

SPEAKING NOTES FOR

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MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND ATTORNEY GENERAL OF CANADA**

FOR THE

DELTA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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Thank you for that kind introduction, ^{Ian}
Mayor Jackson, Members of Council, George,
Good morning, Ian, Peter, Executive Committee, and
Association Members.

It is a great pleasure to be here with you today. C'est un grand plaisir d'etre ici aujourd'hui avec vous.

I know this is a great organization, and of course I see many friends among you here this morning. I am well aware of the excellent job you do in supporting business in Delta, and in collaboration with other Chambers in other communities, and with all levels of government. My father has passed away but many years ago, while we 6 children were growing up, he on the Executive and served as President of the Chamber of Commerce where we lived on Vancouver Island.

The Chamber is an excellent and ideal vehicle for promoting growth and prosperity for the interests of the Delta business community, to the benefit of all community members. A prosperous environment for business, industry and commerce in our community and in our province, is a stated goal of our Conservative Federal Government. I am, and will continue to be part of that plan, and do what I can to influence these goals in a positive direction.

Ian mentioned,

As ~~you~~ know, I was elected on May 2nd in our riding of Delta-Richmond East, as part of the majority federal

Conservative Government. The Prime Minister then appointed me to the position of Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General for Canada later that month.

Since then, I have been immersed in:

- ▲ setting up my constituency and Ottawa offices,**
- ▲ dealing with issues that matter most to those of us lucky enough to live in our beautiful corner of Canada – issues like dredging, the importance of our Fraser River basin, job creation, our positioning as the Pacific Gateway to Canada, crime and its impact in our community, our fisheries, agricultural issues, the gun registry, health care, seniors, its a pretty long list - ,**
- ▲ participating in the debate, consultation, and legislative initiatives aimed at keeping our economy strong in an uncertain international climate, and**
- ▲ promoting greater confidence in our criminal justice system.**

I thought I would start by saying a few things about our Fraser River Gateway, and then move on to tell you of the economic consultations that we are engaged in presently, and finally move on to our Government's justice initiatives so you have a sense of what our focus has been and where we are headed.

If there is time, I would welcome questions afterward or take the opportunity to tell you a bit about life in Ottawa as the new M.P. from Delta-Richmond East.

THE GATEWAY

In my dealings locally and nationally, I am well aware of the importance to our community and Canada of the Fraser River Port. It is Canada's second largest cargo port (2006), contributing \$2.3 billion to the national GDP. It supports 12,400 direct high-wage jobs. Further, it provides \$236 million in government revenues at all levels through taxes and fees. Some of these statistics are dated, and these numbers are expected to triple by 2020

An Economic Impacts Analysis study done in Sept 2005 concluded that if dredging ceased, most container vessels would be unable to use Fraser River Port within the first year and that 96% of all deep-sea vessel visits would end within 6 years (FRPA update Oct 2005). Here we are over 5 years later, without a comprehensive dredging strategy. I see this issue as a priority mandate for me moving through this Parliamentary session.

As I am sure is no surprise to you, it is sometimes difficult in Ottawa (which continues to be Eastern Canada centric) to persuade decision makers as to the fundamental importance of our Pacific Gateway.

In 2008, Port Metro Vancouver moved over 33 million tonnes of cargo, over 200,000 TEU, contributed \$4.6 billion in GDP, \$9.6 billion in economic output and supported 53,150 jobs, contributing \$2.6 billion in wages.

By comparison, the St. Lawrence Seaway handled 40 million tonnes of cargo in 2008, and produced an economic impact in Ontario of \$2.5 billion and \$2 billion in Quebec

These are messages that I continue to reinforce at the federal level. I understand the importance of our region and it is imperative, particularly when asking for funding, that we keep these types of facts and figures before Cabinet.

THE ECONOMY

Right now, we are in a pre-Budget consultation phase and have started holding consultative meetings across Canada since the New Year. Last week, for example, I met with your Executive Director, Richmond Chamber of Commerce representatives and other Richmond and Delta business leaders to gain their input. This was co-hosted with Alice Wong, Minister of State for Seniors and our neighbouring Richmond M.P.

