

# PRESENTATION SUMMARY

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COQUITLAM PUBLIC HEARING DATED  
1 JUNE 2004 AT THE EXECUTIVE PLAZA 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.

# Karl Maier

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## DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

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I believe the mixed-member proportional representation voting system would work best for BC. My experience observing elections in other countries supports this belief.

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## KEY THEMES

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Karl Maier argued that proportional representation systems are not actually as complicated as they may first appear. He explained that as long as a voter understands how to use the ballot and that the election result makes sense in terms of the votes cast, it is not important whether or not voters understand the counting process. He described his recent experience living in New Zealand and in Germany, and described voters in these countries as believing that voting is important. He argued that an alternative electoral system will not solve all of our political problems, but may decrease the sense of voter apathy and cynicism. Mr Maier argued that BC shares similarities with both Germany and New Zealand, and that this is an added advantage for introducing MMP in BC because it is not an untested system. He addressed two concerns raised about MMP: that it will produce unstable coalition governments and that governments in PR countries spend more than governments in non-PR countries. Mr Maier argued that parties forming coalition governments hold each other accountable, and are more moderate than majority governments with fewer extreme policy swings and greater stability over time. He also argued that the increased spending of PR-governments may not necessarily be a negative result if these policies reflect the wishes of the electorate. Mr Maier supported the introduction of MMP in British Columbia in order for every voter to feel that his or her vote has helped to elect someone, and in order to guarantee that we will never again have a government that is elected by fewer than 50 per cent of the electorate.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Karl Maier recommended the introduction of MMP in British Columbia.

*Quote: "Living in both Germany and New Zealand I learned that no change in the voting system is going to cure all a place's problems – my German and New Zealand friends still had their share of complaints about politicians and governments. But on the other hand, I didn't hear the kind of apathy and cynicism about voting itself that I myself have felt about voting in Canada and have heard a lot about from others here."*

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## QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

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

Q	What sort of electoral threshold do you think is necessary?
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A	The threshold would need to be appropriate for the number of seats in the legislature.
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**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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There were no questions from the audience.

**Comment:** “I sincerely hope that BC will be the leader to bring PR to Canada and that the other provinces and the feds will follow.”

**SUBMISSION: NO**