

BC Finance Minister attacks People's Petition

Campbell Government trying to smear and intimidate volunteers

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Delta - Former BC Premier Bill Vander Zalm calls an official complaint filed by BC Finance Minister Colin Hansen with Elections BC over the Fight HST citizens Initiative petition an example of a government "totally out of control".

Hansen says he filed the complaint over what he is calling "misinformation" by the all-volunteer Fight HST group in a pamphlet titled the "HST Hit List".

But Vander Zalm, Fight HST Leader, says it is clear from the government's actions that they are angry at his group for thwarting the government's plan to do a mass mail-out to try to sway voters from signing the petition.

Elections BC today ruled that the government cannot send out the pro-HST mailer until after the Initiative signup period ends July 5.

"Attacking the people's petition, using the undemocratic motion of closure to stop debate in the Legislature on the HST - this is a government that is totally out of control," Vander Zalm said.

The HST Hit list, first compiled by a group calling themselves angryformerliberals.ca, was posted by Fight HST on its web site and distributed to BC voters at meetings and rallies. It contains over 77 items that will be affected by HST after the new tax is implemented.

Fight HST made numerous public requests to government to publish a definitive list of items affected by the HST, but have not received a response to date. The list has a qualifying statement that says "This list is a rough guide only and may change depending on what the Liberals decide to do."

"Without a clear list from government, we were forced to use the best information available to compile the items. We have never said it was definitive, and have been constantly updating it as new information has come to light, both adding items that were left off, and removing items that proved to be incorrect, or clarifying them," explained Vander Zalm.

"There has been no intention to mislead anyone. Out of 77 items, only four or five have been incorrect, and even those only partially. To see the government trying to use its power and resources to beat up on a small band of volunteers, including seniors, young people, small business people and working families who are trying to assert their democratic rights borders on totalitarian demagoguery," Vander Zalm fumed.

"This government is so mad that they are losing public support on this issue that they have turned on the very people who elected them. It is outright dictatorship and they must be stopped before this peaceful revolt against them turns ugly. They are doing everything in their power to try to intimidate people from participating in democracy, and it is frankly quite scary."

"In all my years in politics, I have never seen anything like it," Vander Zalm concluded.