If any of you have ideas, or would like to identify priorities to us, there is a website you can go to that I can leave with your President [<http://www.fin.gc.ca/prebudget-prebudgetaire/1-eng.asp>]

As part of your consideration, you should know that the economy continues to be our Government's top priority. We have a strong record of supporting strong growth and job creation with positive initiatives such as:

- ▲ expanding trade and opening new markets – for the export of Canadian good and services**

- ▲ **investing in research and development – to create jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities**
- ▲ **investing in skills training**
- ▲ **eliminating red tape, and**
- ▲ **keeping taxes low – to help families balance budgets and provide a competitive business environment that supports job-creating investment and expansion**

As we prepare our next budget, it is crucial that we continue to listen to Canadians on the best ways to create jobs and economic growth. We want to ensure that we get your views.

JUSTICE INITIATIVES

Although Canada has one of the best justice systems in the world, there is - nevertheless - still a need to keep pace with change, and to adapt and update our laws.

Our day-to-day lives have changed a great deal since Canada's Criminal Code was first enacted in 1892. Much like other democracies around the world, Canadian society and its values have and are continuously evolving, and our justice system needs to evolve as well.

Our Conservative Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Harper has been committed to the safety of our citizens and to respecting victims of crime, as well as making streets and communities safe. It is what Canadians expect of our justice system in the 21st century.

Part of this focus is maintaining the integrity of the justice system – to make it more efficient and effective, and more fair.

This is a great challenge, given that our justice system has many components, and must take into account the needs of the provinces and territories, along with many organizations and stakeholders. We continue to dialogue to identify both the major issues and the best solutions.

As a Government, we have a responsibility to ensure that the justice system provides fair and efficient results for victims of crime and all Canadians.

When our government was first elected in 2006, one of our immediate goals was to restore a sense of balance to Canada's justice system.

Despite what our critics say, we believe in a balanced and comprehensive approach to justice - an approach that is responsive to what is happening on the streets.

Our Government wants to prevent further victimization and make sure that Canada's most serious, violent criminals are kept off our streets.

Under the previous administration, year after year, we heard stories of violent criminals who re-offended immediately upon their release.

Not surprisingly, many Canadians found this offensive and it has led to a serious lack of confidence in our justice system.

In 2004, and in every election since, the Conservative Party of Canada has run on a promise to put the rights of victims and law-abiding Canadians first.

We have taken strong, decisive action with respect to our justice legislation - and this has been the direct response to the very clear message Canadians gave us to correct the inherent inadequacy of the laws as they stood – to restore a sense of balance.

We are very proud of what we have accomplished.

Back in May 2008, Bill C-13, known as *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (criminal procedure, language of the accused, sentencing and other amendments)*, received Royal Assent, and it has helped strengthen and modernize criminal law by making technical amendments to improve procedures and correct or clarify certain *Code* provisions.

A more recent example is our action on mega-trials.

As I'm sure you're aware, it has become increasingly difficult to ensure that such trials take place and are completed within a reasonable time. Trials that feature complex evidence, multiple accused and numerous charges and witnesses consume a great deal of the court's time.

They also cause excessive delays and can increase the length of pre-trial detention.

Worse, they increase the risk of mistrials.

Mega-trials may be hard to avoid, but the manner in which they are conducted are being improved.

Our Government worked swiftly to propose Bill C-2, the *Fair and Efficient Criminal Trials Act*, which was introduced this past June and came into force shortly thereafter.

This legislation strengthens case management by empowering Case Management Judges to, among other things, rule upon preliminary issues and decide on admissibility of evidence.

It also reduces duplication of processes through permitting joint hearings and allowing amendments to direct indictments.

And it improves criminal procedure by increasing the maximum number of jurors from 12 to 14, and instituting measures to better protect the identity of the jurors.

The measures in this legislation will help streamline the prosecution of offences involving organized crime, drug trafficking, white-collar crime and terrorism.

This legislation follows up on recommendations of the Steering Committee on Justice Efficiencies and Access to the Justice System, and Justice experts Chief Justice Patrick

LeSage and Justice Michael Code of Ontario.

