

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

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 BY CLICKING ON "GET INVOLVED". IF SUCH A SUBMISSION IS AVAILABLE, IT WILL BE NOTED AT THE END OF THIS REPORT.

Michael Maser

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

The need for electoral reform mirrors the urgent need for improving resiliency to address increasing societal challenges.

KEY THEMES

Michael Maser spoke in favour of a mixed member proportional representation system in British Columbia. He expressed his despair with the current electoral system, including the disproportionality of the election results and wasted votes, leading to voter apathy and rancour. He argued that the current system undermines the capacity of governments to respond to the challenges faced by modern society. Mr Maser explained that the current electoral system creates an electoral cycle that encourages short term policy planning and a party system restricts the capacity of the government to value differing perspectives. Mr Maser drew comparisons between models of cybernetics and biodiversity and the political system to demonstrate that we need to increase our number of political options in order to have a greater chance of meeting our stated goal. Cybernetic and biodiversity examples show that the system with the most options has the greatest chance of survival. Mr Maser argued that we must reform our electoral system to expand the number of political options available.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Michael Maser recommended the introduction of MMP in British Columbia.

Quote: "We need an electoral system that will encourage 'beyond-the-box' thinking in the legislature."

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

There were two members of the panel who sought clarification on elements of the presentation.

Q	What sort of voter choice would you like to see on the ballot paper?
A	I would like to have two votes: one for a constituency candidate and one for a party.
Q	So it's important for a person to have a local MLA?
A	Yes, under MMP, an MLA would represent a specific constituency, or else they would be party representatives who people could go to see to address party issues rather than local issues.

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

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

There were no questions or comments from the audience.

SUBMISSION: NO