

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

WHISTLER PUBLIC HEARING
DATED 3 JUNE 2004
AT TELUS WHISTLER CONVENTION 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.

Stephane Perron

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

I want to take this opportunity to voice my support for a proportionally based electoral system in BC and explain why.

KEY THEMES

Mr. Perron expressed the view that both local representation and proportionality constitute central elements of any proposal for electoral reform. The presenter expressed support for MMP on the basis of the belief that the diversity it would allow would provide for stability in government. According to Mr. Perron, the introduction of a proportional system will result in the creation of broad visions that will produce solid foundations for governments to build on. The presenter argued that slow and steady policy making is preferred to the fast decisions and erratic swings in policy that occur under the current FPTP system. Mr. Perron stated that MMP would encourage the production of minority governments which have a history of great achievements. The presenter argued that even if a majority government occurred, PR would provide for the representation of more opposition voices in the legislature enabling a better quality of debate. Mr. Perron expressed the view that when people feel that government decisions reflect the will of the people as a whole, rather than just the party that was elected, voter cynicism will decline.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The presenter recommended adopting a system of MMP as influenced by the Proportional Representative Initiative of 2002. Mr. Perron argued that MMP would be an improvement over the current system as it would encourage voter participation, reduce the tendency for wild swings in policy, produce governments that are more accurate reflections of the will of the people, and enable people to vote sincerely rather than strategically. Mr. Perron also recommended that the Assembly consider campaign finance legislation such as that used at the federal level that allows for the funding of parties that gain more than 2% of the vote.