



For Immediate Release

May 10, 2011

Public Dialogue Forums announced in advance of the HST Referendum
Forums and new website provide opportunity for discussion

Vancouver, BC – British Columbians are invited to take part in a series of 11 public forums being held in 10 communities before the referendum on the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST).

The forums are the result of the Government of BC's \$500,000 Public Dialogue Fund. During each forum, the yes and no sides will present their views about the HST Referendum in a public meeting format. The goal is to generate informed discussion before the vote.

The HST Public Forums will take place in BC public universities, colleges and institutes. Independent representatives of the post-secondary institutions will moderate the forums in a non-partisan way.

People are invited to attend the sessions or watch them on the Internet at www.hstpublicforums.ca. The website has an online forum where people can express their opinions. Citizens can also participate in the discussion via Facebook (www.facebook.com/HSTForums) and Twitter (@HSTForums, use hashtag #HSTforums).

The forums will be held between May 24 and June 9, 2011 in Abbotsford, Cranbrook, Dawson Creek, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nanaimo, Prince George, Surrey, Vancouver and Victoria.

Representatives from two groups that have been successful in their request for public funding will be the presenters at the HST Public Forums.

The Government of BC has appointed Stephen Owen, a former BC Ombudsman with extensive experience in public engagement and mediation, as an independent funding decision maker. His role – the Referendum Funding Decision Maker (RDFM) – is to ensure a fair process in allocating public funding of \$500,000 to both sides in the HST Referendum.

Owen has awarded two groups the right to apply for up to \$250,000 each. The groups are the Fight HST Society (the "yes" side, supporting a referendum vote to return to the PST/GST) and the Smart Tax Alliance (the "no" side, supporting a referendum vote to retain the HST).

The RDFM is also responsible for working with three provincial organizations representing post secondary institutions to organize the public forums. The organizations are: BC Colleges, BC Association of Institutes and Universities and the Research Universities' Council of BC. The organizations administer the Public Dialogue Fund.

Website: www.hstpublicforums.ca

Facebook: www.facebook.com/HSTForums

Twitter: @HSTForums



NEWS RELEASE

List of HST Public Forums

May 24 (7:30 pm to 9:00 pm)	Dawson Creek	Northern Lights College
May 26 (7:30 pm to 9:00 pm)	Prince George	University of Northern British Columbia
May 27 (7:30 pm to 9:00 pm)	Kamloops	Thompson Rivers University
May 30 (7:30 pm to 9:00 pm)	Kelowna	Okanagan College
May 31 (7:30 pm to 9:00 pm)	Cranbrook	College of the Rockies
June 2 (7:30 pm to 9:00 pm)	Surrey	Kwantlen Polytechnic University
June 3 (7:30 pm to 9:00 pm)	Abbotsford	University of the Fraser Valley
June 4 (10:30 am to noon)	Vancouver	University of British Columbia Telus Studio Theatre
June 7 (7:30 pm to 9:00 pm)	Vancouver	Simon Fraser University Morris J Wosk Centre for Dialogue
June 8 (7:30 pm to 9:00 pm)	Victoria	Camosun College (Lansdowne Campus)
June 9 (7:30 pm to 9:00 pm)	Nanaimo	Vancouver Island University

Check www.hstpublicforums.ca for more details regarding each HST Public Forum location.

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