

## **LIBERAL MLA SLATER WILL ACCEPT PETITION FROM FIGHT HST – HALF OF COMMITTEE AGREES**

**Port Coquitlam, BC – August 15, 2010** – BC Liberal MLA, John Slater, one of ten members of the Select Standing Committee for Legislative Initiatives, said Saturday that he is willing to accept the petition submitted to his committee on Friday by Fight HST leader Bill Vander Zalm.

Slater, interviewed in the Kelowna Courier on Saturday, said he is unsure why Elections BC decided not to submit the petition to his committee until the courts resolve the business group's challenge. "We should be the one's looking at it, not the courts," Slater admitted. "I think the committee could look at that and make sure everybody's got all the facts."

Slater added, "Let's get it back to the committee and move forward."

Chris Delaney, Lead Organizer for Fight HST, congratulated Slater for his openness and democratic spirit. "We certainly appreciate Mr. Slater's willingness to receive the petition. He is acting with a democratic approach and is listening to the people, and he is to be commended for that - the rest of the BC Liberal MLAs should do the same."

Delaney says Slater's riding had one of the highest levels of support on the anti-HST petition, with over 40% of registered voters signing - thousands more than actually voted for Mr. Slater.

"He recognizes that this process is about listening to the people – not legal technicalities or procedural sleights of hand. That shows integrity, and we thank him for standing up and saying the committee should accept the petition," said Delaney.

Delaney says Slater's acceptance of the petition makes five of the ten members so far who agree that the petition should go to the Select Standing Committee, regardless of the acting Chief Electoral Officer's attempt to withhold it.

Delaney pointed out that the acting CEO's decision was based on the court challenge brought by the business lobby, and has nothing to do with the legal challenge to the tax by Fight HST, which will commence hearings on Monday in the BC Supreme Court.

Delaney says the Initiative Act does not prohibit any other party from submitting a successful petition to the Select Standing Committee once it has been validated by the Chief Electoral Officer. "The petition belongs to the proponent, Bill Vander Zalm, and to the 700,000 people who signed it. It is not the CEO's to withhold. He has validated it, and now the committee must deal with it."

"So far, we have heard from 5 members of the committee willing to accept the petition. That makes it a tie... and we all know from baseball that the tie goes to the runner - in this case Fight HST."

Delaney says according to the Initiative Act, the Select Standing Committee has 30 days to meet from the date the petition is received by them.

“That means they must meet on or before September 12 in order to comply with the legislation. The clock is ticking, and everyone in BC is waiting and watching,” Delaney concluded.

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