

# PRESENTATION SUMMARY

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SECHELT PUBLIC HEARING DATED  
5 JUNE 2004 AT THE DRIFTWOOD INN

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE PRESENTATION TO THE CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON ELECTORAL REFORM. IT ATTEMPTS TO CAPTURE THE KEY ISSUES AND ARGUMENTS THAT WERE PRESENTED AND DISCUSSED DURING THE PUBLIC HEARING. IN SOME INSTANCES, THE PRESENTER HAS ALSO MADE A SUBMISSION TO THE ASSEMBLY AND THIS IS ACCESSIBLE VIA THE WEBSITE AT [WWW.CITIZENSASSEMBLY.BC.CA](http://WWW.CITIZENSASSEMBLY.BC.CA) BY CLICKING ON "GET INVOLVED". IF SUCH A SUBMISSION IS AVAILABLE, IT WILL BE NOTED AT THE END OF THIS REPORT.

# Jeff Chilton

## FreeYourVote Society

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### DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

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Mixed Member Proportional Representation offers the best solution to reform an undemocratic voting system.

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### KEY THEMES

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Jeff Chilton is the Chair of the FreeYourVote Society and described his experience during the campaign for a Citizen's Initiative to establish a proportional representation electoral system in BC in 2002. The campaign succeeded in collecting 98,000 of the 210,000 required signatures in a 90 day period supporting the introduction of MMP in British Columbia. Mr Chilton told the hearing that the FreeYourVote Society supports the work of the Citizens' Assembly. He asked the Assembly to consider the many submissions and presentations made by members of the Proportional Representation Initiative team and of the FreeYourVote Society.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Jeff Chilton recommended the introduction of MMP in British Columbia.

*Quote: "I am advising you that British Columbia has 98,000 people who form the vanguard of this movement towards electoral reform ... They have all, with their signatures, and with varying degrees of sophistication, signed our petitions which advocated a system of mixed member proportional representation. Ninety eight thousand people!"*

### QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

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One member of the panel sought clarification on elements of the presentation.

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| Q | I'm a little bit confused. You've mentioned both MMP and the Proportional Representation Initiative. Which system do you favour? |
| A | The Proportional Representation Initiative was formed in 2002 and advocated Mixed Member Proportional representation.            |

**Comment from panel:** There were no comments from the panel.

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**QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE**

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Following this presentation quite a few members of the audience had questions.

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| Q | You mentioned that there are those who consider this a doomed exercise, could you explain?  |
| A | I have heard people say that this process is a sham, and that the government is not really interested in changing anything. A lot of politicians are not interested in sharing power.   |
| Q | Is someone from your society making a similar presentation at every one of these hearings?  |
| A | No. We've kept in contact with our canvassers from 2002 and asked them to make presentations, but we really don't know how many of them have done so.   |
| Q | My concern is with young people. Have you heard from young people whether they would be more likely to vote under this sort of system?  |
| A | I have spoken to my sons about it and they're not really interested in politics because they think that all the parties are the same. They want to have more choice and I think that's what a PR system would do, because there will be more parties elected and therefore more choice.   |
| Q | You mentioned MMP, what exactly does that mean?   |
| A | There are two forms of proportional representation. In one there are no ridings but you cast your vote for a party and the parties get the number of seats that represents their share of the vote. In an MMP system it is very similar to what we have today with members elected in local ridings, but you have two votes: one for a candidate and one for a party. Top-up seats are used to make sure that the proportion of seats each party wins is proportional to its share of the vote. |

***Comment:*** There were no further comments from the audience.

**SUBMISSION: YES**

**SUBMISSION ID# 0053/0054**

