Recall Petition to be Issued for Comox Valley

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 17, 2011

VICTORIA – Acting Chief Electoral Officer Craig James today approved in principle an application for a petition to recall Don McRae, Member of the Legislative Assembly for Comox Valley. The proponent of the recall is Kathryn Jean Elizabeth Askew.

James said, “The petition will be issued on Friday, January 21, 2011, and at that time, registered canvassers may begin collecting signatures. The petition must be returned to this office no later than Tuesday, March 22, 2011.”

In Comox Valley, 48,368 voters were registered to vote on May 12, 2009. Registered canvassers will have 60 days to collect 19,348 or more valid signatures on the recall petition. The expenses limit for the proponent and the Member is \$39,057.55.

Elections BC has 42 days from the date the petition pages are submitted to the Chief Electoral Officer to verify that those who signed the petition were entitled to do so. The Chief Electoral Officer cannot make a final determination as to the success of the recall petition until the financial report of the proponent is reviewed and it is determined that the proponent did not exceed the expenses limit. The financial report must be filed with the Chief Electoral Officer within 28 days of the end of the recall petition period.

In the event of a successful recall petition, the recalled Member’s seat becomes vacant and a by-election must be called within 90 days. The recalled Member can run as a candidate in the by-election.

Proponent’s statement of why the recall of the Member is warranted:

I am proposing the recall of the Comox Valley Member of the Legislative Assembly, Don McRae, because he continues to support the Harmonized Sales Tax and does not represent the clear wishes of his constituents.

During the last election campaign, the Premier and Finance Minister stated that the Harmonized Sales Tax was NOT on their agenda. British Columbian voters re-elected them believing in that assurance. Only seventy-two days later, the British Columbia Liberals, with NO public consultation, debate or enabling legislation, implemented this tax through an order in council. The successful campaign to repeal the Harmonized Sales Tax was a clear message to Mr. McRae and the government, collecting twelve thousand fifty-one signatures, or twenty-five point two percent of registered voters in the Comox Valley Riding.

Don McRae supports an expensive provincial referendum (over thirty million dollars) in September of this year, creating economic uncertainty which is harming many businesses and consumers.

Comox Valley voters deserve honesty and accountability from their elected representatives. A successful recall tells this and future governments that they must openly and fairly represent those who elected them.

For more information, visit the Elections BC website at www.elections.bc.ca/index.php/referenda-recall-initiative/recall/.

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Attachment: Fast Facts – Recall

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Elections BC is a non-partisan Office of the Legislature responsible for the administration of the *Election Act*, *Recall and Initiative Act*, and conduct of referenda under the *Referendum Act*.

Fast Facts – Recall

- The *Recall and Initiative Act* came into force in 1995
- Under the Act, recall is a process that allows registered voters to remove their Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) from office between elections
- Eighteen months must elapse following General Voting Day for the previous election (May 12, 2009) before a recall application can be made
- The Chief Electoral Officer has approved 21 recall petitions since 1995;
 - A recall petition is currently underway in the Oak Bay-Gordon Head electoral district
 - 16 petitions were not returned to Elections BC by the deadline
 - Four petitions were returned to Elections BC by the deadline
 - Two petitions proceeded to the verification process
 - Paul Reitsma, MLA, Parksville-Qualicum resigned during the verification process of the 1998 recall petition against him; verification stopped at that point
 - One petition continued through the full verification process; Val Roddick, MLA, Delta South (2002); verification determined that insufficient valid signatures had been obtained
- When a recall petition is issued, the proponent has 60 days to collect signatures of more than 40% of the voters who were, on the date of the last election of the Member, registered voters in the Member's electoral district
- Registered voters new to the Member's electoral district since May 12, 2009 are not eligible to sign the recall petition
- There were 48,368 registered voters in the Comox Valley electoral district at the May 12, 2009 General Election
- The signature threshold for Comox Valley is 19,348
- Petition sheets must be submitted to the Chief Electoral Officer on or before March 22, 2011
- Don McRae MLA, Comox Valley received 13,886 votes, or 47.30% of total valid votes, in the 2009 General Election
- The proponent can be assisted by canvassers
- Canvassers must be registered with Elections BC prior to collecting signatures

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- The proponent and the Member have equal expenses limits of \$39,057.55
 - Any individual or organization, other than the proponent and the MLA, who sponsors recall advertising must register with Elections BC
 - There are no spending limits on recall advertising
 - Recall financing reports must be submitted to Elections BC within 28 days after the end of the recall petition period.