

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

PRINCE GEORGE PUBLIC HEARING DATED
10 MAY 2004 AT THE PRINCE GEORGE
CIVIC CENTRE

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.

Virginia Karr

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

Real Rural Representation.

KEY THEMES

Virginia Karr argued that geographical representation is necessary because of the vast range of climates, ecosystems, and populations found throughout the province. She also explained that riding boundaries need to be redrawn to ensure that rural voices are not drowned out by urban voters when a riding encompasses both rural and urban areas. Mrs Karr argued that the legislature lacks a rural voice, due to the diffuse distribution of rural voters when compared with densely populated urban areas. She proposed that this could be remedied through a party list system, because it would be to the benefit of every party to represent groups who may be sparse in any one riding, but combine to represent a significant proportion of the population. Mrs Karr argued that rural representation is important in the legislature so that the government is aware of changes to the climate, environment and resources in rural areas. She explained that urban representatives often fail to understand rural issues and perspectives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Virginia Karr and her family recommended that the Assembly consider a type of PR that will give more of a voice to rural citizens.

Quote: "Rural people sadly see they are neither being understood nor taken seriously while most in the cities don't even realize this difference exists."

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

A member of the panel who sought clarification on elements of the presentation.

Q	Are you then content to leave it up to the Assembly on how this would be accomplished?
A	I think a mixed system is the way to go – a system that has a list system, particularly one which allows people to vote for people on that list.

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

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

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

Q	First Nations representatives should be fitted into this structure. Have you or the assembly given any thought as to how we could include our First Nations people as members in the legislature?
A	(Presenter) I definitely think that they deserve a voice, they have nothing.
A	(Panel member) There are three members of the assembly who are First Nations people. I've discussed this with them and I want to assure you that we have discussed this question considerably within the Assembly. I really think that question needs to be answered by a First Nations person.
Q	Is there any representation on the Citizens' Assembly from the rural area?
A	The Citizens Assembly is composed of two members from every riding in the province.

Comment: There were no comments from the audience.

SUBMISSION: NO