Because there can be no true justice if people – especially our most vulnerable – fear for their safety and security - we need to move toward a safer Canada, and a justice system in which Canadians can continue to have confidence.

That is why our Government introduced the *Safe Streets and Communities Act* (Bill C-10) which is now before the Senate. It addresses a wide range of significant law-and-order issues that affect our society.

Among other things, this bill will help protect children from sexual predators by increasing penalties for sexual offences against children, as well as creating two new offences that take aim at conduct that could facilitate the sexual abuse of a child.

It also targets organized drug crime, when aggravating factors are present, by creating tougher sentences for the production and trafficking of illicit drugs.

There has been a lot of misinformation about our bringing in more mandatory minimum sentences. There were already some 80 mandatory minimums in the Criminal Code before we proposed a few more. Conviction for any sexual offences against children will now carry mandatory minimums. This is an issue we take very seriously. With respect to drug trafficking and production, the aggravating factors I mentioned that attract mandatory minimums are where the accused is proven to be part of organized crime,

or where violence or threats of violence were used, or where children have been targeted.

There is an exemption for those whose crimes are non-violent but related to drug addiction. If a person is willing to go through a court-approved treatment program, his or her sentence may be reduced or suspended. In fact, yesterday, I was with the BC A-G Shirley Bond to announce and support the 10th anniversary of the Drug Treatment Court in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside which is jointly funded by our two levels of government. An independent SFU evaluation has just been published which found the recidivism rate reduced by 50% for graduates.

Bill C-10 will also ensure our justice system responds to the problems posed by youth crime by using fair and appropriate measures to hold young offenders accountable when they break the law.

It will also put an end to the use of conditional sentences or house arrest for serious violent and property crimes, such as sexual assault, human trafficking, arson, breaking and entering, luring a child, and kidnapping.

Finally, our Bill takes steps to prevent the trafficking, abuse and exploitation of vulnerable immigrants.

In addition to Bill C-10, we have also moved forward on legislation that provides clear direction on the appropriate use of citizen's arrest, and streamlines and simplifies the

self-defence and defence of property provisions in the *Criminal Code*.

Many victims of crime feel they have no voice in the justice system. Our government has made progress in giving victims both a greater voice and greater access to services notably by establishing the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime. And we continue to collaborate successfully with the provincial governments on victims' issues.

But victims of crime and their families also deserve to know that we are taking action to keep dangerous offenders off our streets.

Two pieces of legislation that came into force this past December attest to our commitment.

Bill S-6 eliminates the "faint-hope" clause, ensuring that criminals who commit first-degree murder will no longer be eligible for early parole until they serve the full 25 years of their sentence.

And Bill C-48 ensures truth in sentencing, so that those who commit more than one murder will face the possibility of serving parole ineligibility periods consecutively. This means the length of their sentence will better reflect the severity of their crimes.

Both these pieces of legislation will help ensure that the concerns of the families and loved ones of murder victims

are taken into account within Canada's justice system, and that Canadians will know that criminals are held accountable for their crimes.

We have also recently acted through Bill C-21, the *Standing Up For Victims of White Collar Crime Act*, which includes a mandatory minimum penalty of at least two years for fraud over \$1 million, and it toughens sentences by adding aggravating factors that courts can consider.

In addition, our Government is acknowledging the role of technology in facilitating crime. There is now legislation in effect to deal with the growing threat of identity theft and, more recently, Internet child pornography. Under Bill C-22, which came into force last December 8, those who provide Internet services are now required to report tips to the Canadian Centre for Child Protection about Web sites that make child pornography available to the public.

And here, I must also acknowledge the efforts of provincial and territorial governments who have already enacted or are contemplating legislation on mandatory reporting of child pornography.

But as we all know, reform of the justice system is not restricted to legislative amendments.

Indeed, our government always welcomes the opportunity to collaborate in innovative ways with our partners in the provinces, territories, the police, members of the Bar, as well

as other non-governmental organizations and groups to reach our shared goals, as we have in the past.

I am confident that the the steps we are taking will lead to improved efficiency and effectiveness in our criminal justice system.

Ultimately, a sound economy and a sound justice system are essential components of sustaining and building the country Canadians want and to which we all aspire.

Thank you! Merci!