



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SPEC calls for Transportation Reallocation

Vancouver, BC – September 21, 2010 - As government officials meet this week behind closed doors to discuss transportation funding SPEC and the Liveable Region Coalition (LRC) are calling for a substantial reallocation of that funding. Recent reports on pollution levels in British Columbia demonstrate the need to shift from highway construction projects to investing in public transit.

In 2008, the most recent year for which there are records, greenhouse gases increased in BC despite a national trend of decreasing emissions. 2009 saw per-capita gasoline sales in BC rise almost 10 percent which was the largest single-year increase for the province in at least 30 years. “Clearly British Columbia is failing to meet its climate change goals and needs a dramatic change in policy,” said SPEC director Robert Baxter.

SPEC is calling on the province to scale back or cancel the many highway expansion projects that are either in process or planned. The Gateway Project, although underway, is an example of a project that could be scaled back. The Highway One lane expansion could be reduced in scope and the South Fraser Perimeter road could be cancelled. This would free up well over a billion dollars for public transportation, education and social programs and it would help Metro Vancouver catch up to other cities when it comes to public transit modal share.

Many cities, including Bern, Zurich, New York, Frankfurt and London have transit modal shares that are twice that of Metro Vancouver. SPEC believes this is clear evidence that we have enough highway capacity but not enough transit capacity when compared to other major cities. The ridership during the Olympic Games also demonstrated that, if given the option, many commuters will choose transit over other modes.

Transit also offers significant economic benefits. A recent CUTA report concludes that transit's national economic benefit is over \$11.5 billion per year, including job creation benefits of \$3.7 billion.

Founded in 1969, The Society Promoting Environmental Conservation (SPEC) is a non-profit charitable organization that addresses environmental issues in British Columbia, with a particular focus on urban communities in Lower Mainland and the Georgia Basin.

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